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Atlanta Audubon Society Recognizes the City of Atlanta with a Special Honor:

McDaniel Branch Wetlands in Southwest Atlanta certified as an Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary

(Atlanta, Ga.) October 23, 2018 – On Friday, October 19, the Atlanta Audubon Society recognized the City of Atlanta’s McDaniel Branch Wetlands as an Atlanta Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary. The designation has been a collaborative effort between Atlanta Audubon Society and the City of Atlanta Department Bureau of Watershed Management (DWM). The McDaniel Branch Wetlands is the first of three properties that will ultimately be certified as Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuaries. The other two, Lionel Hampton-Beecher Hills Nature Preserve and Herbert Greene Nature Preserve, are working to complete the certification process.

The Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary Program encourages both private and public properties to enhance their land for birds and other wildlife by installing native plants and providing food, water, and shelter for birds and other wildlife.

“Atlanta Audubon is thrilled to partner with the City of Atlanta Department of Watershed Management to add McDaniel Branch and other wetland areas to our network of more than 450 certified wildlife habitats in Atlanta and north Georgia,” says Melinda Langston, Atlanta Audubon board member and Wildlife Sanctuary Program Coordinator. “The welfare of birds and other wildlife is directly linked to the quality of food and shelter available to them. The plantings used in the McDaniel Branch not only help hold the stream banks in place and improve water quality, but they also create valuable habitat for birds and other wildlife.”

The McDaniel Branch stormwater project was designed to mitigate the impacts of stormwater runoff in and around Atlanta’s in-town neighborhoods. The constructed wetlands central to this project mimic natural systems for managing stormwater. Over the past year, the planting of a variety of native plant species have been underway, including wild rye, river oats, black- and brown-eyed Susan, partridge pea, ironweed, Joe-Pye Weed, and Mexican hat coneflower. In addition, dozens of native trees, shrubs, aquatics and riparian fringe species have been planted around the ponds, including red maple, river birch, overcup oak, water oak, American hornbeam, redbud, dogwood, beautyberry, button bush, sweetshrub, spicebush and witch hazel.

“The designation of the McDaniel Branch Wetlands as an Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary underscores the City of Atlanta’s commitment to implementing innovative stormwater solutions while preserving and protecting native ecosystems through green infrastructure,” said DWM Deputy Commissioner Todd Hill. “Our collaboration with the Atlanta Audubon Society will ensure that this natural greenspace will be experienced by a broader audience of Atlanta residents, students, and visitors.”

As a way to help hold the stream banks of the McDaniel Branch Wetlands in place DWM’s Green Infrastructure team installed a number of aquatic and riparian fringe plants, including flatstem spikerush, swamp sunflower, Louisiana iris, pickleweed, bluestem, upland sea oats, cardinal flower and cinnamon fern. A mowing plan has also been implemented that will allow native plants to thrive and avoid harming ground nesting birds and other wildlife during the spring and summer nesting season.

For more information on certifying a property as an Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary, visit <https://www.atlantaaudubon.org/wildlife-sanctuary-certification.html>.

Media Note: Photos to accompany this article and a MS Word version of this press release are available for download at <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/y3l9s32oktcs94e/AADL4n1VHbxzzwGhN455VJ-fa?dl=0>.

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