



Public Opinion Sought on Georgia's Outdoor Recreation Services

ATLANTA, September 1, 2015 -- The Georgia Department of Natural Resources has commissioned the University of Georgia's Carl Vinson Institute of Government to complete a statewide public opinion survey regarding outdoor recreation services. The institute's Survey Research and Evaluation unit will conduct a telephone survey of more than 1,000 respondents over the next month.

The survey results, along with information garnered from focus group discussions and public input meetings, will be used to help formulate Georgia's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, the official policy addressing outdoor recreation services across Georgia. The DNR's Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division is responsible for updating the plan every five years for the state to be eligible for federal assistance through the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

"We hope those who receive a survey call will take a few minutes to respond," said Theresa Wright, director of the institute's Survey Research and Evaluation unit. "This is an excellent opportunity to share recreational preferences and help the state of Georgia formulate its plan for the future."

Through the survey, the institute is asking Georgia residents to tell about outdoor recreation experiences with their city, county, state and national parks, trails, wildlife and fishing areas. The survey takes 11–19 minutes to complete. Georgians can explain what is important to them about outdoor recreation and what might prevent them from enjoying it as often as they would like.

"With the help of the Institute of Government, we can dig deeper, exploring demographic trends, recreational preferences and funding considerations to better anticipate future community needs," said Becky Kelley, Director of the Parks, Recreation and Historic sites Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. "Survey research makes it possible for us to hear from a wide variety of Georgians. This is your opportunity to let DNR hear from you."

Survey results will be used to help assess and make recommendations on four primary outdoor recreation focus areas: conservation, health and wellness, economic vitality and quality of life, and greater financial sustainability. The 2017–21 report, outlining how Georgia will sustain and improve the quality of its outdoor recreation opportunities, will be submitted by Gov. Nathan Deal to the U.S. Department of Interior in October or November of next year.

When called, survey respondents are encouraged to complete the telephone survey or consider rescheduling the interview. For questions regarding the survey, contact Antoinette Norfleet at 770-389-7264 or Antoinette.Norfleet@dnr.ga.gov or consultant Eric VanDeGenachte of Vanguard Contingent at 678-948-8467 or eric@vguardcon.com.

The Carl Vinson Institute of Government is a Public Service and Outreach unit of the University of Georgia that provides training, offers technical assistance, and conducts applied research to help state and local governments operate efficiently and effectively and thus provide improved service to the public.

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