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**WRIGHT ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION CENTER IN COBB COUNTY RECOGNIZED AS ATLANTA
AUDUBON WILDLIFE SANCTUARY**

(Atlanta, Ga.) April 16, 2019 – On Thursday, April 11, the Atlanta Audubon Society officially recognized the Jean and Elwood Wright Environmental Education Center in Cobb County as an Atlanta Audubon Certified Wildlife Sanctuary. A collaborative effort between Atlanta Audubon and the Cobb County Master Gardeners, the Wright Center is the first Cobb County Park to be added to the network of more than 500 Atlanta Audubon-certified Wildlife Sanctuaries across the metro area and north Georgia.

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 Cobb County Master Gardeners to add the Wright Environmental Education Center to our network of certified sanctuaries, and we’re particularly thrilled to add our first public park in Cobb County,” 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, and the Cobb County Master Gardeners have done a wonderful job of adding and highlighting a variety of plant species native to Georgia’s Piedmont region to this acreage. With the onsite education center and a nice trail system, the Wright Center is a wonderful resource for the community.”

Located at 2661 Johnson Ferry Road, in Marietta, the Jean and Elwood Wright Environmental Education Center belonged to the Wright family from the mid-1940s until 2003 when it became a Cobb County Park. The Wright’s were committed to adding native trees and plants to what was then a nearly barren landscape, and the property is now boasts a wealth of large trees and native, understory plants. The Cobb County Master Gardeners have spent countless hours clearing invasive plant species and adding additional native plants to the landscape. In addition, Cobb County has renovated the house on the property with classrooms, restrooms, and a small kitchen for use by school, scout, and other groups. The trail system meanders through the entire property passing through towering oaks, tulip poplars, and other mature trees. Many plants native to Georgia thrive in the park, some listed as unusual by the state. A unique feature of the center is a “plant jail” created by the Master Gardeners. The plant jail is a selection

of non-native, invasive plants that have been removed from the property and replaced with native Georgia species.

“The Master Gardeners believe that Jean Wright, the original owner of this property, would be delighted with the Atlanta Audubon Wildlife Sanctuary designation,” says Judy Beard, one of the Cobb County Master Gardeners who spearheaded the effort to certify this property. “This certification represents her deep love for birds and wildlife of all types and her lifelong desire to make her home into a natural habitat for wildlife.”

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>.

Atlanta Audubon is building places where birds and people thrive. We create bird-friendly communities through conservation, education, and advocacy.

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