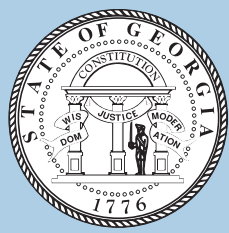
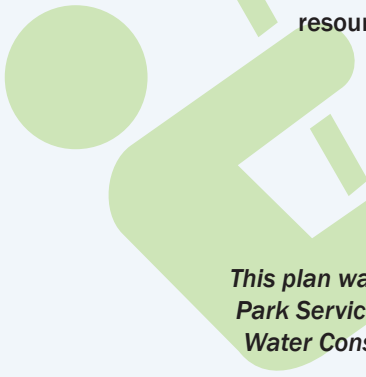


Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013

Sonny Perdue,
Governor
State of Georgia

Noel Holcomb,
Commissioner
Georgia
Department of
Natural Resources





For more information about SCORP 2008-2013, additional online resources or to download the entire SCORP document, visit the Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites website at: www.GeorgiaStateParks.org/SCORP

**You may also contact us:
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**Outdoor
Recreation
Strategies to
Enhance
Georgia's
Future for
Health and
Livability,
Economic
Vitality and
Resource
Conservation**

SCORP

**Georgia Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013**

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Table of Contents

- Acknowledgements 1
- Letter from Governor Sonny Perdue 3
- Letter from the LWCF State Liason Officer 5
- Executive Overview 7
- Introduction 15
- 1** **1. Supply, Usage Patterns and Expressed Demand 21**
 - A. Supply: Recreation Service Providers
 - B. Usage Patterns: Participation in Outdoor Recreation
 - C. Expressed Demand: The Public Speaks
- 2** **2. Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation 29**
 - A. Socio-Demographic Shifts
 - B. Increasing Urbanization and Regional Variations
 - C. Growing Appreciation for the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation
- 3** **3. Priorities 39**
 - A. Promote Health/Fitness and Livability of all Communities
 - B. Improve Economic Vitality
 - C. Conserve and Properly Use Natural Resources
- 4** **4. Strategic Actions 53**
 - A. Health and Livability
 - B. Economic Vitality
 - C. Conservation
 - D. Commitment
 - E. Education
 - F. Funding
- 5** **5. Implications for LWCF and Georgia Law 61**
 - A. Guiding Principles for LWCF
 - B. Wetlands Preservation
 - C. Fulfillment of Legal Mandate
- References 67
- Glossary and Photo Credits 69
- Appendices 70



Governor Sonny Perdue and grandchildren.

Governor Perdue's Goals for a New Georgia:



Healthy Georgia

Promoting healthy, active lifestyles and livable communities



Educated Georgia

Fulfilling our responsibilities for environmental protection and stewardship



Best Managed Georgia

Working with community partners to conserve and provide high-quality recreation opportunities for all



STATE OF GEORGIA

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

ATLANTA 30334-0900

Sonny Perdue
GOVERNOR

Dear Fellow Georgians,

I am pleased to support this bold effort to ensure abundant opportunities for outdoor recreation for our ever-growing population and for the millions who visit and enjoy Georgia's natural resources and parks. Georgia's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP 2008-2013) sets the benchmark for recreation policy throughout Georgia and guides the disbursement of federal dollars from the Land and Water Conservation Fund to both our local and state recreation agencies.

Georgia's popularity as a great place to live, work and play has resulted in unprecedented growth which is expected to continue for years to come. As we prosper, we must be ever-mindful to manage and protect our precious natural resources and ensure that all Georgians have adequate and easily-accessible areas to recreate and relax.

State and local governments are challenged by many critical issues. However, it is important to recognize the wide-ranging significance of our public recreation lands. The returns we enjoy from our investment in outdoor recreation are exceptional. Whether those benefits are realized through the attraction of new businesses and visitors, improved health and fitness, appreciation of home values, or enhanced cultural integration, our returns far outweigh our investments.

I commend the Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the SCORP Advisory Committee for crafting SCORP 2008-2013 with extensive public involvement and thorough data collection. It truly represents the desires and interests of all Georgians and responds to the trends affecting our future. It outlines how Georgia can provide outdoor recreation opportunities that promote fitness, reconnect our youth and families with nature, build the next generation of environmental stewards and enhance our state and local economy.

I urge each of you to answer the challenges set forth in this plan as we strive to be good stewards and improve the quality of life in Georgia. Come-on, let's Get Outdoors Georgia!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sonny Perdue".

Governor Sonny Perdue



“Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity; and that mountain parks and reservations are useful not only as fountains of timber and irrigating rivers, but as fountains of life.”¹

- John Muir, 1901

Dear Governor Sonny Perdue and Citizens of Georgia,

Even though naturalist John Muir spoke these words over one hundred years ago, they describe what we are experiencing in Georgia today. Georgians have strong connections with parks and natural resources, visiting them often to relax and participate in a variety of recreation activities. We also value our natural environment, parks and greenways because they help to sustain our quality of life. I am proud to report that these core values and fundamental principles have been substantiated through the update of Georgia's Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP).

SCORP has also brought to light many serious challenges facing the well being of our state, our local communities and our parks and natural resources. Georgia's prosperity has resulted in rapid growth and development that has consumed thousands of acres of our natural environment. As a result, the open fields, creeks and woods where we once played and relaxed are being consumed by development. Because we have not been able to preserve natural areas at rates that counterbalance this development, many of our citizens no longer have access to a natural environment or places to play and relax.

Other realizations of our growth include the rapid influx of millions of new Georgians, shifting demographic trends and lifestyle changes that affect how we recreate. Demand for recreational services exceeds supply. Because of urban growth and increased cultural diversity, some traditional forms of recreation and natural resource use are giving way to new interests and recreational demands. And, our increasingly sedentary lifestyles have created serious health concerns for both Georgia adults and children.

The ultimate declaration of SCORP 2008-2013 is that Georgia is at a critical crossroad. The preservation of our state's priceless natural resources and the provision of accessible and affordable public outdoor recreation opportunities are now, more than ever, important responsibilities that we – as a state and as a society – must forthrightly address. Our actions today will dictate the health and vitality of communities tomorrow. The time has come when we must recognize the major role that parks have in promoting public health, livable communities, economic vitality and conserving our irreplaceable natural resources.

While the window of opportunity still exists to turn these trends around, our federal, state and local governments must work with our citizens, non-profit support organizations, businesses and service delivery partners to efficiently and responsibly address the threats facing our natural environment. We must work together in new and innovative ways to maximize the opportunities to ensure a healthy and prosperous Georgia with abundant green spaces and recreation opportunities for future generations to enjoy.

By enacting the recommendations of Georgia SCORP 2008-2013, we can ensure that future Georgia residents and visitors are able to prosper from our natural resources and experience the sheer joy of the outdoors that we have grown to love so much.



Becky Kelley

LWCF State Liaison Officer

Director, Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division

Georgia Department of Natural Resources



EXECUTIVE

OVERVIEW

Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013

We can no longer take our natural environment and outdoor recreation for granted. The future of Georgia, the protection of our natural resources and the provision of quality outdoor recreation opportunities for future generations are in our hands—and we must act now.

FINDINGS REVEAL A SENSE OF URGENCY

- Rapid urbanization and loss of greenspace
- Significant demographic transitions
- Obesity epidemic and declining health
- Diminished conservation ethic
- Local communities need economic growth
- Growing support for outdoor recreation

Outdoor Recreation in Georgia and the SCORP Mandate:

This Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) presents a bold agenda for outdoor recreation from 2008 to 2013. It has been crafted for two primary reasons:

- 1) To fulfill Georgia law mandating the development of a state policy on outdoor recreation (Georgia Code 12-3-1); and
- 2) To keep Georgia eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grant dollars.

Developing the 2008–2013 SCORP has been a true collaboration with a wide variety of allied partners. We took a multi-faceted, data-driven approach in order to fully understand the status of recreation in Georgia. Data collection consisted of:

- A comprehensive resource inventory of all federal, state, county and city outdoor recreation areas and facilities;
- Trends and benchmarks analysis of the emerging trends impacting our state;
- Statistically valid public telephone surveys to quantify opinions on outdoor recreation resources; and
- Public meetings, stakeholder groups, online comments and various other public involvement avenues for people to express their opinions.

Trends impacting outdoor recreation in Georgia:

Trends:

- Rapid urbanization
- Loss of greenspace
- Need for diverse recreation opportunities
- Declining health
- Diminished conservation ethic
- Growing support for outdoor recreation

Compelling Trends

Rapid urbanization and demographic shifts are resulting in the loss of natural resources, a greater demand for outdoor recreation opportunities and the need for diverse recreational offerings.

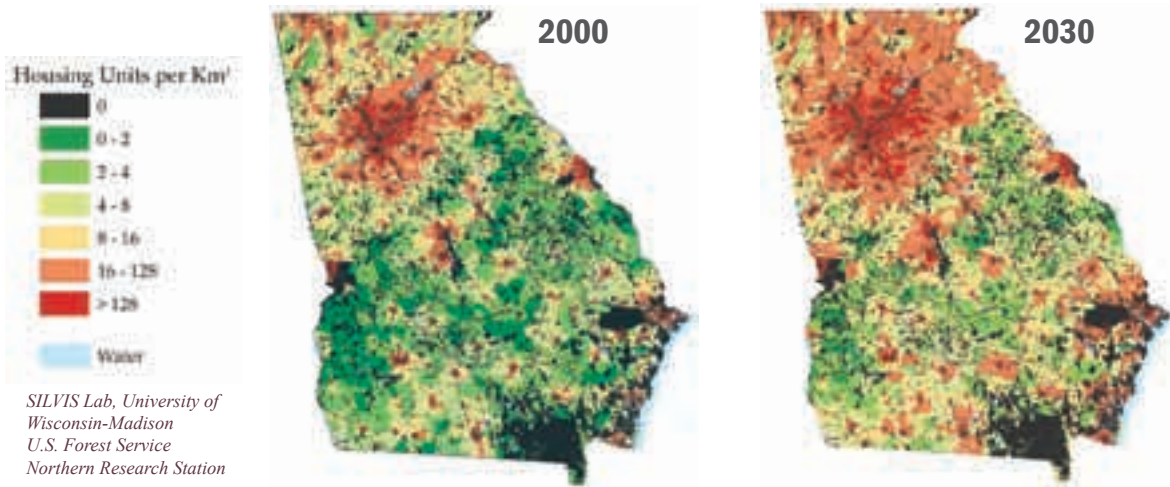
Georgia’s population is growing and will reach nearly 11 million by 2015. State-wide, over 106 acres are lost each day to development—55 acres per day in Atlanta alone. By 2015, only two years beyond the horizon of this SCORP, 12 counties are projected to experience growth in excess of 75%.

In addition, Georgia is becoming home to an increasingly diverse population in terms of ethnicity, age and income. Forty percent of Georgia’s new resi-

dents are foreign-born. By 2015, ten percent of Georgia’s population will be Hispanic and Georgia will have the largest proportion of African Americans when compared to the other top ten most populous states. As we grow more diverse, we are also seeing increases in both our elderly and youth populations. And, while our economy is relatively strong, 12.5% of our citizens continue to live in poverty.

It is clearly our generation’s responsibility to recognize the impact of this growth and diversity and to take decisive action to properly guide it to the best of our ability.

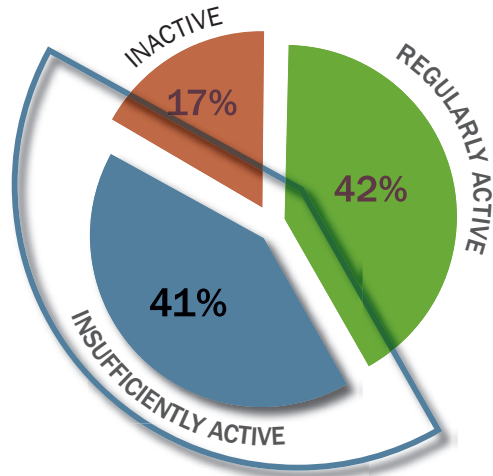
Georgia Housing Density Increase 2000-2030



Georgians’ increasingly sedentary lifestyles and disconnection from nature are resulting in alarming health declines and a diminished conservation ethic.

Georgia is facing an obesity epidemic. At a time when obesity rates among adults and children are skyrocketing, the important role of physical activity and access to outdoor recreation resources cannot be underestimated.

Our ‘target market’ is primarily the insufficiently active segment of Georgians who will choose to be more active if they can find fun and rewarding outdoor recreation activities. This segment represents just over 40% of Georgia’s population, and is over-represented by women, minorities, people aged 65 years and over, people with low income or low education and non-metro residents.



Our target market

Source: Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

As Georgia becomes more urbanized, sustaining a connection to our natural resources becomes extremely challenging. Parks and nature-based outdoor recreation opportunities provide critically important connections to our natural world and help to advance an effective conservation ethic.



Americans and Georgians are financially supporting outdoor recreation at record levels.

President Bush has called on all Americans to work together to prepare our national parks for another century of conservation, preservation and enjoyment. He has submitted a \$100 million appropriation request for our national park system in the 2008 budget and has issued a challenge to fund an additional \$100 million/year for the next ten years, if matched by private donations.

Georgians are demonstrating their support for city and county bond referendums for local park improvements in record numbers. In fact, 88% of Georgians support public investments in parks and outdoor recreation areas, according to the telephone survey conducted for SCORP.

Recent Funding Examples

National Park Service – 2008 Budget Request

- \$ 40.6 million – 3,000 new employees
- \$ 35.0 million – cyclic maintenance
- \$ 3.4 million – expand volunteer programs
- \$ 1.0 million – Junior Rangers/Web Rangers
- \$ 20.0 million – resource protection

Presidential Challenge – \$3 Billion
(\$100 million/year for 10 years if matched with private donations)

Texas State Parks & Wildlife (2007)

\$180 million
(includes \$36.5 million for their local park grant program)

Cobb County, Georgia (2006)

\$40 million
(park land acquisition)

Paulding County, Georgia (2006)

\$15 million
(collaboration with GA DNR to purchase 7,020-acre Paulding Forest Wildlife Management Area; total federal, state, local and foundation investment of \$45 million)

City of Atlanta, Georgia

\$3 million increase (2006) and \$2 million increase (2007)
(park operations and maintenance)

Priorities

It is imperative for local, state and federal governments to work collaboratively with private sector organizations to secure a future where Georgians live healthier lifestyles, the economic well being of communities is sustained and wildlife and natural resources are conserved. Priorities for SCORP 2008–2013 build on the science-based research and insights from both current and previous plans, addresses anticipated trends and takes Georgia into the coming decade with vision, focus and urgency.

**Georgia's
Outdoor
Recreation
Priorities for
2008–2013**



1 Promote Health/Fitness and Livability of All Communities

We must act now to make tangible contributions toward healthy living by reinforcing the connection between health, quality of life and outdoor recreation.

Key recommendations include:

- Improve access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities by establishing parks near where people live and work and by exploring ways to connect existing facilities for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles (bikes, in-line skates, horses, etc.).
- Attend to segments of the population that are under-served by existing facilities (e.g., seniors, young adults and African American populations).
- Work with statewide organizations such as the Department of Human Resources, the Georgia Recreation and Park Association and others to develop programs that promote health and livability and to incorporate those programs into state and local outdoor recreation.

2 Enhance Economic Vitality

We must act now to support and maintain Georgia's outdoor recreation resources so that we remain attractive to new business and industry, draw tourists across our borders and grow our tax base.

Key recommendations include:

- Document the economic benefits of outdoor recreation in Georgia and track the financial return from investing in outdoor recreation facilities.
- Facilitate collaborations between government agencies and the private sector to advance the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation.
- Market our natural and recreation resources to increase public participation and foster support, advance tourism and opportunities for economic development and encourage volunteerism.
- Rehabilitate, update and upgrade existing public outdoor recreation facilities to maximize marketability.

- Promote outdoor recreation events, programs and facilities that attract day travelers and overnight visitation by creating partnerships with businesses such as convention and visitor bureaus, recreation equipment vendors and guide services.

3 Conserve and Properly Use Natural Resources

We must act now to conserve our natural resources and wildlife so that we stay ahead of the state's rapid population growth, take advantage of the recent increase in support among Georgians for conservation and cultivate the next generation of environmental stewards.

Key recommendations include:

- Identify and prioritize key lands for acquisition, particularly in the fastest-growing areas of the state.
- Establish and provide resource data and tools by establishing a Technical Assistance Unit within the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division to aid local governments that are focusing on land conservation needs in accordance with SCORP 2008-2013, the Georgia Land Conservation Plan and the Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Expand the SCORP inventory of outdoor recreation resources and other GIS databases to identify lands suitable for conservation.
- Support land use planning that encourages conservation of natural resources and opportunities for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- Expand nature-based programming opportunities at the state and local level.



Three Critical Ingredients for Success

1 Commitment

We must act now to follow through with implementation of the SCORP recommendations. Collaboration among agencies with common missions will provide the synergy needed for all Georgians to have access to quality outdoor recreation resources that meet their needs.

Key recommendations include:

- Create the Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership (GORP) to shepherd implementation of the Strategic Actions from SCORP.
- Enhance DNR's efforts to provide statewide recreation research, planning and technical assistance services.
- Explore alternative funding sources, ways to improve service delivery and means to maximize the benefits that outdoor recreation has on local communities.
- Pursue creation of a multi-jurisdictional Georgia Scenic Trails System as outlined in Ga. Code 12-3-113 and 114.

2 Education

We must act now to share tools and resources to conserve recreation lands and provide high quality opportunities for all. By heightening the awareness of recreation's benefits for community health and livability, economic vitality and conservation of our natural resources, we will elevate the priority of outdoor recreation with policymakers, planners, practitioners, partners and the public.

Key recommendations include:

- Provide balanced interpretation, education and outdoor recreation programs to expand the knowledge and appreciation of Georgia's natural and recreational resources in a manner consistent with the conservation of the resource.
- Work with the Georgia Board of Regents to advance healthy lifestyles and natural resource conservation in Georgia schools.

3 Funding

We must act now to use funds efficiently at all levels of government, leverage with other private and non-profit investments and seek consistent funding to guarantee outdoor recreation for current and future generations.

Key recommendations include:

- Work with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget and state legislative leaders to maximize existing funds and develop new funding resources that support state and local recreation land acquisition, conservation, development, rehabilitation and maintenance projects.
- Create and sustain partnerships to minimize reliance on tax revenues to support the operation and maintenance of public parks and outdoor recreation areas.
- Advocate for the continuation of state and local funding assistance through the Land and Water Conservation Fund program and other federal programs that support outdoor recreation opportunities in Georgia.

Key criteria for recreation funding:



Implications for LWCF

Beginning in 2008, LWCF application criteria will directly correlate with the SCORP 2008–2013 strategic recommendations. Key criteria for LWCF disbursements will favor jurisdictions that:

- Have developed a thoughtful recreation plan;
- Demonstrate awareness of the outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation priorities in their communities;
- Show a direct relationship between proposed projects and their affect on health, fitness and livability, economic vitality and resource conservation;
- Create alternative approaches to funding and develop partnerships that leverage and supplement requested state and federal funds.

Alternatively, LWCF disbursements should also go to jurisdictions that demonstrate a need, but have little opportunity to invest in outdoor recreation due to their economic condition.



The challenges inherent in providing outdoor recreation opportunities for ALL Georgians are profound.

However, we can—and we will—successfully meet those challenges by leveraging the efforts and expertise of partners and by implementing the recommendations from SCORP 2008-2013.

Doing this will ensure that Georgia serves as a model for the nation in providing abundant outdoor recreation, high-quality service and strong resource protection.



SCORP INTRODUCTION

Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013

To protect and preserve outdoor recreation resources for our continued use and enjoyment, we must be vigilant. Georgia's state and local governments and all allied partners concerned about the future of our environment must commit to a comprehensive strategic plan to establish and protect natural areas and opportunities for outdoor recreation.

The SCORP 2008–2013 is that plan. It documents the urgency of the situation and suggests creative ways for all Georgians to work together for our public parks and greenspace. Georgia has reached a point where government—at all levels—needs to demonstrate leadership in conserving our natural spaces and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for our burgeoning population. Only through such committed leadership will we ultimately make outdoor recreation accessible for all our residents and visitors.



Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plans (SCORPs) have provided guiding frameworks for Georgia planners, service providers and policy makers since the mid-1960s. *What is different* about the 2008-2013 SCORP is the heightened sense of *urgency* that Georgians feel about the many issues facing our state:

Urgency about:

The need for economic growth in our local communities

The obesity epidemic and declining health

Significant demographic transitions

Diminished conservation ethic

Rapid urbanization and loss of greenspace

Growing support for outdoor recreation

Legal Mandate to Plan

Georgia law mandates the development of a state policy on outdoor recreation (GA Code 12-3-1). The Department of Natural Resources (DNR), as the responsible agency, must:

- Appraise recreation needs and disseminate recreation-related information.
- Assist local governments with recreation planning.
- Aid recreation professionals by providing programs for education, recruitment, placement and retention.
- Promote conferences and institutes within both the public and private sectors.
- Define and promote recreation standards.
- Report achievements and recommendations to the governor and general assembly.

Federal Funding for Outdoor Recreation

Federal funds for recreation are made available through the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). States are eligible for these funds upon approval of a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan or SCORP. In Georgia, the agency responsible for SCORP is DNR's Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division (PRHSD). The division uses LWCF funds to help state and local governments acquire, develop and rehabilitate recreation facilities and resources.

40 years

\$150 million invested

95% benefited

LWCF grants provide critically needed funds for recreation projects. In the last 40 years, Georgia has received more than \$75 million from the LWCF program, but that is only part of the story. More importantly, those grants have leveraged an additional \$75 million from local governments through matching funds (for a total of \$150 million). Nearly 95% of all counties have benefited from LWCF funding since 1965.

The LWCF requires that SCORP plans be updated every five years, something Georgia has been doing since the mid-1960s. This plan provides guidance for the 2008–2013 funding cycle, replacing the existing plan that expires in September 2007.

State Funding for Outdoor Recreation

DNR and local governments have benefited from funding for acquisition of greenspace and natural resources through RiverCare 2000, Preservation 2000 and most recently the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership (GLCP).

During the years 1978–1999, the State of Georgia provided financial assistance to local governments for recreational developments through the Recreation Assistance Fund totalling \$11,166,000.



However, unlike many states, Georgia has no consistent funding source that supports acquisition, development and rehabilitation of outdoor recreation areas.

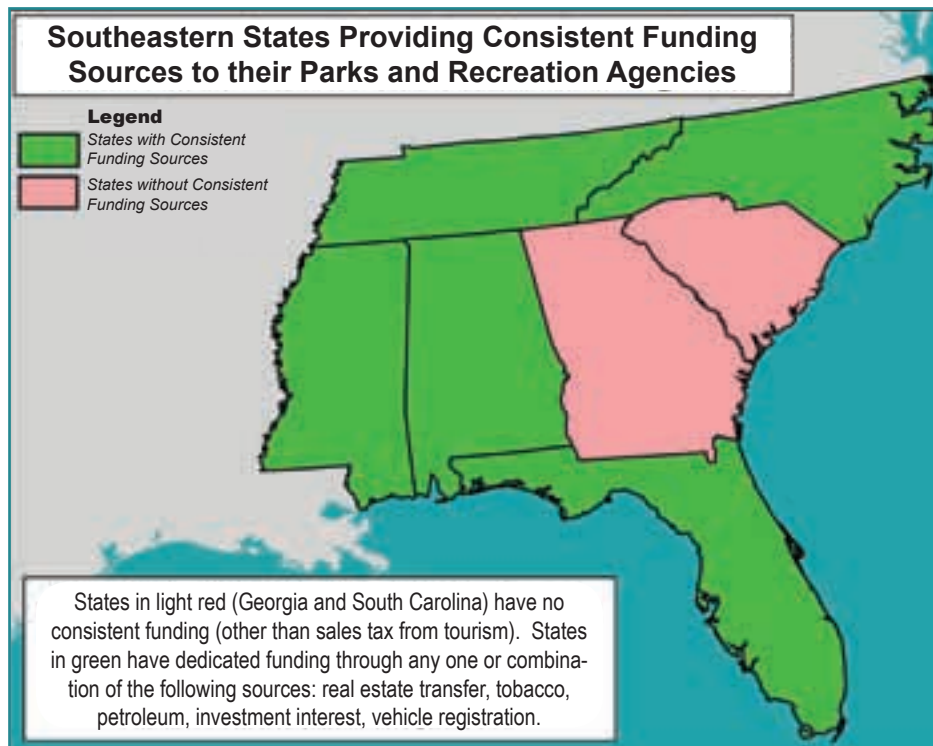


Figure 1. Southeastern States Providing Consistent Funding Sources to Their Parks and Recreation Agencies

Georgia is one of

14

states with
no consistent
source of funds
for parks and
recreation
agencies

Alaska	Missouri
Connecticut	New Mexico
Georgia	Oklahoma
Hawaii	Rhode Island
Kentucky	South Carolina
Louisiana	Vermont
Massachusetts	Virginia

Future Direction of Outdoor Recreation in Georgia

The strategic directions outlined in SCORP 2008–2013 build on science-based research as well as insights from allied planning efforts that provide a solid foundation for strategic action and a progressive vision.

Through new and innovative technology and the unprecedented collaboration among an array of organizations and individuals committed to quality outdoor recreation, this SCORP identifies:

- **Trends:** Examines social, demographic and recreation trends for Georgia supplemented with data from the National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (NSRE).
- **Benefits:** Identifies the benefits of outdoor recreation in the context of current economic, health, natural and social trends.
- **Inventory:** Contains a comprehensive electronic inventory of local, state and federal governments and other public-access outdoor recreation resources applying Geographic Information System (GIS) technology to map important factors—such as existing recreation areas and notable natural habitats. This inventory serves as the baseline to benchmark the successful accomplishments of this and future SCORPs.
- **Assessment of need:** Reflects a comprehensive assessment of recreation needs based on a survey of Georgians and supplementary qualitative information from town hall meetings, online questionnaires and focus groups.
- **Roles:** Identifies current roles and responsibilities for state and local, public, quasi-public and private outdoor recreation service providers and examines the changes in those roles as Georgia experiences urbanization and demographic shifts.
- **Strategies:** Proposes strategies and priorities for land acquisition, resource protection and conservation and recreation facility development and rehabilitation; and delineates options for implementation at a statewide, regional and local level.
- **Cohesive effort:** Incorporates and advances the current recommendations and strategic plans of many partners (e.g., the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership Program, Coastal Management Plan and Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan).

OUTLINE

for SCORP 2008-2013



CHAPTER

1

Supply, Usage Patterns and Expressed Demand

SCORP 2008-2013 begins with a snapshot of the current state of outdoor recreation in Georgia—defining supply, usage patterns and expressed demand.

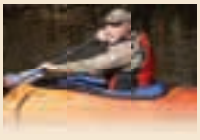


CHAPTER

2

Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation

With this foundation, the report examines recent demographic and socio-economic Trends affecting outdoor recreation and the formidable challenges they pose.



CHAPTER

3

Priorities

Three priorities emerge that command our attention:

- 1) promoting health/fitness and livability of all communities,
- 2) enhancing economic vitality, and
- 3) conserving and properly using natural resources.



CHAPTER

4

Strategic Actions

An ambitious agenda of strategic actions is then outlined to guide policy makers and recreation providers as they develop programs and policies from 2008 to 2013.



CHAPTER

5

Implications for Land and Water Conservation Fund and Georgia Law

Implications for LWCF and Georgia law are addressed.

Definitions

Active or Passive Recreation: What's the Difference?

Definitions vary by author and purpose. Often, resource agencies focus on the 'extractive' element of recreation (hunting vs. walking). Others focus on the 'facilities' element (ballfields vs. wildlife areas). Still others focus on the 'team-sport' element (baseball vs. birdwatching).

For our purposes:

ACTIVE RECREATION

Active recreation is based on physiology and is defined as activities that result in a healthy increase in aerobic rate.

PASSIVE RECREATION

In contrast, **passive recreation** includes those activities that do not result in increased aerobic rates. Passive recreation provides important benefits for mental health and stress reduction.

The terms active and passive recreation describe activities, not sites or facilities.

HIGH-INFRASTRUCTURE AND LOW-INFRASTRUCTURE SITES

To differentiate between facilities like ballfields and wildlife preserves, we use the terms "high-infrastructure" site and "low-infrastructure" site.

While it is commonly assumed that active recreation occurs at high-infrastructure sites (soccer on soccer fields) and that passive recreation occurs at low-infrastructure sites (birdwatching at a wildlife preserve), it is certainly possible to conduct both types of recreation at either type of site. For example, stargazing from a baseball field at night is an example of passive recreation conducted at a high-infrastructure site; whereas mountain-biking is active recreation conducted at a low-infrastructure site.

Important Things to Know

SCORP 2008–2013 Survey Regions

For the SCORP 2008–2013 random sample public survey, Georgians age 18 and over with residential telephone landlines were randomly sampled from each of four regions (figure 2). Town hall meetings were also conducted within each region to provide perspectives on regional variations.

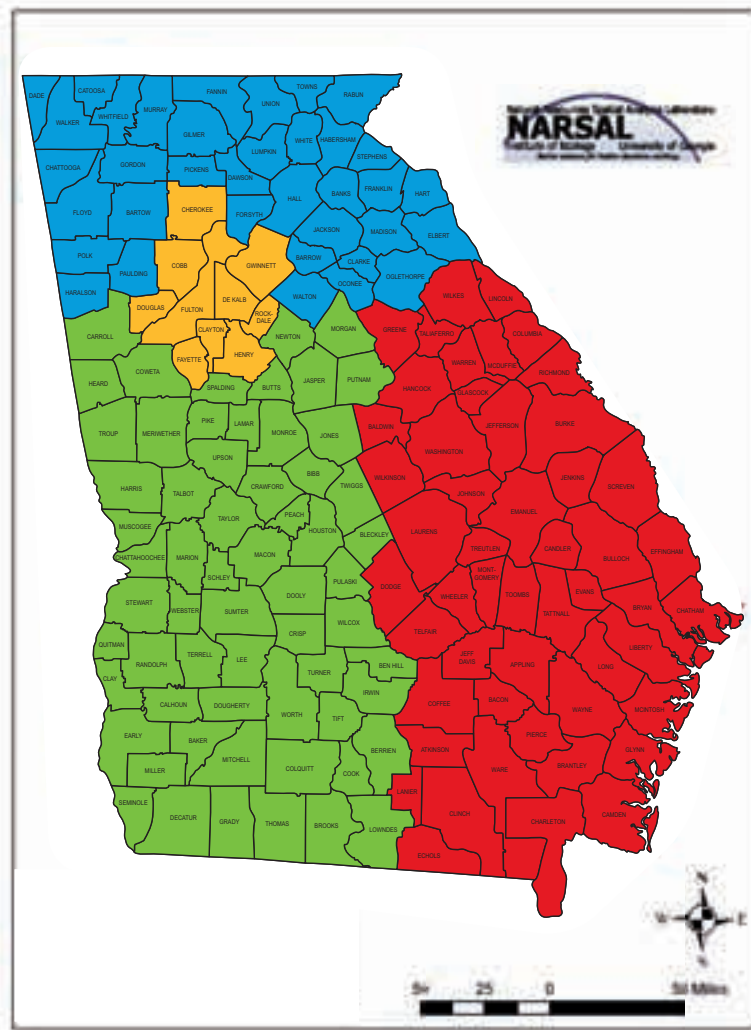
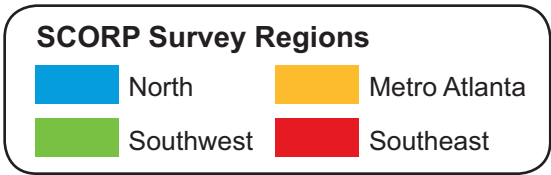


Figure 2. SCORP 2008–2013 Survey Regions





CHAPTER 1

Supply, Usage Patterns and Expressed Demand

To learn about the supply, usage patterns and demands for outdoor recreation in Georgia, a comprehensive inventory was developed of existing public outdoor recreation opportunities and extensive public input was elicited through town hall meetings, focus groups, an online questionnaire and a statewide survey divided by metro Atlanta, north Georgia, southwest Georgia and southeast Georgia (see Figure 2).

A. Supply: Recreation Service Providers

Georgia is fortunate to have a variety of recreation service providers—local, state and federal governments, as well as private and quasi-public organizations.

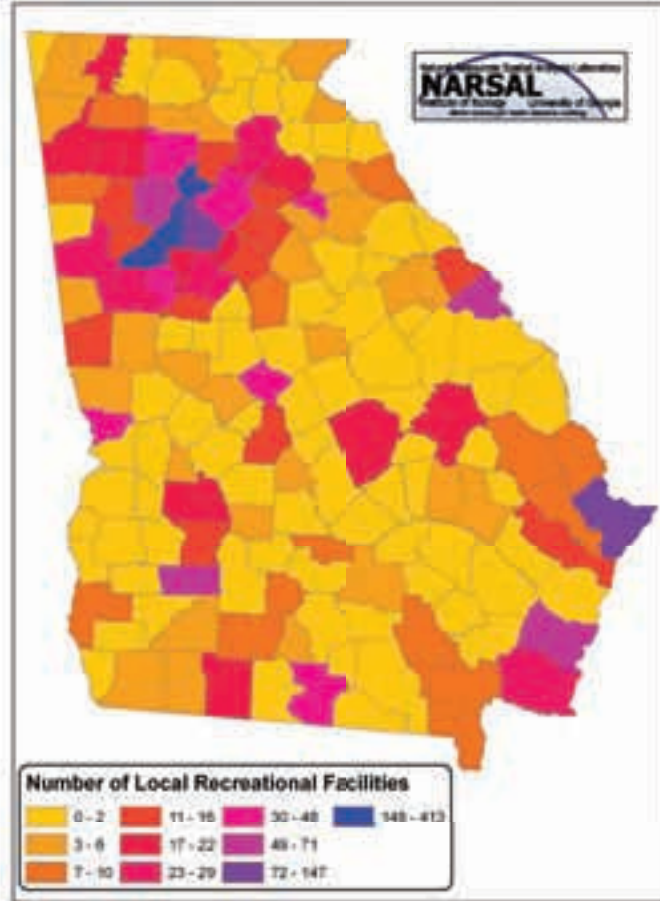


Figure 3. Number of Local Recreational Facilities in Each Georgia County

Local recreation providers are the park and recreation departments of both city and county governments. Historically, their focus has been on establishing high-infrastructure sites such as athletic fields, outdoor courts, playgrounds, playfields and comfort stations. During the past ten years, their focus has been expanded to include low-infrastructure sites—greenspace and watershed protection—for activities such as hiking and bird watching.

According to an intensive inventory conducted by the University of Georgia, there are 2,340 sites managed by local service providers totaling 63,103 acres. The majority of those sites (1,405) are high-infrastructure sites, like ballfields; the remaining 935 are low-infrastructure sites. Of these 935 sites, state greenspace programs helped locals protect 310 sites totaling 9,692 acres.

When you consider that the total area of the state is roughly 17.2 million acres, the percentage of the land owned or managed by local recreation service providers is about one third of one percent (0.36%). Consider also that Georgia's population of roughly nine million relies on a tiny number (1,405)

of high-infrastructure facilities for much of their day-to-day needs for active outdoor recreation needs. Statistically, that places a burden on parks to satisfy an average of 6,500 people per facility. Imagine having any one of these facilities with an attendance of 6,500 people per day—some sites would barely have enough room for attendees to stand shoulder-to-shoulder, let alone recreate.

State of Georgia recreation providers offer a blend of both low- and high-infrastructure sites—from natural areas to golf courses, with most sites being large-acreage tracts. Despite this balanced approach, the state has long placed a premium on establishing low-infrastructure sites designed to conserve natural resources and greenspace. This approach underscores the importance of SCORP to provide for high-infrastructure sites where active recreation most frequently occurs.

The principle providers at the state level are the DNR Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division (PRHSD) and the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD).

While PRHSD’s mission encompasses resource protection, its central focus is on the “people” element of parks. It manages 48 parks, 15 historic sites and other undeveloped properties totaling 83,344 acres. By contrast, the WRD focuses primarily on “resource-oriented recreation” like hunting and fishing. WRD has management responsibility for 89 Wildlife Management Areas, 10 Public Fishing Areas, and 17 Natural Areas totaling 1,087,704 acres. Of this total, the state owns, in fee simple, only about a third (321,520 acres). About a third (203,184 acres) are under annual short-term leases and the remaining third (563,000 acres) are protected via long-term lease agreements or memoranda of understanding.

Other state-level providers include the Georgia Forestry Commission and state authorities such as those at Stone Mountain and Jekyll Island.

State lands accommodate a host of outdoor recreation activities including hiking, camping, picnicking, hunting, fishing, boating, nature study, horse-back riding, golf, swimming and caving.

**Georgia DNR Responsibilities
Relative to Outdoor Recreation**

To provide policy and programs to assist and guide natural resource protection and use.

Examples related to recreation include:

- the creation of a recreation policy (Ga. Code 12-3-1),
- a Georgia Scenic Trails System (Ga. Code 12-3-113/114)
- a Georgia Youth Conservation Corps (Ga. Code 12-11-1).

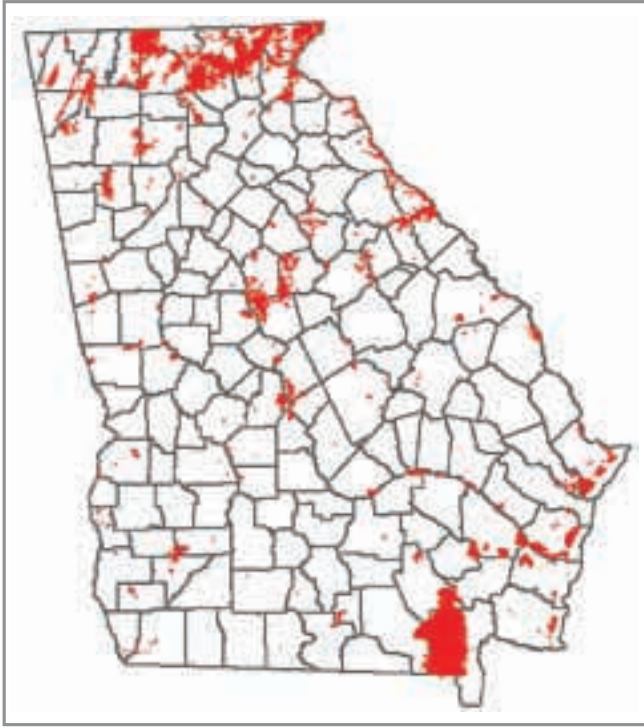


Figure 4. Parks and Wildlife Management Areas of the GA DNR and Select Federal Agencies (USFS, USFWS, USACE, NRCS)

Federal recreation providers offer primarily low-infrastructure sites with large-acreage tracts, supporting such recreation opportunities as hiking, camping, fishing, hunting, nature study, canoeing, boating, swimming, picnicking, biking and horseback riding. These types of activities are encouraged unless they are incompatible with the resource objectives. Some key federal providers are: the National Park Service (55,629 acres), the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (482,703 acres), the U.S. Forest Service (863,167 acres), the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The Corps owns and manages 524,740 acres of land and water, plus 4,724 miles of shoreline on Corps lakes. Additionally, over 784,000 acres of protected natural areas are contained within Georgia’s military bases.

In addition, several *conservation organizations* are actively involved in acquiring and protecting greenspace and land possessing unique natural resources. The activities of the Trust for Public Land, The Conservation Fund, The Nature Conservancy, land trusts, and similar organizations have gained prominence in recent years in assisting state and local communities in the preservation of natural areas and the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities. These efforts have been further extended by the significant support of *Georgia’s philanthropic community*. An example of total collaboration with all of these

agencies, state and local governments is the multi-million dollar acquisition program for lands along the Chattahoochee River.

Quasi-public recreation providers include a wide diversity of partners and services. A few examples:

- The Georgia Power Company has developed 57,084 acres of lakes, 1,350 miles of coastline and dozens of areas that offer fishing, boating, swimming, hiking, camping and picnicking.
- Charitable social organizations—like YMCA/YWCAs, Boys and Girls Clubs, Boy and Girl Scouts, and churches—provide outdoor recreation facilities for public use, some for a user-fee. Facilities typically consist of high-infrastructure sites (e.g., athletic fields for softball, baseball, and soccer programs). Churches in urban areas, particularly the large “mega” churches, are increasingly providing high-infrastructure facilities for their congregations and in many cases for the surrounding community.
- One significant example of a non-profit partner in the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities is the PATH Foundation. Working with the state and several local governments, PATH has constructed more than 100 miles of hiking, biking, walking trails with endowments for perpetual maintenance.

Private recreation providers include dozens of for-profit entities that support a wide range of services and facilities for outdoor recreation: golf courses, tennis facilities, swimming pools, campgrounds, hunting preserves, outdoor-outfitters, guide services, shuttle services, and others. While SCORP assesses and guides provision of public recreation opportunities, it is important that governmental entities consider the financial and geographic accessibility to private service providers when expressed public need overlaps with private-provision opportunities such as those listed above.

B. Usage Patterns: Participation in Outdoor Recreation

SCORP survey: questions and answers revealed

The SCORP survey was the first time that valuable information was collected from across the state to characterize the status of, and needs for, recreational sites and facilities. Through this survey, we found that Georgians take advantage of outdoor recreation resources frequently—and do so for a variety of reasons.



Top Five Reasons Georgians Participate in Outdoor Recreation

1. To have fun
2. To be with family and friends
3. To relax or reduce stress
4. To exercise and improve health
5. To experience or enjoy nature

Participation and use



Most Georgians (68%) participated in outdoor recreation activities somewhere in the state during the past twelve months. And nearly three of every four Georgians visited a public outdoor recreation area in that same period but did not necessarily participate in an activity. Participation varies by place of residence, level of education, age, ethnicity, income, family status and gender.

Participating in last 12 months	68%
Highest participation	Metro Atlanta
Lowest participation	Southeast Georgia Region

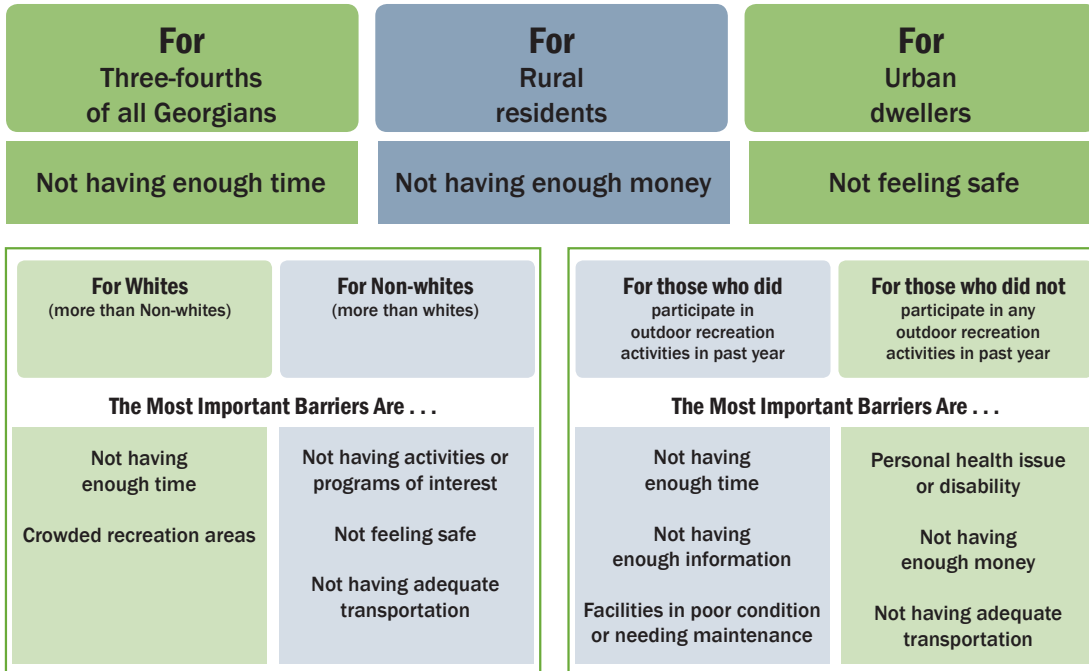
Participation by . . .	More Likely	Less Likely
. . . Education	Highly educated	Less educated
. . . Age	Under 55 Middle-aged	Over 55 Young adults, seniors
. . . Ethnicity	Whites, Hispanics	African Americans
. . . Income	Higher income	Lower income
. . . Family status	With children	Without children
. . . Gender	Females	Males
. . . Urban status	Urban populations	Rural populations

Visiting more than once a month	41%
--	------------

Nearly half (41%) of Georgians who visited a public outdoor recreation area in the past 12 months did so at least a few times a month. The survey asked about participation and the frequency of participation. Statistics on frequency followed the same patterns shown above, with two exceptions: non-whites visit public recreation sites more frequently than whites; and African Americans who visited recreation sites did so more frequently than any other ethnic group. In short, while some demographic groups may have relatively low levels of participation, members of those groups who participated did so more frequently than anyone else.

Barriers to participation

The Most Important Barriers Are . . .



Significant issues facing outdoor recreation

Georgians feel that *limited funding* is the most significant statewide issue facing outdoor recreation, followed by a *lack of information*. Those living in metro Atlanta are also concerned about safety.

Support for funding

Georgians support both public funding and additional public funding (special purpose local option sales taxes, user fees, etc.) of outdoor recreation by large margins.

All Georgians
88% support public funding sources

Of the 88%, 74% support additional public funding

88% of all Georgians support public funding sources. Of the 88%, 74% support additional public funding. In addition:

- Educated Georgians were more likely to support public funding.
- The Metro Atlanta region expressed the highest support for additional funding.
- The Southeast region expressed the lowest support for additional funding.

The findings of this survey provide recreation planners and policy-makers with valuable data on areas of need. However, the survey does not provide the level of detail needed to answer specific questions like: Which pieces of land should we protect? What types of outdoor recreation facilities should we build? What might the costs be?

Acquiring detailed information to answer such specific questions will require a more intensive focus on local service areas, needs and opportunities. This is a task being delegated to the Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership or simply, GORP. GORP will be a DNR-initiated partnership of professionals and stakeholders charged with implementing the vision for SCORP 2008–2013 (see Chapter IV).

Expressed Demand: The Public Speaks

Data collection and survey results

The PRHSD conducted seven town hall meetings across the state to give Georgians an opportunity to speak directly to state officials about the importance of outdoor recreation. The selected meeting sites—Atlanta, Brunswick, Camilla, Columbus, Milledgeville, Rome and Tallulah Falls—were within an hour’s drive of most Georgians.



In addition, feedback was solicited from six focus groups of Georgians who have particular expertise or experience with outdoor recreation. The six focus groups were:

- 1) African Americans
- 2) High school age students
- 3) Elementary school age students
- 4) Recreation professionals with the Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA)
- 5) Managers of large public land tracts
- 6) SCORP Advisory Committee

Georgians also had the opportunity to provide input through online comments at the official SCORP website, <http://gastateparks.org>, and at multiple public presentations across the state to a variety of interest groups.

Three questions were posed to participants of town hall meetings and focus groups:

- 1) Why is outdoor recreation important to you and your family?
- 2) What should be done to improve outdoor recreation in your area?
- 3) What obstacles will keep improvements from being made?

For the elementary school student focus group, the questions posed were similar, but more straightforward and direct:

- 1) What do you like to do outside?
- 2) What do you do at parks?
- 3) What do you want that you don’t have?

Appendix B conveys the most common responses heard from all of these groups except the elementary school students. Additional comments worth noting follow.

Focus group perspectives

African Americans

- Outreach and marketing specific to the African American population should be expanded using familiar faces, traditions and institutions. This approach can also be applied to the needs of other ethnic and cultural groups in our state.
- Improve the number, variety and diversity of activities available.

Elementary School Students

Their favorite activities outdoors and in parks are swimming, bike riding and team sports such as soccer, kickball, basketball and baseball. And they wanted more:

- Parks closer to their homes
- Safe places for riding bikes, not the street
- Places for individual activities such as skateboarding, playing on playgrounds or playscapes and jumping rope.

GRPA Professionals

- This SCORP must be compelling and lead to action.
- Outdoor education should be integrated into our school systems.
- DNR must assume a leadership role, particularly in facilitating collaborations.
- Work with Georgia Public Broadcasting to “get the word out” about the benefits, values and opportunities of outdoor recreation.

SCORP Advisory Committee

- We need to study efforts of other states to learn from their successes and challenges.
- We need to conduct in-depth research on the benefits of outdoor recreation in Georgia, specifically the economic, health and environmental benefits.

Online Respondents

Georgia needs to:

- Increase use of volunteers and advocacy
- Increase opportunities and activities for beginners and toddlers
- Limit commercialization and development on public lands
- Distribute financial burden fairly, e.g., hunter and anglers pay for WMAs through fees but hikers and campers that use the same areas don't pay fees
- Increase public land available for hunting, particularly for waterfowl.



Through this extensive data gathering effort, we understand better which outdoor recreation opportunities are available, how Georgians use them and what improvements they would like to see. Planning for the coming decade requires that we also project into the future and take into account anticipated trends that may impact supply, use and demand for outdoor recreation. Such an exploration is presented in Chapter 2.



CHAPTER 2

TRENDS AFFECTING OUTDOOR RECREATION

To truly plan for 2008–2013, we must do more than assess the current state of outdoor recreation and must consider the significant trends likely to impact the future. Conducting a trends analysis from our survey and inventory work was a critical component of defining priorities and strategic directions.

Major Trends Impacting Outdoor Recreation in Georgia

- A) Socio-demographic shifts*
- B) Increasing urbanization and regional variations in perspectives and needs*
- C) Growing appreciation for the benefits of outdoor recreation*

A. Socio-Demographic Shifts

Cultural and ethnic diversity

From 1920 until 1970, Georgia’s residents were primarily Caucasian and African American. In recent years, however, the largest growth has occurred in the Hispanic American population. In fact, the Hispanic population is growing faster in the south than anywhere else in the nation—and is expected to account for almost ten percent of the state’s population by 2015.²



Georgia is home to an increasingly diverse population in terms of culture, ethnicity, income and age.

Although the Hispanic population may be growing the fastest, African Americans still comprise our largest minority group. By 2015 Georgia’s population will have the largest

proportion of African Americans when compared to the other top ten most-populous states.²

Migration currently accounts for more than half of Georgia’s annual population growth with 40% of those migrants being foreign nationals.²

Income

Georgians’ incomes have been increasing over the past decade.³ However, poverty continues to be a persistent problem, with an estimated 12.5% of our residents living below the poverty level.³ Although poverty has declined in north Georgia, rates of 15-20% still dominate the southwest corner and eastern central portion of the state.⁴

Household income and poverty rates vary widely across the state. In 2005, the median household income statewide was \$45,926, including the Atlanta metropolitan region and the other metropolitan areas near Albany, Augusta, Brunswick, Columbus, Macon and Savannah. Only 35 counties of our 159 counties had median household incomes in excess of \$40,000. Our poorest counties, with household incomes less than \$30,000, are primarily located in southwestern and eastern Georgia.

Age diversity

Georgians are living longer and retirees are flocking here. As of the last U.S. Census, about 10% of Georgia’s population was 65 years old or older. By 2015, these seniors will comprise 13.6% of our state’s population. In some counties, this percentage will be even higher: 20% in 35 counties and 25% in another six counties. The highest concentrations of older adults will live in the north Georgia mountains, in southwestern counties along the state line with Alabama and in several central counties.³



At the other end of the spectrum, the census estimated that 26% of Georgia’s population is 18 years old or younger, and by 2015, 34% of Georgians will be under age 20.³

Socio-Demographic Shifts (cont.)

What these trends mean

Shifts in ethnicity and culture will result in changes in the recreation preferences of participants in terms of types of activities, frequency, location, etc. Equally critical is an understanding of the barriers or constraints to recreation participation, such as discomfort due to the perception of discrimination or possible language barriers.⁵

Also, as a result of income disparities, the ability to pay for outdoor recreation will vary considerably. All Georgians deserve to have access to recreation activities that best suit their needs and their pocketbooks. This begs the question, what is the role of government in ensuring recreational opportunities for “all” when “all” cannot afford to recreate?

Outdoor recreation opportunities must also accommodate a growing active senior population as well as an expanding youth population.

B. Increasing Urbanization and Regional Variations



Georgia’s population is growing, with most of that growth occurring in our metropolitan areas—particularly in the urban ‘fringes.’ Urbanization has reduced the amount of land available for outdoor recreation in the same areas where it is needed most—and the remaining available land is rapidly increasing in cost.

**Projected
Fastest Growing
Counties in Georgia
from
2000-2015**
(in order of anticipated growth)

- | | |
|----------|----------|
| Forsyth | Pickens |
| Henry | Butts |
| Newton | Dawson |
| Paulding | Barrow |
| Cherokee | Walton |
| Lee | Gwinnett |

Currently, Georgia is the ninth most populous state with a growth rate expected to be nearly twice that of the nation.⁶ If current trends continue, our population will be nearly 11 million by 2015 and 14.4 million by 2030.⁷

Between 2000 and 2015, twelve Georgia counties will experience significant growth in population by more than 75%—and another 36 counties will grow by more than 34%.⁷ Four counties—Forsyth, Henry, Newton, and Paulding—are expected to see increases of more than 100%.⁷ All of the fastest growing counties are in or adjacent to metropolitan Atlanta, with the exception of Pickens and Dawson Counties in north Georgia and Lee County in the southwest region.

In contrast, 23 counties are expected to lose population from 2000 to 2015.⁷ Eight of these counties—Calhoun, Liberty, Quitman, Randolph, Stewart, Taliaferro, Warren, and Webster—are projected to lose more than 10% of their residents.⁷

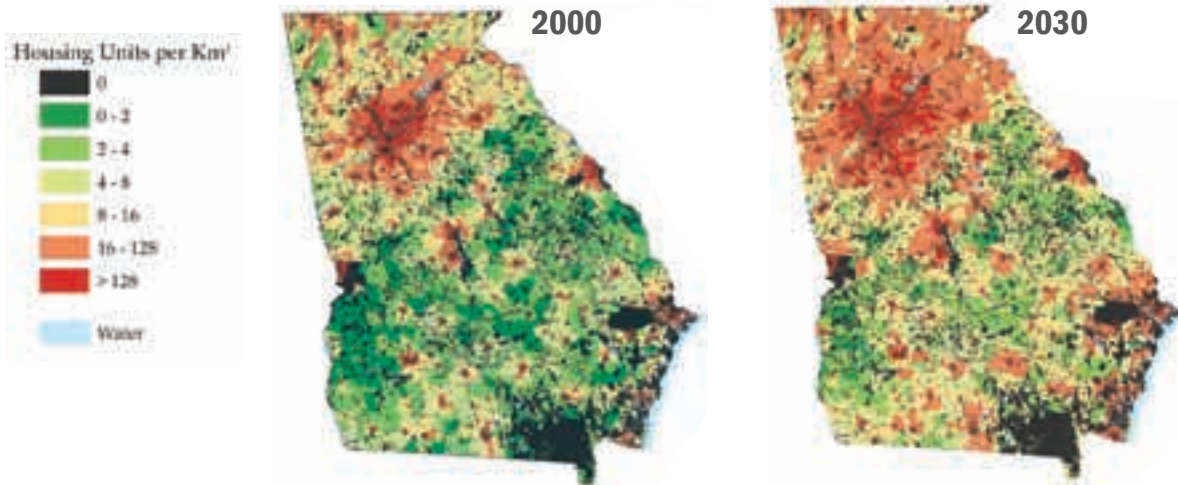


Figure 5. Georgia Housing Density Increase 2000-2030. SILVIS Lab, University of Wisconsin-Madison, U.S. Forest Service Northern Research Station

Where we live: Mostly urban

Almost 75% of Georgia’s current population of nine million is concentrated in metropolitan areas.⁷ It is in those same metropolitan areas that growth rates are expected to be the highest.

By contrast, about 62% of our counties (100 of 159) have populations less than 35,000.⁷ One way to “visualize” the disparity between urban and rural counties is to consider that Turner Field in Atlanta has seating capacity for 50,000 spectators. An entire county’s population could attend a ballgame and the stadium would still be half empty. This disparity between rural and metro Georgia creates significant challenges for outdoor recreation service providers.

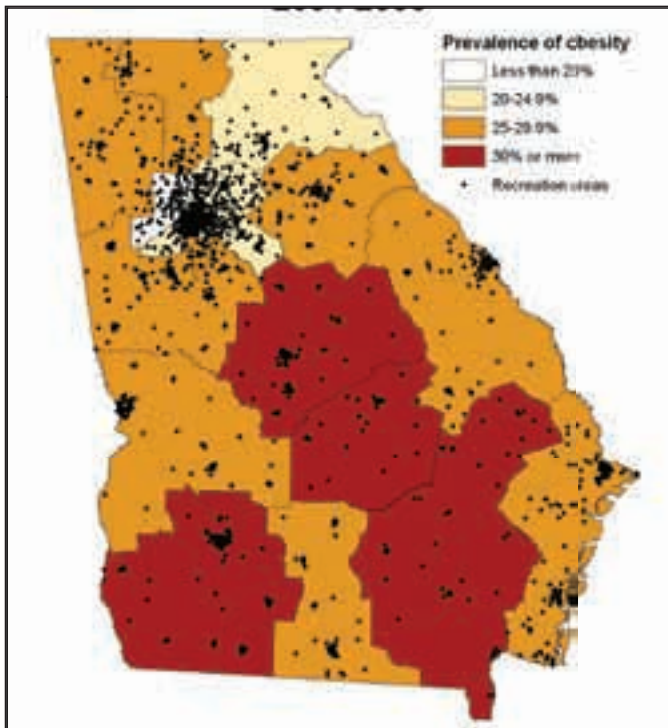


Figure 6. Prevalence of Obese Adults by Health District (2000-2005 data) and Distribution of Local Parks and Recreation Areas

Regional variations

- **Economic well-being**

Regional variations can be anticipated in household income and poverty rates. If an imaginary line were drawn across the state, east to west through Macon, all of the counties south of this line—except Bryan, Camden, Effingham and Lee Counties—would have median household incomes less than \$40,000. And a majority of these southern counties have household incomes lower than \$30,000.

- **Public health**

The prevalence of obesity and other chronic diseases such as diabetes, arthritis, and high blood pressure vary throughout the state. Counties with the highest prevalence of obesity and other chronic diseases are in the southern regions, while the lowest prevalence is in metro Atlanta.⁸ Residents of eastern and southern Georgia, in the traditional agricultural areas,

have the highest rates of death by heart attack and stroke in the state.⁹ At the same time, the distribution of high-infrastructure sites for active recreation is most scarce in these same areas.

It is important to note that while park lands play an important role in combating obesity through physical activity, the epidemic we are experiencing today is the result of several complex factors that are not necessarily related to the provision of outdoor recreation opportunities, including social and cultural values, traditional cuisines of the area and many other factors.

- ***Funding recreation***

Residents in metro Atlanta expressed the highest support for additional funding, while those in the southeast were the least supportive. Many metropolitan counties have the population and tax base to support public referenda specifically for the purpose of acquiring natural areas and park land and building recreational facilities (e.g., Paulding, Cobb, Gwinnett and DeKalb). However, other counties—due to their small size or population base—are limited in their ability to support bond sales or special purpose local option sales tax alternatives.

- ***Participation in outdoor recreation***

Residents of metro Atlanta and north Georgia claimed the highest rates of participation (roughly 73% and 72%, respectively). Residents of the southwest and southeast were ten percentage points lower (roughly 62% and 64%, respectively).

- ***Access to public transportation***

While public transportation systems do not usually make ‘stops’ at recreation areas, they often provide incidental access to adjacent recreation sites. Because urban areas typically have extensive transportation systems, access by public transportation is a more likely choice for urban residents than it is for rural residents.

- ***Preferences in recreation***

Residents of metro Atlanta and north Georgia are more likely to engage in a wider diversity of activities than are residents of the southeast and southwest. It is likely that rural communities have greater access to more unstructured forms of outdoor recreation because of their access to large expanses of countryside and undeveloped land.



Urban vs. Rural: What To Do?

With the limited funds available, should service providers focus their efforts on the metro areas or rural areas? The easy answer is that funds should be made available to both, but defining (and justifying) the proportion that each area should get becomes complicated very quickly.

Table 1 illustrates the dilemma.

Appropriating Funds for . . .

	Urban Areas	Rural Areas
PROS . . .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Highest visitation rates 2. Highest support for public and alternative funding 3. Public transportation to facilities more frequently available 4. Establishment and durability of “Friends” groups and access to volunteers is probably high 5. Diverse populations are served 6. Funds are applied to the fastest-growing areas 7. High access to (and benefit from) the abundance and diversity of experts in the local community 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Very few recreation facilities in the areas, some in poor condition 2. Little capacity to provide for themselves 3. More facilities would address the obesity epidemic in rural Georgia 4. The sites that do exist likely bring in more tourist dollars than do smaller urban parks 5. Acquisition dollars buy much more land 6. Under-served groups are better served
CONS . . .	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Range of certain activities limited 2. Acquisition dollars don’t go very far 3. Already have the highest concentration of recreation sites and facilities 4. Many sites serve the local population and don’t necessarily draw tourist-dollars 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Fewer people served 2. Diversity of participants may be comparatively lower 3. Service providers may need continual support to properly manage areas 4. Establishing durable “Friends” groups may be more difficult 5. Fewer people in the community have expertise from which to draw

Table 1. Pros and Cons of Appropriating Funds for Urban vs. Rural Areas

Increasing Urbanization and Regional Variations (cont.)

What these trends mean

Georgia's population will reach nearly 11 million by 2015—only two years after this SCORP expires. Increased urbanization will continue to take a tremendous toll on our physical environment: the loss of natural and recreation resources; compromised air and water quality; and disappearance of greenspace and natural areas due to development.

The demand for outdoor recreation will soon out-pace the supply of land and available recreation resources as well as the ability of recreation providers, including local and state government, to afford to meet this need.

Unless we act now, the development demands of increasing urbanization will outweigh the opportunities to conserve and increase greenspace and outdoor recreation resources. As a result, land for parks and greenspace will not be protected and many current and future Georgians may never see a forest, paddle in a stream, marvel at our abundant wildlife or have the chance to play ball.

No “one size fits all” solution will suit Georgia. We must anticipate regional variations and adjust the state's outdoor recreation resources to meet the needs of all our residents.

C. Growing Appreciation for the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation

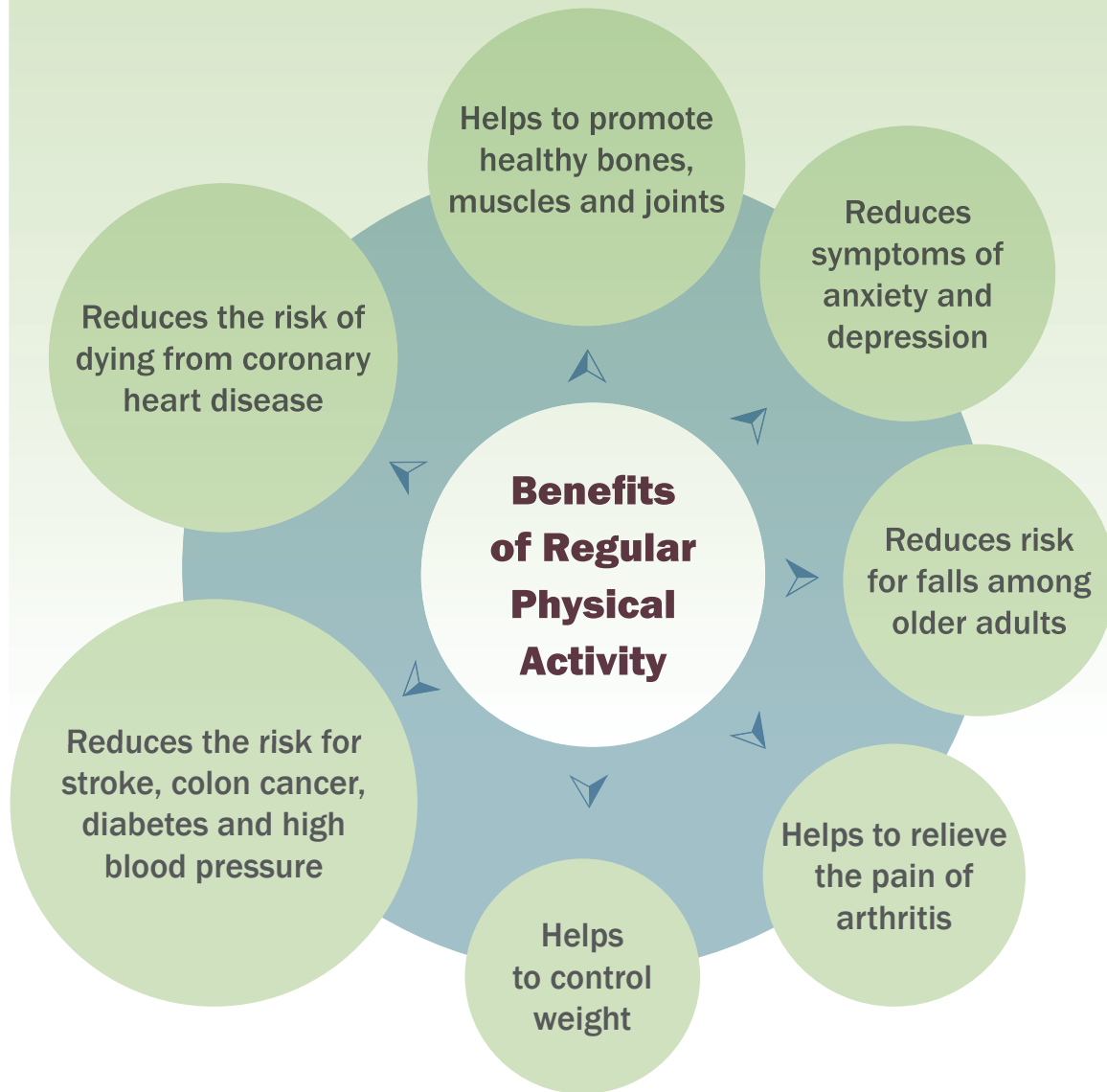


Public health, economic vitality and community livability are all strongly and positively affected by the presence of lands providing for recreation and resource protection.

Public health

The physical activity associated with many outdoor recreation activities has powerful benefits for our overall physical and mental health.¹⁰

Trees and greenspace also help to clean the air, reducing respiratory diseases such as asthma, particularly in children and the elderly.^{11,12} Access to nature has also been proven to have significant positive impacts on mental health, and can even lessen the symptoms of attention deficit disorder in children.¹²



The Georgia Department of Human Resources Division of Public Health (DHR) recently issued **Georgia's Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan**, outlining strategies to prevent and control obesity and other chronic diseases through increased physical activity.¹³ This SCORP intends to further the objectives of that plan.

Economic vitality and livable communities

It can be demonstrated that local economies are stimulated by, and new business attracted to, areas where conservation and recreation have been promoted.

- *Tourism*

In 2005, Georgia hosted 62.4 million tourists, who spent an estimated \$16.6 billion. Traveling for leisure was the primary purpose for the vast majority (74%) of tourists. State parks draw more than 10 million visitors annually—contributing significantly to that \$16.6 billion.¹⁴ Anglers alone spend more than \$859 million each year with an estimated \$1.5 billion in economic impact.¹⁵ The best news is that tourism is growing! In a single year, visitation grew by 9%.

- *Appreciation of home values*

In addition, recreation opportunities of all types have been shown to increase the value of adjoining and surrounding properties. For example, after Centennial Olympic Park in Atlanta was built, the average price of adjacent condominiums increased from \$115 to \$250 per square foot.¹⁶

- *Attracting business*

Outdoor recreation also tends to attract business and industry. One dollar spent on recreation yields multiple dollars to the local economy. And, the more physically active those workers are in their free time, the more productive they are on the job (with lower rates of absenteeism and fewer incidences of job-related accidents).¹⁷

- *Reducing costs of health care and transportation*

Assuring adequate distribution of greenspaces, both large and small, provides recreation opportunities for a health conscious society—particularly in light of the recent increase in obesity and the need for expanded physical activity opportunities. Greenspace also helps build communities by lessening our reliance on automobiles and connecting schools, libraries, shopping centers and work sites.

- *Land conservation efforts*

The growing need for land and wildlife habitat conservation prompted Governor Perdue to mandate the development of Georgia's first comprehensive land conservation plan. One of the plan's eight key goals was to "Promote creation of land conservation partnerships among the state, private sector, local governments and other public institutions." DNR plans to work toward this goal through GORP and other partnerships and collaborations.

Wildlife and greenspace are vital to the livability of our communities. Increasing the density of greenspace supports successful animal migration and continued survival of wildlife populations, while the loss of such habitats puts animals in ever-closer proximity to humans. Preserving a significant portion of every watershed in a near-natural condition also protects the quality and supply of our water sources.



Growing Appreciation for the Benefits of Outdoor Recreation *(cont.)*

What these trends mean

Increasing participation and access to outdoor recreation resources plays a significant role in keeping Georgians healthy. Close collaboration and partnership with DHR is vital to support physical activity in parks and natural areas throughout the state.

Georgia and its communities can also reap significant economic benefits from outdoor recreation resources in terms of tourism, enhanced property values and attracting new business and industry. It is important for all jurisdictions to collaborate and partner with their chambers of commerce, economic development agencies and other interested organizations to advance the provision of outdoor recreation amenities.

We must protect and maintain our valuable store of wildlife and greenspace to assure clean air, clean water, wildlife habitats, diverse plant and animal populations and the outdoor recreation opportunities that they inspire. Close collaboration and partnership with the Georgia Land Conservation Plan is vital.





CHAPTER 3

PRIORITIES

The urgency triggered by current and anticipated trends compels outdoor recreation providers to secure a future where Georgians live healthier lifestyles, the economic well being of communities is sustained, and wildlife and natural resources are conserved.

The strategic directions and priorities of this plan focus on the critical role of outdoor recreation in shaping the Georgia yet to come.

Georgia's Priorities for 2008–2013

- A) Promote health through fitness and livable communities*
- B) Enhance economic vitality*
- C) Conserve and properly use natural resources*

To make the case for these strategic priorities, we posed several pertinent questions: Why pursue this direction? What challenges lie ahead? Why must Georgia act now?

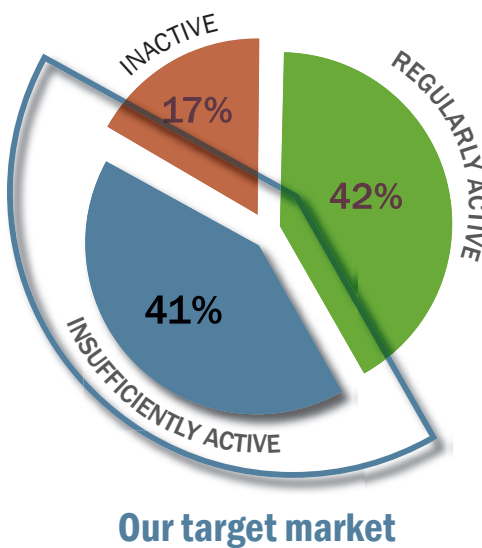
A. Promote Health Through Fitness and Livable Communities

Why pursue this direction?

The prevalence of obese adults in Georgia has tripled during the last two decades; we currently have the 15th highest prevalence of obese adults in the United States. In 2005, 1.5 million adult Georgians were obese.⁸

Childhood obesity is a problem as well. In 2005, 24% of our third grade students,¹⁸ 16% of middle school students, and 12% of high school students¹⁹ were obese. Obese children and adults are at increased risk for chronic conditions such as high blood pressure, Type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease. The cost of obesity in Georgia, including health care costs and lost productivity, is \$2.1 billion a year.²⁰ Costs will only continue to rise as rates of obesity increase in our population.

Fortunately, the adverse health consequences of obesity and its associated costs to health care can be prevented by balancing energy intake (nutrition) and energy expenditure (physical activity). In addition to weight control, research consistently demonstrates that regular physical activity has a broad range of physical and mental health benefits to the population.¹⁰ Despite these benefits, less than half of Georgia adults (42%) and only one-third of Georgia high school students (36%) are regularly active.^{8,19} In addition, nearly half of Georgia middle school (49%) and high school students (42%) spend excessive amounts of time watching television instead of getting exercise outdoors.¹⁹



Source: Georgia Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System

Figure 7. Physical Activity Levels Among Adults in Georgia, 2005

The most promising approach to reverse the obesity epidemic is to incorporate healthy eating and physical activity into people’s daily routines. While individuals must ultimately make the commitment to adopt a healthy lifestyle, characteristics of the physical and social environment play an important role in promoting physical activity. A Georgia survey found that neighborhood sidewalks and streets, public parks, school running tracks, fitness centers, shopping centers, and walking trails are the most common places for adults to walk.²¹ Those who have access to such places are more likely to be physically active than those who do not. Given that 41% of adults are insufficiently active (Figure 7), recreation facilities in the community are an opportune setting to help more people become regularly active. The benefits of designing communities with a variety of safe walking places go beyond physical activity and obesity; walkable communities are also thought to increase social interactions between residents and improve air quality.^{22,23}

One priority of this SCORP plan has been to identify the inactive and insufficiently active segments of Georgia’s population—those who are the least invested in outdoor recreational activities. This segment comprises just over 40% of Georgia’s population, and is over represented by women, minorities, people aged 65 years and over, people with low income or low education and

non-metro residents. This target audience generally prefers low-intensity, low-commitment recreational activities such as walking for pleasure, family gatherings, gardening, driving for pleasure and picnicking. Although many suitable recreational opportunities may already be offered for this target audience, more specific strategies are needed to reach them in a meaningful and engaging manner.

What challenges lie ahead?

Challenges to Promoting Outdoor Recreation

Lack of time or money

Lack of transportation

Personal limitations

Poor site conditions

Changing demographics

- *Lack of time*

In the SCORP survey, three-fourths of Georgians feel “not having enough time” is the single most important barrier to their participation in outdoor recreation. Between work, children’s activities, running a household and other commitments, we are all very busy. Locating parks and other recreation resources close to our homes and jobs is critical.

- *Cost*

40% of residents statewide report that “not having enough money” was a barrier to their participation in outdoor recreation activities. In the southwestern and southeastern regions, which include the traditional agricultural areas of the state, almost half of the respondents identify lack of money as an obstacle. The NSRE also found low income to be a key inhibitor of participation.

- *Lack of transportation*

More than half of Georgians report that public transportation is not available to the areas they wish to visit. This is particularly a problem in rural areas, which have the highest rates of obesity and death from heart disease and stroke and, in many cases, have the lowest household incomes and highest rates of poverty.

- *Personal limitations*

Non-users of outdoor recreation resources are also more likely to cite a “personal health issue, disability or other physical limitation” as a barrier to their participation in outdoor recreation. Improving the health of this group is important and requires full accessibility. In addition, some Georgians, particularly in urban areas, are afraid to visit certain recreation areas. Although this may be more perception than reality, it should be addressed if it is inhibiting use of existing resources and facilities.

- *Poor conditions*

Many recreation areas are too crowded and over-used, in poor condition or not well maintained. This challenge was identified in both the SCORP survey and the NSRE as well as during the town hall meetings, online survey and focus groups. During the GRPA focus group, lack of money at the local level to properly operate, maintain and rehabilitate outdoor recreation facilities was a top concern. Many counties and towns are finding ways to acquire and develop facilities by using special purpose local option sales taxes (SPLOST), bonds and impact fees, but these funds cannot be used for maintenance and operations.

- **Changing demographics**
As we grow more ethnically diverse, culture and language differences can make use of facilities difficult for those who do not understand English or do not come from a tradition of outdoor recreation. The increase in the proportion of the population under age 20 and those over 65 will also present new challenges. Many youth today are bored without technology, so outdoor recreation providers will need to find ways to attract them. Geocaching, outdoor treasure hunts using handheld GPS (global positioning system), and similar “gadget” oriented activities should be considered.

Why must Georgia act now?

- **Collaboration opportunities**
It is a perfect time for DNR to promote healthier living through outdoor recreation. Our sister agency, the Department of Human Resources, recently launched a major initiative to combat obesity—with its primary platform to promote physical activity. A coordinated effort, joined by other partners, not only improves the chances for success, but also highlights the importance that outdoor recreation can play in combating some of the leading causes of death in Georgia.

- **Public support for funding**
The SCORP survey found that there was resounding support for public funding of outdoor recreation facilities (88% of all respondents). Although poorer sections of the state had somewhat lower levels of support (statistically-speaking), 64% of respondents from the southwest region were still in favor of additional funding—more than enough to win a referendum. However, Georgia is one of 14 states nationwide and one of two states in the southeast region that does not have a consistent funding stream for parks and recreation.



- **Increased appreciation for benefits**
Acting now will also capitalize on the fact that we are increasingly recognizing the linkage between outdoor recreation and healthy living. In fact, when town hall meeting participants were asked why outdoor recreation was important, the most frequently cited reason was that it improved both mental and physical health. These results are reinforced by the SCORP survey and the NSRE.

- **Demonstrated demand**
The SCORP survey found that 68% of respondents visited a public outdoor recreation area during the past year, and almost half of them (41%) did so a couple times a month. In 2005, 12 counties received federal funds through the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Five times as many counties actually applied for that funding, but did not receive awards because the money simply ‘ran-out.’

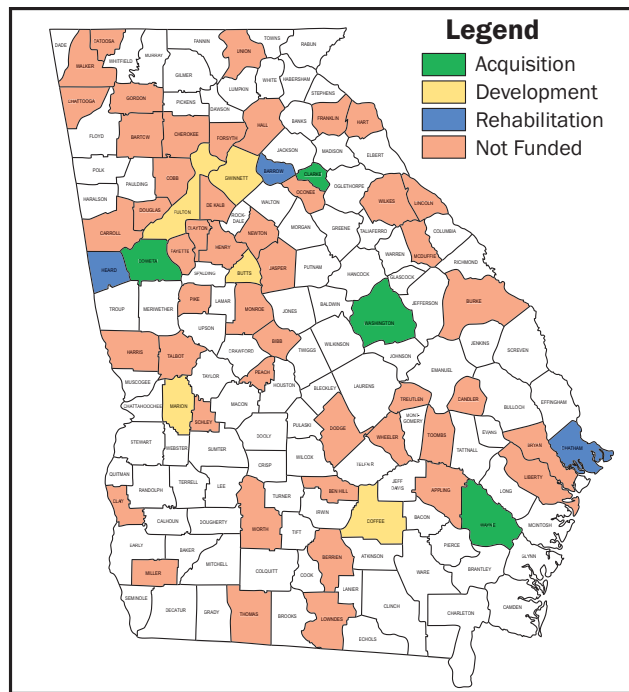


Figure 8. 2005 LWCF Requests and Awards



We must act now to make tangible contributions toward healthy living by reinforcing the connection between health, quality of life and outdoor recreation. We must respond to the public's support for outdoor recreation and enact strategies for change. Together we must chart a course to:

- Educate the public and officials at all levels, in both the public and private sectors, on the importance of outdoor recreation and the role it will play in helping Georgians live healthier.
- Improve access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities including locations nearer to work and home; reduce the cost of participation; improve transportation to sites and accessibility to those with physical limitations.
- Enhance security in outdoor recreation areas where needed and reduce perceptions that participating in outdoor recreation activities is unsafe.
- Create an inviting atmosphere to all who want to visit regardless of their ethnicity.
- Explore ways to help providers in the public and private sectors with funding for maintenance and operations of existing and future outdoor recreation areas.
- Explore ways of meeting the needs of a population that is becoming more diverse, ethnically and culturally.
- Explore ways of meeting the needs of both the young and retirees.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration among providers at all levels to broaden and enrich partnerships to improve the health of all Georgians through participation in outdoor recreation.



Case Study: Neighborhood Parks and Active Living Survey

Starting in the summer of 2007, Emory University and the Rollins School of Public Health are conducting a survey to assess the levels of physical activity of people visiting county parks as well as residents near those parks. The goal of the survey is to identify the factors that predict park-use and physical activity. These factors might include anything from dog ownership to proximity of parks or participation in organized sports.

The Neighborhood Parks and Active Living (NPAL) survey is being conducted in 12 DeKalb County parks and is funded by a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In addition to asking participants a series of questions, they are asked to wear an ‘accelerometer.’ An accelerometer is a small device – much like a pedometer - that attaches to your belt and takes precise measurements of movement and calculates physical activity.

The series of questions to which participants are asked to respond relate to where they live, their park-use, and their level of physical activity. Participants in the survey include both park-users as

well as a control group of non-park-users that reside near the parks.

To ensure that the results of the survey reach those that really need it (like local parks managers) the project convened an advisory group that includes local officials (e.g., the Director of DeKalb County Parks and Recreation, the Director of Decatur’s Recreation and Community Services Department, the Executive Director of Park Pride) as well as citizen advocates and public health officials.

One aspect of the study of particular interest is accessibility. While many parks that have wonderful amenities are fairly well maintained, some have limited access for a variety of reasons. Other factors, like determining demographic diversity, are also important elements of the study.

Communities contribute a great deal to creating and maintaining parks, trails and greenspaces, but little is known about the degree to which visitors are getting the level of physically active needed to derive health benefits. Preliminary results should be available late in 2007.



Improve Economic Vitality

Why pursue this direction?

- **Tourism dollars**

The economic impact of outdoor recreation in Georgia is immense. Outdoor recreation is *big business*; anglers alone bring in \$1.5 billion in total revenue when considering license fees, restaurants, hotels, gas stations, outfitter operations and other service-oriented businesses. Moreover, the sales taxes paid to local governments and the state on those purchases is a significant revenue source.



“As a state, we have outstanding potential to attract tourists...whose dollars will give a major boost to communities across the state.”

- Governor Sonny Perdue

More than 10 million people visit our state parks and historic sites every year, and spend over \$32 million. The total economic impact of that revenue is much greater, exceeding \$769 million per year for the state and local communities.²⁴

- **Tax benefits**

Outdoor recreation also positively impacts ad valorem tax revenue for local governments and the state. Numerous studies over the past 30 years have found a direct relationship between the value of a given property and

its proximity to parks and greenways, resulting in higher tax revenues and improved aesthetics.²⁵ In a study of sales transactions in Oregon, it was found that the proximity of natural outdoor recreation areas has the greatest influence on property values. This study found that, on average, homes within

1,500 feet of a natural area sold for \$10,648 more than homes outside the 1,500-foot buffer.²⁶ This study also found that urban parks and specialty parks increased sale values for adjacent properties. Another 2002 study in Athens, Georgia found that properties located near a 690-acre wildlife sanctuary and riverine trail system sold for approximately \$7,400 more than properties that were located more than 3,000 feet away.²⁷

- **Appreciation of home values**

Outdoor recreation areas also positively impact the private sector. A recent survey of 2,000 homebuyers found that trails, parks and playgrounds are among the five most important amenities considered when selecting a home.²⁵ A similar survey found that 50% of homebuyers would be willing to pay 10% more for a house located near a park or a protected greenspace.

In Boston, real estate agents contend that lease rates for office space facing a new urban park commanded a 10% premium over offices in the same building without a park view.²⁹ And, in Atlanta, after Centennial Olympic Park was opened, adjacent condominium prices rose from \$115 to \$250 per

square foot.¹⁶ Additional Georgia-specific research must be conducted to further confirm these impacts here at home.

Property values increase
20%
when near a park

A national study by Professor John Crompton of Texas A&M University estimated that property values abutting or fronting a passive park are 20% higher than similar property not situated near a park. Moreover, parks have a substantial, positive impact on property values within 500 feet.²⁸

57%
want to live near a park

A 2001 survey by the National Association of Realtors found that 57% of respondents would choose a home close to parks and open space over one that was not. In addition, the survey found that 50% would be willing to pay 10% more for a house located near a park or protected open space.²⁵

- **Attracting newcomers**
 Outdoor areas also attract and retain affluent retirees who want communities with leisure and recreation amenities. In one study, the top three considerations for retirees looking to relocate were: scenic beauty, recreation opportunities and mild climate.³⁰ When they move, retirees bring expendable income with them. If 100 retired households come to a community in a year, each with a retirement income of \$40,000, their impact is similar to that of a new business spending \$4 million annually in the community.³¹
- **Cultural integration**
 Outdoor recreation is an important tool for enhancing interaction among individuals of different racial and cultural groups. It can bring people of different backgrounds together and offer outlets for improving community relations and quality of life.³²

What challenges lie ahead?

- **Lack of knowledge**
 The greatest challenge to expanding the economic impact of outdoor recreation is a lack of appreciation for the role outdoor recreation plays in our state’s economy. Without that awareness, communities will continue to resist land use planning and other changes needed to ensure adequate outdoor recreation areas.
- **Fear of the unknown**
 A prevailing culture of NIMBYism (Not in My Back Yard) also gets in the way. Concern over who may use a recreation area and the kinds of activities that will occur there can cause controversy that may delay approval of new or improved recreation areas.
- **Competition for land**
 Developers need to understand that reserving land for outdoor recreation or greenspace in their plans will only increase the value of the properties they are trying to sell.

Challenges to Improving Economic Vitality

Lack of knowledge

Not in my backyard-ism (NIMBYism)

Competition for land

Why must Georgia act now?

- **Tourism to replace lost industries**
 Georgia needs the jobs and income that outdoor recreation resources can provide. With the decline of textile and other industries, our communities need alternative, reliable sources of revenue. Both the private and public sectors will benefit from increasing the economic impact of outdoor recreation. With the projected growth of the state’s population approaching 11 million by 2015, state and local governments will need the additional income to meet the needs of the new residents.
- **Local officials seeking help**
 Urgent action also is needed to educate policy makers in our fastest growing areas on the economic benefits of converting land into outdoor recreation or conservation uses. These areas experience significant pressure to meet the recreation needs of their residents.



We must act now to support and maintain Georgia's outdoor recreation resources so that we remain attractive to new business and industry, draw tourists across our borders and grow our tax base. Together we must chart a course to:

- Educate the public and officials on the economic impact of outdoor recreation resources on the state, our communities and our residents.
- Study more thoroughly the economic benefit of outdoor recreation.
- Continue to demonstrate, quantitatively, the economic benefits of outdoor recreation.



Case Study: Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area

The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area is a multi-jurisdictional initiative that protects and interprets natural and cultural resources in DeKalb, Rockdale and Henry Counties. The State of Georgia is working with each of these jurisdictions, the Arabia Mountain Alliance and local community groups to create a magnificent green corridor that will connect Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve, Panola Mountain State Park, the South River and the Monastery of the Holy Spirit to outstanding natural and cultural resources in the area – all within a 20-minute drive from downtown Atlanta.

The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area represents a unique environmental place in Georgia because of its preservation of a rare landscape with historic, natural and cultural significance in the south. The goal is to protect 7,000 acres of greenspace through public ownership and another 3,000 through private protection (conservation easements). These lands will be available for public education and enjoyment.

The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area project

is a great example of how Georgians can advance tourism in our state by showcasing our natural resources and heritage. Archeological and historical sites within the heritage area include remnants of Native American culture, early European settlements, one of the oldest African American settlements in Georgia and sites from Lithonia's granite mining heyday of the 1890's to 1920's. By linking these important cultural riches with bicycle paths and interpretive trails, we will attract visitors to the area who can learn about Georgia history while also having a chance to explore the natural beauty of the region.

Congressional declaration of the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area as a National Heritage Area occurred in late 2006. The National Heritage Area Program is administered by the National Park Service with the goal of helping the local sponsors manage the area's assets, encourage tourism and to bring new, sustainable development into the heritage area. The Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area is eligible for federal funding of up to \$1 million annually, for a total of \$10 million.

C. Conserve Natural Resources



Why pursue this direction?

Conservation of our natural resources and wildlife is vital to the future of outdoor recreation in Georgia. While this is true for many reasons, a few stand out.

"Buy land. They ain't making any more of the stuff."

- Will Rogers

- **Family time**

First, spending time in nature is a popular, traditional, family-oriented pastime—and doing so encourages good stewardship of the state's resources. Respondents in the town hall meetings and focus groups repeatedly commented that outdoor recreation was important because "it enables us to maintain Georgia's outdoor tradition of people and families being in nature and enjoying it." Another frequent response was that outdoor recreation is important because it encourages the conservation/preservation of natural resources.

Top Five Outdoor Recreation Activities in Georgia



62% Walking, jogging or running

50% Picnicking or outdoor social gatherings

42% Swimming outdoors

39% Viewing, identifying & photographing nature

33% Fishing

Of the top five outdoor recreation activities in Georgia, two of them are directly related to conservation of natural resources and wildlife: fishing and viewing, identifying and photographing nature. The other three top outdoor recreation activities in the state—walking, jogging or running; picnicking or outdoor social gatherings; and swimming outdoors—can all be done in natural areas. The NSRE also found that experiencing and enjoying nature is a significant reason people participate in outdoor recreation and predicted that activities such as viewing, learning about and photographing nature will become even more popular in the foreseeable future.

- **Economic benefits**

A second reason conservation is vital to the future of outdoor recreation is that it has significant economic benefits. These benefits, explored earlier in this plan, increase our tax base and offset funding from state and local coffers for improving and maintaining our recreation areas.

- **Environmental quality**

Third, conservation directly impacts environmental quality. As noted in the Georgia Land Conservation Partnership Plan, among the most important benefits that conservation lands can provide are clean and abundant water, clean air and biodiversity. Since so many of us enjoy spending time outdoors, it is important that our natural environment be as clean and healthy as possible.

Preserving greenspace directly offsets the negative environmental impacts of development. This connection is becoming more apparent, with a sense of urgency keenly felt in the fastest growing metropolitan areas. Georgia and its local governments must establish and enforce developmental guidelines that encourage natural solutions to developmental impacts (e.g., storm-water retention ponds, grassed strips along streams and pedestrian corridors). Developments must also be encouraged to include greenspace and park set-asides as fundamental elements.

Conservation encourages good stewardship of Georgia's natural treasures, has significant economic benefits and directly impacts environmental quality.

What challenges lie ahead?

Challenges to Conservation

- Competition for limited funds
- Development pressure
- Lack of knowledge

- *Competition for limited funds*
This challenge, identified in previous versions of Georgia's SCORP, is one of the most significant obstacles to ensuring easily-accessible, high-quality facilities, additional land protection, and improved resource conservation. Competition exists for all public and private providers of outdoor recreation.
- *Development pressure*
Land that is good for conservation is often also profitable for development. This development pressure tends to inflate the cost of protecting land for conservation and recreation.
- *Lack of knowledge*
The public, elected officials at all levels of government and the private business sector are not fully educated on the importance of outdoor recreation and the role it plays in the local economy and conservation of our state's natural resources and wildlife.

Why must Georgia act now?

- *Urbanization*
The sense of urgency for conserving Georgia's natural resources and wildlife stems directly from the rapid population growth projected for the state and the urbanization that accompanies it. This loss is most acute in those areas experiencing the fastest population growth, primarily the Atlanta metropolitan area along with a few other metropolitan areas across the state. Every day, metropolitan Atlanta loses 50 acres of trees and gains 55 acres of asphalt and concrete due to development.³³ We must adopt policies that are forward-looking to help protect natural resources, encourage sustainable economic development and preserve the standard of living that makes the region so attractive. The map in Figure 9 shows the progression from 1991 to 2005 of greenspace converted to impervious surfaces. Impervious surfaces are pavement, buildings and other development.

106 acres/day

Undeveloped land in Georgia is being converted to development at a rate of 106 acres per day.

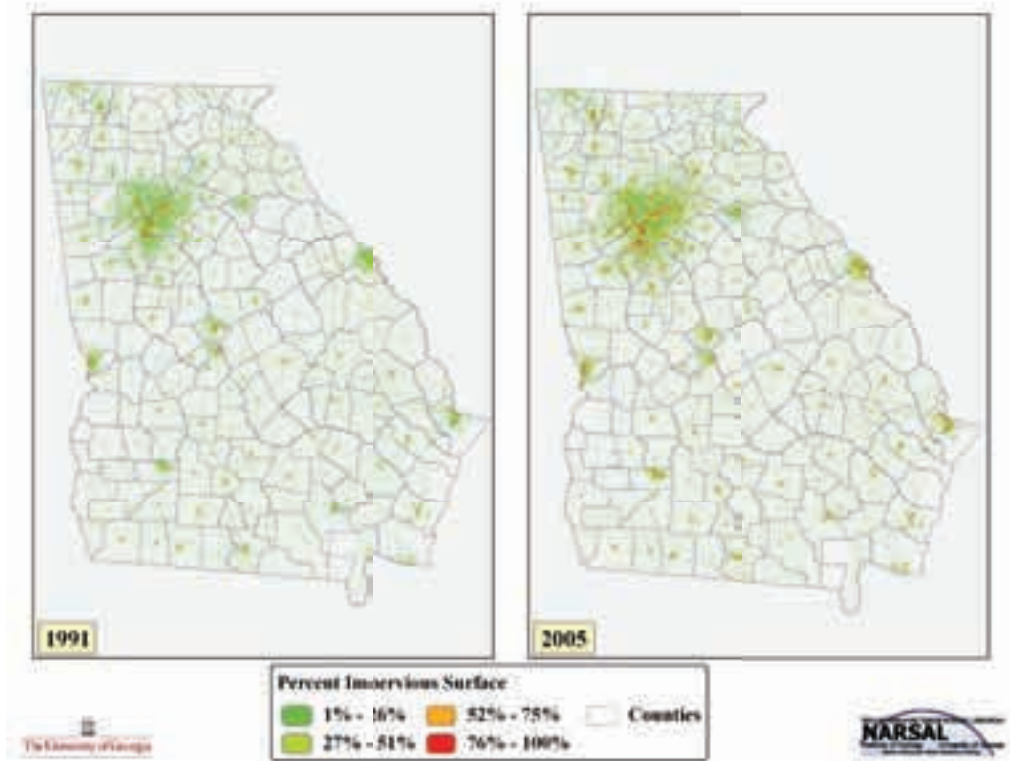


Figure 9. Conversion of Greenspace to Impervious Surfaces, Georgia, 1991–2005

• **Habitat loss**

In rapidly growing urban areas, sprawl is destroying natural habitats at an unprecedented rate. In rural Georgia, economic pressures are forcing more landowners to sell their property, often to developers. This development also increases a variety of pollutants in the air and water and increases the threat of releasing non-native plants and animals. By recognizing these facts and by setting priorities for natural resource management and use, we can continue to provide and grow Georgia’s outdoor recreation opportunities, ensuring that developments are compatible with resource objectives.²⁵

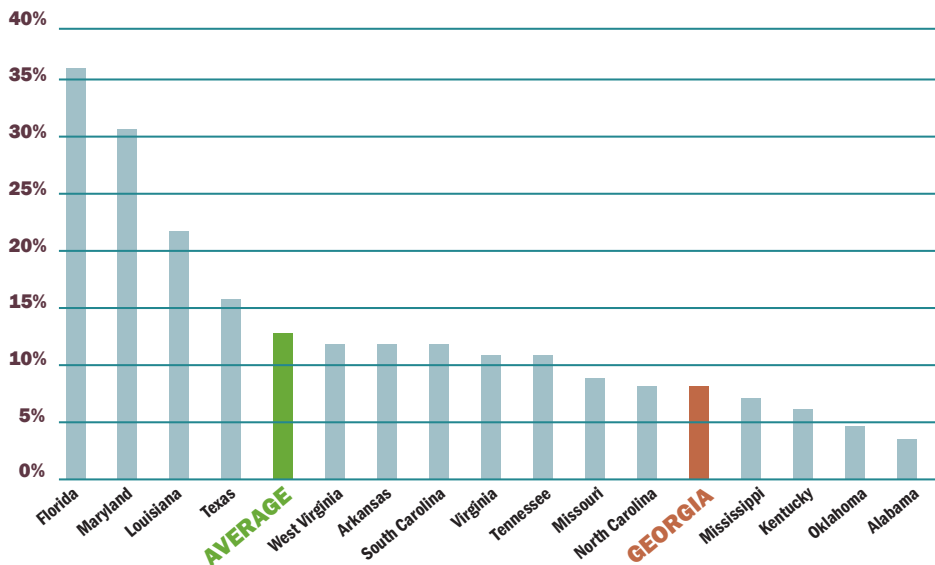


Figure 10 Percent of Land Area in Protection, by State



"I've made a career from sports that I grew to love while growing up in Georgia, so I know how important our parks and ballfields can be. Outdoor recreation helps shape young minds as well as young bodies."

Dan Reeves

*Former Atlanta Falcons Head Coach and
Georgia State University Football Consultant*

- ***Georgians supporting change***

The good news is that Georgians sense this urgency and support change. Those attending the town hall meetings frequently identified conservation of natural resources as a primary reason for their participation in outdoor recreation. SCORP survey respondents also reinforced the value of conservation. In addition, there is strong support (from the SCORP survey and the NSRE) for the use of public funds to create outdoor recreation opportunities in the state. The time is right to capitalize on this support and move forward.



We must act now to conserve our natural resources and wildlife so that we stay ahead of the state's rapid population growth, take advantage of the recent increase in support among Georgians for conservation and build the next generation of environmental stewards. Together we must chart a course to:

- Increase the amount of land in conservation before opportunities are lost.
- Explore ways to expand greenspace conservation, especially among non-governmental partners.
- Initiate planning at all levels of government to identify key lands for conservation.
- Ensure that community land use planning provides for the conservation of natural resources and access for those living in residential developments to nature and other outdoor recreation resources and opportunities.
- Educate the public and officials in both the public and private sectors on the importance of conservation.
- Strengthen communication and collaboration among providers at all levels to broaden and enrich partnerships statewide.
- Expand the SCORP inventory of outdoor recreation resources to identify lands suitable for conservation.
- Initiate the Georgia Scenic Trail System.
- Explore the reconstitution of the Georgia Youth Conservation Corps.



Case Study: Cobb and Paulding Counties

Cobb County is facing a greenspace crisis. It is a rapidly developing suburban county that had not adequately planned in advance for greenspace and parklands. In contrast, neighboring Paulding County is experiencing a recent population growth spurt and is planning ahead for its future greenspace and recreation needs. Both counties placed bond referendums on the 2006 general election ballots and both passed with strong support. The Cobb County referendum included \$40 million dollars in bonds and passed with 72% support. The Paulding County referendum was for a \$15.2 million bond issue that passed by 71%. In addition, Paulding County has several partners, including DNR, contributing resources for a total investment of \$45 million dollars.

So what are these tax payers getting for their purchases? Cobb County residents will be able to see approximately 300 acres of new parks scattered around the county. Paulding County residents are getting a large reserve encompassing over 7,000 acres.

Why is the difference so great for these neighboring counties? Because land values in Cobb County have skyrocketed over the past decade as land supplies decreased. Paulding County saw what was happening in neighboring counties such as Cobb and Gwinnett and decided to act before they would be forced to pay high prices for limited land resources.





CHAPTER

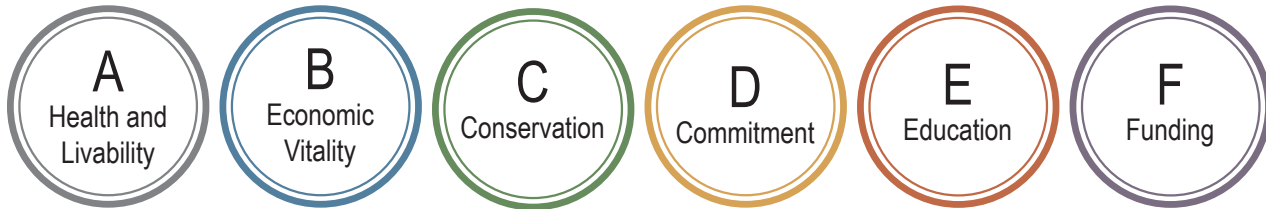
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STRATEGIC ACTIONS

The future of outdoor recreation in Georgia can be positive if the major challenges facing our state are addressed forthrightly. Critical issues such as rapid population growth, loss of natural resources, growing cultural diversity, urbanization, increases in obesity and other chronic diseases, and contrasts of recreation preferences between regions of the state deserve our immediate attention - before there is little to no opportunity to effectively respond.

**STRATEGIC
ACTIONS OF
SCORP
2008-2013**

This SCORP 2008–2013 provides a framework for collective action by providing a solid vision, based on data and public input, and offering recommendations for making that vision a reality. Its recommendations are grouped into six strategic actions which, for the next five years, will serve as a ‘to do’ list for all stakeholders in outdoor recreation, from the state of Georgia to city and county governments. Implementing the recommendations from this SCORP will make Georgia a model for the nation in outdoor recreation, quality service and resource protection.



There are six strategic action categories, all of equal importance. The focus on Health and Livability, Economic Vitality and Conservation results from analysis of all the findings of the SCORP 2008–2013 process. Commitment, Education and Funding strategies identify essential components for successful implementation of the SCORP recommendations. Actions within each of the six strategic areas are numerically coded so that they can be applied to Land and Water Conservation Fund criteria and tracked for performance measurement purposes.

A. Health Through Fitness and Livability

Recreation providers, public health officials, planners and policy-makers must collaborate to fight Georgia’s obesity epidemic, combat other serious health conditions and improve overall health by promoting and accommodating active lifestyles. The connection between positive physical and mental health and spending time outdoors is undeniable.

It is critical that Georgia and all city and county governments make comprehensive connections between planning, zoning, natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation. Livable communities strengthen social bonding among diverse cultures and create a sense of community, while they also slow the fragmentation of our landscape. These elements are vitally important in areas of Georgia that are experiencing demographic shifts.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- A.1. Improve access to outdoor recreation resources and facilities by providing locations near where people live and work and exploring ways to connect existing facilities for pedestrians and non-motorized vehicles (bikes, in-line skates, horses, etc.).
- A.2. Collaborate with local health departments to create programs and activities in parks and outdoor recreation areas promoting ‘healthy lifestyle choices.’
- A.3. Identify and reduce barriers that prevent the use of outdoor recreation facilities (e.g., safety concerns, cost of participation, incorporation of public transportation networks and accessibility by those with physical limitations).
- A.4. Attend to segments of the population that are under-served by existing facilities (e.g., seniors, young adults and African American populations).

- A.5. Recognize how recreation preferences change with shifts in demographic composition (e.g., growing Hispanic populations).
- A.6. Create opportunities to “cross-culturalize” activities to increase participation in outdoor recreation activities by Georgia’s diverse populations.
- A.7. Enhance security for outdoor recreation areas where appropriate.

The State of Georgia will:

- A.8. Work with statewide organizations such as the DHR, GRPA, and others to advance the “Healthy Georgia” initiative and incorporate health and livability programs in state and local outdoor recreation sites.

City and County Governments will:

- A.9. Provide a variety of outdoor recreation areas and parks in close proximity to where people live and work.
- A.10. Promote the development of residential areas that retain greenspace, include recreation facilities and provide safe pedestrian access to public parks from schools, business and retail centers.

B. Economic Vitality

Agencies at all levels must seek ways to capitalize on the public’s growing desire and ability to travel in order to experience nature and participate in outdoor recreation events and programs. Efforts should be made to maximize the tourism potential associated with conservation of our natural resources and provision of recreation and sports activities as key visitor attractions for Georgia and its local communities.

Preservation of greenspace is a cost effective and value-added means to address flood management, air and water quality and other municipal infrastructure needs. Wise planning and utilization of natural areas can address these issues while providing highly desirable greenspace for growing communities.

The state of Georgia and its local communities can benefit from the significant and multi-layered return on investment from outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation expenditures.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- B.1. Rehabilitate, update and upgrade existing outdoor recreation facilities to maximize marketability.

The State of Georgia will:

- B.2. Collaborate with other partners to document the economic benefits of outdoor recreation in Georgia through market research and tracking the financial return of investments in outdoor recreation facilities.
- B.3. Facilitate collaborations between state agencies to advance the economic benefits of outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation.
- B.4. Market our natural and recreation resources to gain public participation and support, advance tourism and economic development opportunities and encourage volunteerism, collaborating with other state agencies that specialize in market analysis and promotion to significantly strengthen any marketing effort.



City and County Governments will:

- B.5. Promote outdoor recreation events, programs and facilities that attract day travelers and overnight visitation.
- B.6. Create partnerships with local businesses that provide direct or indirect materials or services for outdoor recreation such as local convention and visitor bureaus, recreation equipment vendors and guide services.

C. Conservation

All partners must act immediately and collaboratively to conserve Georgia's natural resources, address Georgia's rapid growth and urbanization, build a new generation of environmental stewards and capitalize on the state's strong support for both natural resource conservation and enhanced outdoor recreation opportunities.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- C.1. Identify and prioritize key lands for acquisition, especially in the fastest-growing areas of the state.
- C.2. Create plans to manage and operate facilities and sites to 1) efficiently use limited funds, 2) ensure the protection of biodiversity, and 3) respond to recreation preferences and needs. These plans should be functional and include specific measures for defining success.
- C.3. Explore and expand partnerships with land trusts and other conservation organizations as a means to permanently protect greenspace.
- C.4. Develop multi-jurisdictional projects to satisfy several important objectives: 1) to coordinate land protection efforts for connectivity, 2) capitalize on complementary strengths and weaknesses, and 3) ensure resource conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- C.5. Provide balanced interpretation, education and outdoor recreation programs to expand the knowledge and appreciation of our natural, cultural and recreation resources in a manner consistent with conservation

The State of Georgia will:

- C.6. Establish and maintain resource data for use by local government officials focusing on land needs and unique areas needing protection in accordance with the Georgia Land Conservation Plan, the Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan and the Coastal Management Plan.
- C.7. Facilitate collaborations and partnerships for the protection of wetlands and the provision of greenway and blueway trail corridors, including the creation of the Georgia Scenic Trail System.
- C.8. Expand the SCORP inventory of outdoor recreation resources and other GIS databases to identify lands suitable for conservation.
- C.9. Seek opportunities for state agencies to work together to facilitate increased conservation of Georgia's natural resources.
- C.10. Work with the federal government to ensure permanent protection of natural areas within military bases in Georgia.
- C.11. Investigate the reconstitution of the Georgia Youth Conservation Corps.

City and County Governments will:

- C.12. Encourage land use planning that includes natural resource conservation and outdoor recreation opportunities.
- C.13. Develop corridors to link recreation sites and residential areas using multi-use pathways.

D. Commitment

Collaborations must be maximized to improve the quality and availability of recreation opportunities throughout Georgia. An implementation plan with measurable goals and timeline expectations must be developed to ensure progressive fulfillment of SCORP 2008-2013 recommendations.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- D.1. Foster advocacy organizations to advance the benefits of outdoor recreation, modeled on the “Friends of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites” group and other successful collaborations.
- D.2. Facilitate, fund and collaborate in efforts to advance the recommendations of SCORP, including the development of educational and support materials.
- D.3. Seek ways to further individual agency missions by leveraging the efforts of state and local partners.
- D.4. Refine and reinforce a systematic plan identifying the status and future needs for land acquisition, and facilities development and operation.
- D.5. Acknowledge and integrate the preferences of ethnic and socio-demographic groups, tailoring facilities and programs to serve diverse constituencies.

The State of Georgia will:

- D.6. Pronounce the creation of the Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership (GORP) through the Department of Natural Resources and charge it with prioritizing and implementing the vision of SCORP 2008–2013. GORP will be comprised of members of the existing SCORP Advisory Committee along with representatives from state departments (DNR, DCA, DHR, DED, DOE, DOT, etc.) and allied agencies and organizations sharing a common mission and commitment. Report SCORP implementation status in a fall 2008 Conference on Outdoor Recreation.
- D.7. Conduct regular statewide assessments on outdoor recreation preferences by socio-demographics; modify the DNR Strategic Plan and PRHSD System Plan to address these findings; and share data with other outdoor recreation providers to use in developing their own local plans and programs.
- D.8. Provide technical assistance to outdoor recreation providers by serving as or providing for a clearinghouse for information on planning, development, management and funding. Research and technical assistance will include:
 - a. Best practice models and case studies for recreation planning for cities, counties and other outdoor recreation providers, including best practice models for natural resource stewardship and sustainability.

- b. Converting the SCORP inventory GIS database to a web-based format for use as a planning tool for recreation planners and an informational resource for the public.
- c. Working to commit resources for maintaining and improving the current database of recreation and conservation lands.
- d. Establishing recreation standards and specific metrics for outdoor recreation providers that outline target service delivery goals by population for outdoor recreation land and facility types.
- e. Planning assistance for local recreation providers to help them protect parks and greenspace and provide high quality recreation service opportunities based on emerging trends (for example, counties experiencing explosive growth and those facing population loss have very different recreation needs).
- f. Information and educational materials that advance a conservation ethic and promote environmental awareness.
- g. Investigate recreation property liability constraints.



One of the initiatives of PRHSD is the “**Get Outdoors Georgia**” campaign designed to highlight the link between participation in outdoor recreation and improved health for people of all ages and abilities; achieve decreased obesity; and emphasize children’s early involvement in nature for establishing life-long physical, mental and community benefits. Part of this initiative is to post, on the DNR website, activity-based events taking place at state parks and historic sites.

City and County Governments will:

- D.9. Work with DNR to explore: alternate funding sources, ways of improving efficiency in service delivery, and ways to maximize benefits to the community for every dollar spent on outdoor recreation efforts.
- D.10. Seek ways to incorporate the principles of environmental planning into zoning policies and into the construction of their own buildings and facilities.
- D.11. Stay current with the needs of their constituents for outdoor recreation opportunities.
- D.12. Acknowledge the economic and health benefits that outdoor recreation sites provide to their communities.
- D.13. Enter into an agreement with DNR to assist GORP with its efforts (e.g., gathering database information, county-level information and plats defining).

E. Education

Tools and resources are available and must be shared to conserve recreation lands and provide high quality opportunities for all. Elevating the priority of outdoor recreation with policymakers, planners, practitioners, partners and the public will heighten their awareness of the benefits in terms of community health and livability, economic vitality and conservation of Georgia’s natural resources.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- E.1. Advance SCORP objectives by educating policy makers on the value of outdoor recreation for community health, livability, economic vitality and ecological integrity. Use SCORP as a policy document to drive decision-making on recreation initiatives.
- E.2. Collaborate to develop training opportunities and programs for policymakers, planners and outdoor recreation providers designed to:
 - a. Demonstrate the benefits of outdoor recreation for quality of life, healthy communities and economic vitality.
 - b. Delineate and reinforce a conservation ethic. (The Green Infrastructure Toolkit created by the Atlanta Regional Commission, The Georgia Conservancy and The Trust for Public Land is suggested as a good model.)
- E.3. Broadcast the vision of SCORP through aggressive marketing, conferences, newsletters and other outreach tools.
- E.4. Integrate principles of healthy living, livable communities, economic vitality and resource conservation into the mission statements of service providers.
- E.5. Provide balanced interpretation, education and outdoor recreation programs to expand the knowledge and appreciation of our natural, cultural and recreation resources in a manner consistent with conservation.

The State of Georgia will:

- E.6. Through the Governor's Office and DNR, educate members of the Georgia General Assembly and all state agencies about the findings and recommendations of SCORP 2008–2013.
- E.7. Work with the Department of Education to advance healthy lifestyles and natural resource conservation in Georgia public schools.
- E.8. Inspire and facilitate the efforts of the Georgia Department of Education and the university system to create curricula and degree programs designed to educate students and produce well-trained professionals in the fields of recreation (leisure services) and resource management, ensuring planning competency and responsiveness to the community.

City and County Governments will:

- E.9. Commit themselves to understanding the value of recreation in their communities.
- E.10. Capitalize on the assistance provided by DNR, including applying for LWCF funding and working with PRHSD to seek other sources of funding and support.
- E.11. Encourage site managers and service providers to attend training sessions and to utilize tools provided by DNR and its partners.
- E.12. Explore ways to collaborate with partners to achieve objectives for recreation (e.g., memoranda of agreement, management agreements, cost-sharing and staff-sharing).

F. Funding

The issue of funding is multi-faceted since it covers recreation land acquisition, facility construction, operations and appropriate recapitalization. It also includes the efficient use of existing funds at all levels of government, leveraged with private and non-profit investment and the creation of consistent funding streams.

Solid data and science are among the best tools available to recreation providers to ensure adequate funding. They reveal strong and direct correlations between recreation and community wellness as well as justify the need for additional state and federal funding.

All Outdoor Recreation Providers and Other Partners will:

- F.1. Identify both short- and long-term funding options for land acquisition, conservation and management as well as for facility development, maintenance and rehabilitation.
- F.2. Develop staffing plans, cost estimates and options for service delivery (e.g., in-house staff, contracted services, staff-sharing arrangements and volunteer networks) as well as for the operation and maintenance of recreation facilities. It is important that this information is provided to local officials before the construction of new facilities to ensure that needs are being met to provide safe, clean and attractive facilities.
- F.3. Develop training and certification programs for operations and maintenance personnel to ensure the most cost-effective methods are used.
- F.4. Expand the use of volunteers, interns and other staffing alternatives.
- F.5. Create and sustain partnerships to minimize reliance on tax revenues to support the operations and management aspects of public parks and outdoor recreation areas.

The State of Georgia will:

- F.6. Work with the Governor's Office of Planning and Budget, allied state agencies and state legislative leaders to develop a funding source to parallel the goals of the federal Land and Water Conservation Fund in supporting state and local needs for outdoor recreation including land acquisition, resource conservation and management as well as facility maintenance, rehabilitation and development.
- F.7. Seek collaborations and synergies to maximize existing state and federal funding sources (e.g., LWCF, Forest Legacy, SAFETEA-LU and Urban Parks and Recreation).

City and County Governments will:

- F.8. Pursue the use of special purpose local option sales tax (SPLOST), impact fees, business and industry partnerships and foundation grants as additional funding mechanisms to fund land acquisition, conservation and management as well as facility development, maintenance and rehabilitation.



CHAPTER 5

IMPLICATIONS FOR LAND AND WATER CONSERVATION FUND (LWCF) AND GEORGIA LAW

Existing state and federal funding levels are not sufficient to address all our outdoor recreation needs. Too often, other priorities take precedence over outdoor recreation facilities and maintenance. Therefore, we must use sound science to establish stronger and more strategic positions that support additional state and federal funding for outdoor recreation land acquisition, development, rehabilitation, operations and maintenance.

A. Guiding Principles for LWCF

Funding

Appropriation of available state and federal funds should go to jurisdictions that have demonstrated knowledge and awareness of their outdoor recreation and natural resource conservation priorities and how these priorities affect the health, livability and economic vitality of their communities. Preference should be extended to communities that:

- Show commitment to improve their outdoor recreation opportunities;
- Seek creative or alternative approaches to service delivery funding; and
- Establish partnerships that leverage and supplement requested state and federal funding.

At the same time, we must be mindful of and committed to assisting communities that demonstrate a need, but have little opportunity to invest in outdoor recreation due to their economic condition.

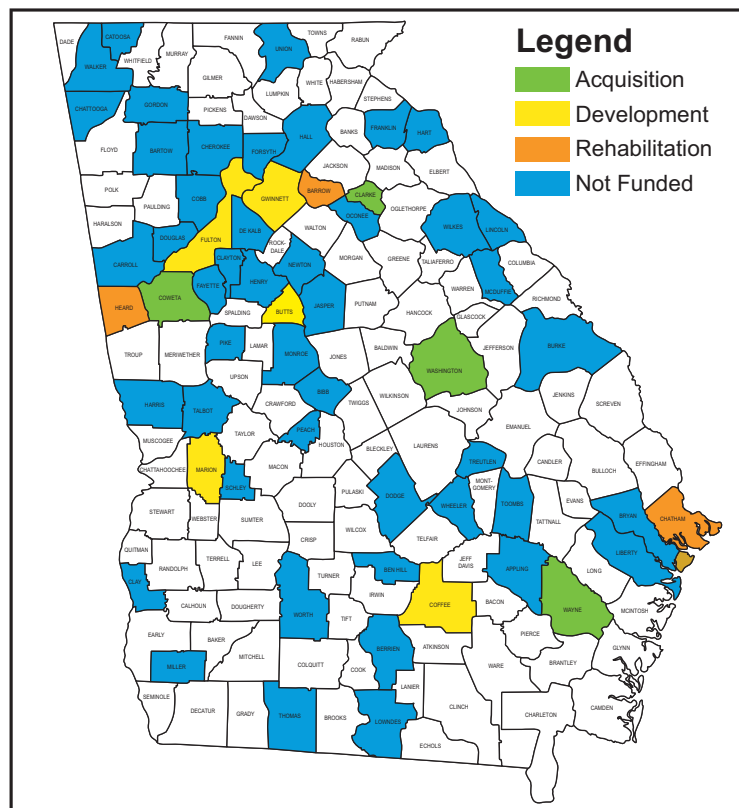


Figure 11. Land and Water Conservation Funds (LWCF) Requests and Awards, 2005

Priorities and action strategies

As stated in the introduction, SCORP 2008–2013 must be completed in order for Georgia to be eligible for federal Land and Water Conservation Fund grant dollars. These funds must be used to address the priorities that were established during the development of SCORP (see Chapter 3) and the six key strategic actions for SCORP (see Chapter 4). But how do these priorities and recommended actions really relate to LWCF and grant awards?

Below is a listing of the strategic actions that have a direct correlation to the LWCF funding process. Based on these strategic actions, criteria will be developed for scoring applications and ultimately making grant awards. These criteria will be based on the strategic actions below:

Key Element	A Health and Livability	B Economic Vitality	C Conservation	D Commitment	E Education	F Funding
Coded Action Strategy	A.1., A.3., A.4., A.7., A.9., A.10.	B.1., B.6.	C.1., C.2., C.3., C.4., C.12., C.13.	D.5.	E.12.	F.1., F.2., F.4., F.8.

Table 2. Strategic Actions Related to Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)

Standards for recreation facilities

SCORP 2008–2013 recognizes the importance of establishing universal standards for the identification, establishment and maintenance of recreational sites and facilities. However, this SCORP is designed to provide a comprehensive overview of recreation needs throughout the state, not necessarily to define the specific set of metrics for judging individual facilities or services.

Developing specific metrics and standards for outdoor recreation are tasks delegated to GORP (Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership). GORP will be a DNR-initiated partnership of professionals and stakeholders responsible for implementing the objectives and strategic actions of SCORP 2008–2013. GORP will report its findings on recreational standards at a conference on outdoor recreation.

Wetlands Preservation



Wetlands: A Definition

Expanses of land periodically inundated or saturated by groundwater or surface water at a frequency and duration sufficient to support vegetation adapted for life in such conditions.

Benefits of wetlands

Wetlands provide a wide variety of benefits including: maintaining water supplies, enhancing water quality, controlling floodwaters, erosion control and providing recreation opportunities.

Wetlands and SCORP

Section 303 of the Federal Emergency Wetlands Act requires that the SCORP address wetlands as an important

outdoor recreation resource and that protection priorities be established in consultation with both DNR’s Environmental Protection Division (EPD) and WRD. The priorities established in this SCORP satisfy that requirement.

Area of wetlands in Georgia

According to the USFWS, Georgia currently has about 20% of its land area in wetlands (7.7 million acres).³⁴ This total includes nearly 367,000 acres of estuarine wetlands and 7.3 million acres of palustrine wetlands. The National



Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration estimates that, by the 1980s, about 23% of Georgia's original wetlands acreage was lost to conversion.³⁵

Loss of wetlands in Georgia

The greatest loss of wetlands occurred in the Atlantic Coastal Plain. Much of the land conversion was from deciduous forested wetlands to intensively managed pine plantation. The major conversion of wetland areas to pine plantation occurred between 1985 and 1992. The greatest conversion of wetlands to agriculture occurred from 1974 to 1985. An increase in harvesting occurred in 1998–2001, perhaps due to the record droughts that allowed access to riverine areas from low flows.

Population growth and wetland conservation

Georgia ranks second among EPA Region 4 states in estimated wetland acreage and its complex physiography results in a rich diversity of wetland types. A large proportion of our anticipated population growth over the coming decade is projected for areas proximal to wetlands such as coastal counties. Currently, we have no coordinated statewide program to identify and prioritize landscape-level wetland areas for development of wetland mitigation banks or other wetland restoration activities. As a result, current restoration projects, while benefiting the immediate area and satisfying no-net-loss standards, may not contribute greatly to the overall health of the watershed. Developing and using a prioritization map of potential wetland restoration areas will help natural resource managers focus restoration efforts in areas that will provide the greatest positive cumulative effect on the health of a watershed and surrounding communities. Augmentation of funding opportunities for the restoration of wetlands also would be advised.

Comprehensive wetlands protection plan

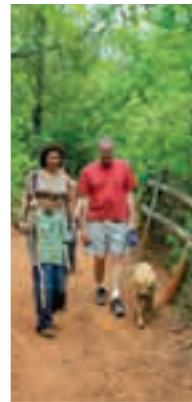
In response to this lack of coordination, DNR-EPD has begun a process to develop a comprehensive assessment to identify high priority areas for wetland restoration, mitigation and protection. This project will provide state, federal and non-governmental natural resource managers with a database of potential areas for wetland mitigation banks, conservation activities and restoration projects through the development of a GIS model that establishes priorities for wetland functions and values. The priorities are: wildlife habitat, water quality/quantity, flow regulation/flood control, ecological services, biodiversity conservation, recreation, education, connectivity, ease of restoration and scenic value. The results of this effort will provide information and coordination for a number of statewide planning activities such as the Comprehensive Statewide Water Management Plan, activities of the Land Conservation Partnership, the State Wildlife Action Plan and the State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

B. Fulfillment of Legal Mandate

As stated in the introduction, DNR is legally mandated to prepare outdoor recreation planning documents by the Official Code of Georgia: Section 12-3-1. Table 3 identifies the specific requirements under Section 12-3-1 and the elements of this SCORP that address them.

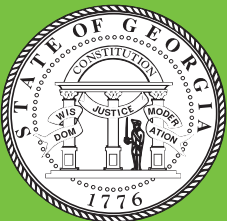
SCORP Elements Addressing Legal Requirements	
Legal Requirements	SCORP Elements
Formulate a comprehensive recreation policy for the state of Georgia.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This document, SCORP 2008–2013, and anticipated development of an implementation team (GORP).
Appraise recreation needs of the state and disseminate information relative to recreation.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Conducted GIS analysis, town hall meetings, focus groups, statewide telephone survey, online questionnaire, NSRE survey, “Outdoor Recreation Participation and Trends for Georgia.”
Cooperate in the promotion and organization of local government recreation systems—advise them in the planning of facilities and consult with them in the financing.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Proposing establishment of a “technical assistance” service to be coordinated by PRHSD. Open invitation for local service providers to attend and participate in GORP.
Aid in recruiting, educating and placing recreation workers and promoting recreation institutes and conferences.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaborating with the Departments of Recreation and Leisure Studies at the University of Georgia (Athens) and Georgia Southern University (Statesboro) and the Recreation Curriculum at Georgia State University.
Help establish and promote recreation standards.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Exploring various mechanisms to define measurable standards, including CEPAE (Comprehensive Evaluation to Promote Active Engagement).
Cooperate with public and private interests in promoting recreation opportunities.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sharing GIS data, providing technical assistance, invitation to participate in the SCORP implementation team (GORP). Proposed Conference on Outdoor Recreation in Fall 2008. Health initiatives with DHR.
Submit a report of activities and recommendations to the Governor and notify the General Assembly of its availability.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> This document, SCORP 2008–2013, as well as progress reports prepared by GORP.

Table 3. SCORP Elements Addressing Legal Requirements



REFERENCES / GLOSSARY / PHOTO CREDITS / APPENDICES

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Glossary

ACCG:	Association County Commissioners of Georgia
ADA:	Americans with Disabilities Act
CRD:	Coastal Resources Division, DNR
DCA:	Georgia Department of Community Affairs
DHR:	Georgia Department of Human Resources
DNR:	Georgia Department of Natural Resources
EPD:	Environmental Protection Division, DNR
FGSPHS:	Friends of Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites
GFC:	Georgia Forestry Commission
GIS:	Geographic Information System
GLCP:	Georgia Land Conservation Partnership or Plan
GMA:	Georgia Municipal Association
GORP:	Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership
GRPA:	Georgia Recreation and Park Association
GWF:	Georgia Wildlife Federation
LWCF:	Land and Water Conservation Fund
MSA:	Metropolitan Statistical Area
NRCS:	Natural Resource Conservation Service
NSRE:	National Survey of Recreation and the Environment
PRHSD:	Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division, DNR
RDC:	Regional Development Center
SAFETEA-LU:	Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act: A Legacy for Users
SCORP:	Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan
SPLOST:	Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax
TVA:	Tennessee Valley Authority
UGA:	University of Georgia
USFS:	United States Forest Service
USFWS:	United States Fish and Wildlife Service
USACE:	United States Army Corps of Engineers
WIC:	Women, Infants and Children Program
WRD:	Wildlife Resources Division, DNR

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The photographs used throughout this document were provided by: Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Georgia Department of Economic Development, Gwinnett County Georgia Parks & Recreation Department and Peachtree City Parks & Recreation Department.



Appendices

Technical Supplements

Additional technical information, supporting documents, survey results, (etc.) are on file in the PRHSD Director's Office and are available for review.

APPENDIX **A** Page 71
Systematic Process for Crafting the SCORP

APPENDIX **B** Page 73
Top Responses from Georgians
to Three Standard Questions

APPENDIX **C** Page 77
How SCORP Relates to Other
Planning Documents and
Surveys of DNR and DHR

APPENDIX **D** Page 81
SCORP Public Comment Summary

APPENDIX **E** Page 85
Interactive Website Mapping of
Recreation and Conservation Areas

APPENDIX **F** Page 86
SCORP Board Resolution

APPENDIX A: Systematic Process for Crafting the SCORP

Phase I: Orientation and Information Gathering

To begin the planning process, representatives from key federal and state agencies and non-governmental organizations met to discuss process details, agree on the scope of the plan and confirm the resources available for its development. A SCORP Advisory Committee served as a governing body for assuring that a plan was developed that would meet all requirements yet was progressive, comprehensive yet focused and challenging yet achievable.

PRHSD contracted with the University of Georgia (UGA) to oversee and coordinate the SCORP development process. Together they reviewed several relevant state and regional planning documents to identify: socio-economic trends in Georgia's population demographics, industry sectors, employment, etc.; available infrastructure and services to support outdoor recreation; existing promotion and communication systems; and potential resources for implementation. They also studied Georgia SCORPs from prior years and recent plans from other states.

Phase II: Inventory of Existing Resources

The second phase aimed to document as many existing local, state, federal, non-governmental and other public outdoor recreation and conservation resources as possible given time and resource constraints; and to create—for the first time—an interactive inventory in a Geographic Information System (GIS) database. To accomplish this, PRHSD and its partners, including UGA:

- Collected information on outdoor recreation resources from municipal and county comprehensive plans and web pages.
- Located each recreation area spatially in a GIS from aerial photographs or via satellite imagery.
- Created a database and populated it with information on the outdoor recreation attributes of each area.
- Worked with local park and recreation departments to assess the accuracy of the locations and attribute data.

Phase III: Public Input

- *Survey*

In the third phase, UGA conducted a statewide telephone survey of Georgia adults aged 18 and older about outdoor recreation. The survey asked Georgians about their support for outdoor recreation; their participation in outdoor recreation activities and access to outdoor recreation; the barriers or constraints that limit their participation in outdoor recreation; why outdoor recreation is important to them; and their assessment of issues facing outdoor recreation in Georgia. Georgians with residential telephone landlines were randomly sampled from each of the four geographic regions (see Figure 2), creating four independent random samples of 400 adults for a total of 1,600 Georgians who responded to the telephone survey. Finally, the survey data were weighted to improve the accuracy of population estimates and the maximum sampling error was $\pm 5\%$ for each regional sample and the statewide sample.

- ***Public town hall meetings***
DNR held seven public meetings across the state, drawing an estimated 170 attendees. Meetings were held in conveniently accessible locations in a variety of urban, suburban, and rural settings: Atlanta, Brunswick, Camilla, Columbus, Milledgeville, Rome, and Tallulah Falls. The meetings were publicized using websites, stakeholder mailing lists, and newspaper advertisements. Advisory Committee members actively encouraged participation through personal invitations to their constituents. Attendees provided input on four questions:
 - Why is outdoor recreation important to you and your family?
 - What should be done to improve outdoor recreation in your area?
 - What obstacles will keep improvements from being made?
 - What else do we need to know about the future of outdoor recreation in Georgia?

- ***Online comments***
A dedicated website was offered to those individuals who were not able to attend the town hall meetings, for whatever reason. This site, gastateparks.org/scorp, posed the same questions as the meeting facilitators. More than 400 people recorded their comments online through January 2007.

- ***Stakeholder focus groups and briefings***
To elicit specific input from stakeholder groups, DNR conducted focus groups and briefings with public land management agencies and companies, government agencies and user groups. These groups targeted the unique needs and concerns of:
 - African Americans
 - High school age students
 - Elementary school age students
 - Recreation professionals with the Georgia Recreation and Park Association (GRPA)
 - Managers of large public land tracts
 - SCORP Advisory Committee.

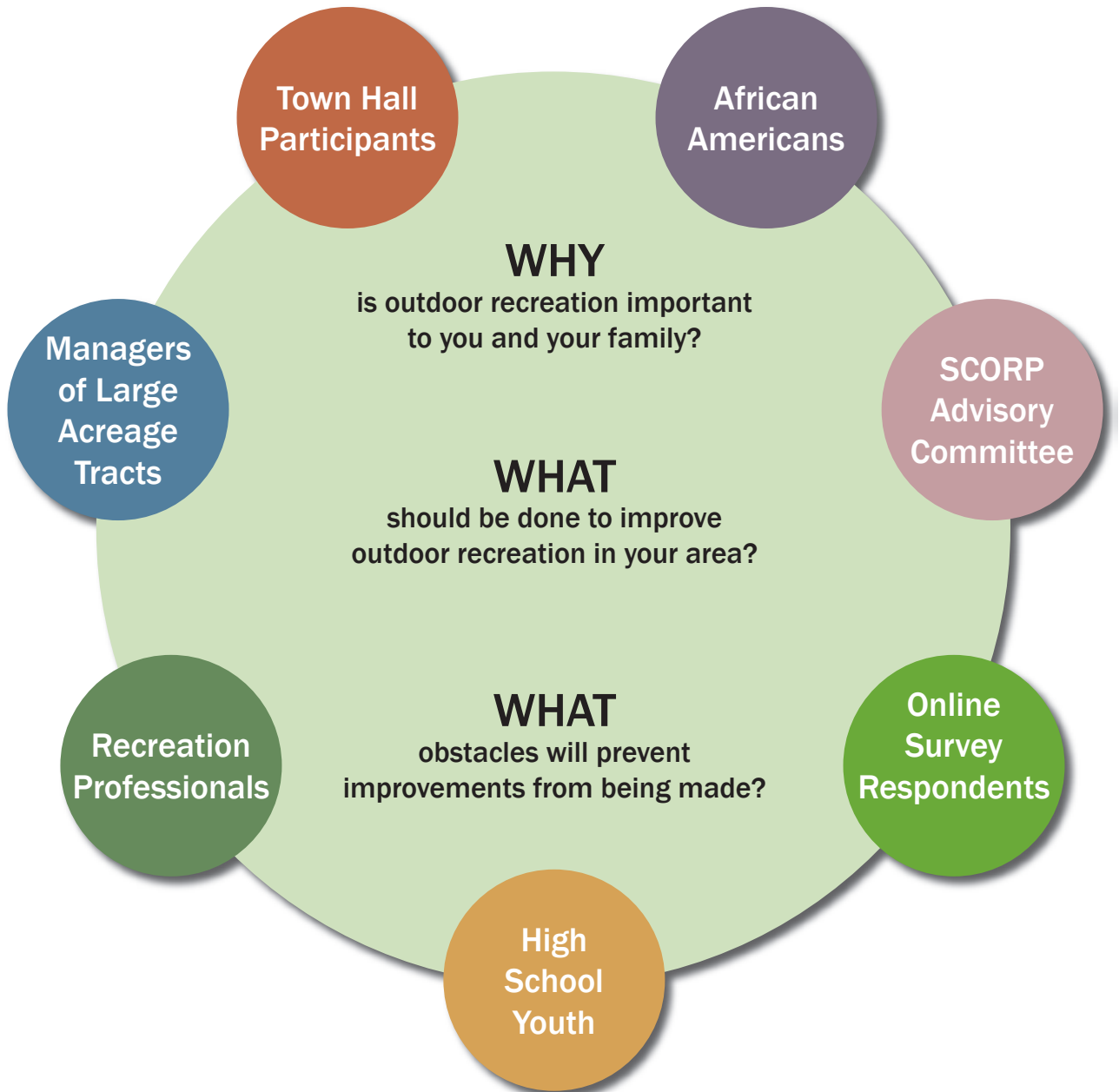
Phase IV: Analysis and Strategic Planning

During this phase, data was analyzed by county, Metropolitan Statistical Areas (MSAs), micro Statistical Areas, and U.S. Congressional Districts. Supplementary findings from the National Survey of Recreation and the Environment (NSRE) and the Georgia Survey of Recreation and the Environment (GSRE) were examined to compare Georgia's experience with that of other states across the southeast and the nation. Results were used to generate strategies for policies and programs at state and local levels, along with actions for implementing them. These were presented to the Advisory Committee in April 2007 for discussion and subsequent modification.

Phase V: Adoption and Implementation

The draft document was presented to the DNR Board in May 2007 and made available for public comment (see Appendix D for comments). It was subsequently modified, finalized, and adopted by the Board and the Governor for submission to the National Park Service.

Appendix B: Top Responses from Georgians to Three Standard Questions



Town Hall
Participants

WHY
is outdoor
recreation
important
to you and
your family?

1. Improve both physical and mental health
2. Maintain outdoor lifestyle/tradition, enjoy nature
3. Provide opportunity to acquire education/knowledge
4. Strengthen family/social connections
5. Encourage conservation/preservation of natural resources

Other noted reasons:

- Positive economic impact
- Improves quality of life
- Access to water
- Counter rapid urbanization/sprawl
- Enjoy equine activities
- Trail/park connectivity
- Enjoy diversity of opportunity/activity
- ATV businesses are dependent on access to public lands

1. Increase conservation/preservation of natural resources
2. Increase number and diversity of outdoor recreation opportunities/activities
3. Increase/improve education/knowledge of outdoor recreations benefits
4. Increase overall funding for outdoor recreation
5. Increase/accelerate acquisition
6. Increase the number of trails of all kinds

Other common responses:

- Improve collaboration efforts
- Improve planning techniques
- Improve marketing/public relations
- Improve safety/security
- Increase number of bike trails/lanes
- Increase water access

1. Lack of funds
2. Low priority/support
3. Lack of communication and collaboration
4. Lack of education/knowledge of the benefits of outdoor recreation
5. Development pressures

Other obstacles mentioned often:

- Competing values, needs and interests
- Land scarcity/rapid urbanization
- Lack of planning (recreation and land use)

WHAT
should be done
to improve
outdoor
recreation in
your area?

WHAT
obstacles will
prevent
improvements
from being
made?

African
Americans

1. Provide an urban escape/connect with nature
2. Provide educational opportunities about nature

Other important reasons:

- Positive impact on physical and mental health
- Provide a variety of activities
- Provide family/social activities
- Contribute to a sense of place
- Activities for all ages

1. Marketing for the African American/urban population, specifically:
 - Use familiar faces as spokespersons
 - Get churches and schools involved
 - Use popular cultural themes
 - Emphasize the history of African American contributions/involvement with outdoor recreation
2. Improve the number/variety/diversity of activities available

Other suggestions:

- Be flexible/try something different
- Improve/upgrade/maintain existing resources
- Educate the public/officials on benefits/value of outdoor recreation based on input from the community

1. Political priorities
2. Inadequate marketing/public relations
3. History/traditions

Other frequently mentioned obstacles:

- Lack of money
- Inadequate planning
- Perception that participating in outdoor recreation is unsafe



WHY
is outdoor
recreation
important
to you and
your family?

WHAT
should be done
to improve
outdoor
recreation in
your area?

WHAT
obstacles will
prevent
improvements
from being
made?

**SCORP
Advisory
Committee**

1. Relax and escape
 2. Improve health, physical and mental/exercise
 3. Engage in positive/affordable family/social activity
 4. Connect with nature
 5. Encourage conservation/preservation
- Enjoyment of outdoor activities was also mentioned (specifically, paddling, canine related, and shooting/archery)

1. Increase/improve access/opportunity
 2. Increase funding
 3. Increase education of benefits/values
 4. Increase/improve marketing/public relations, specifically diversity in markets and message and development of common/consistent messages across all providers
 5. Maintain/upgrade/update existing facilities/resources
- Other issues identified:
- Increase/improve advocacy
 - Increase connectivity between existing facilities/resources
 - Increase communication/collaboration, particularly with schools, local governments and organizations, and corporate America

1. Lack of education/knowledge of the benefits/value/urgency, specifically health, economic development impact, and environmental benefits
 2. Low priority/support with public/decision makers
 3. Lack of funds, specifically
 - Need to find non-governmental funds
 - Need consistent funding sources that cannot be raided
 - Need sources the public supports
 - Impact fees in fast growing areas
 4. Lack of leadership/common message
 5. Competing interests/needs/values
- Another key obstacle:
- Lack of communication/collaboration, specifically with Georgia Department of Economic Development (on economic impact/benefit of outdoor recreation), with urban populations and with schools

**Online
Survey**

1. Connect with nature/outdoor tradition/urban escape
2. Improve health (physical and mental) /exercise
3. Engage in positive/affordable family/social activity
4. Enjoy outdoor activities
5. Education opportunities

1. Increase access
 - Public land for hunting
 - Equine
 - Water activities
 - Closer to home/residential areas
 - Active/sports
 - Elderly or disabled
 - Picnic areas
 - Middle and South Georgia
 - ATV/OHV/motorcycle
 - All ages
2. Increase trails/connectivity
 - Hiking/walking
 - Bicycle–mountain and others
 - ATV/OHV/motorcycle
 - Equine
 - Closer to home/residential areas
3. Increase conservation/preservation
 - Acquire more land
4. Update/upgrade existing facilities
 - Restrooms
5. Improve/increase maintenance of existing facilities
 - Reduce litter/trash
 - Restrooms

1. Lack of money
 - Increase grants
 - More budget flexibility
2. Low priority/support
 - Equine
 - Protecting Piedmont Park (Atlanta)
3. Rapid urbanization/development pressure
4. Land scarcity/loss of public land
5. Activism
 - Environmental
 - Anti OHV/ATV/motorcycle
6. Lack of knowledge/education of benefits/value of outdoor recreation
7. Competing interests/needs/values

High School Youth

Recreation Professionals

Managers of Large Acreage Tracts

WHY is outdoor recreation important to you and your family?

1. Good opportunity for family time/bonding in nature
2. Provide fun and relaxation

1. Has a positive influence on character
 2. Positive impact on physical and mental health
- Other, less frequently mentioned responses:
- Provide a diversity of opportunity/activity
 - Positive impact on quality of life
 - Connection with nature
 - Educational opportunities
 - Contribute to a sense of community

Not applicable

WHAT should be done to improve outdoor recreation in your area?

1. Increase access to/convenience of/opportunities at outdoor recreation resources
 2. Increase number of trails/paths/sidewalks specifically for walking/hiking, biking, and jogging/running
- Other improvements mentioned:
- Updating and maintaining existing facilities and resources
 - Reduce trash/litter at existing facilities

1. Increase funding overall for outdoor recreation
 2. Need for more money for maintenance and operations
 3. Educate the public and officials on the value/benefits of outdoor recreation
 4. Increase/improve communication/collaboration among partners, particularly closer coordination between the Georgia Municipal Association (GMA) and the Association County Commissioners of Georgia (ACCG) on outdoor recreation issues
- Other solutions noted:
- Expand/update/maintain existing resources and facilities
 - Increase conservation/preservation efforts
 - Increase/improve/diversify marketing and public relations

1. Adopt a market based approach
 - Go where the users are
 - Maintain, update and rehabilitate existing facilities
2. Increase education/knowledge of the benefits/values of outdoor recreation in terms of economic impact, human character and health
3. Focus on mission, both nature based and passive
4. Increase/improve communication/collaboration between providers and partners
5. Link outdoor recreation/nature to communities
 - Aim for everyone to live within a 15 minute walk of some form of outdoor recreation
 - Increase connectivity to schools, existing parks and downtowns

WHAT obstacles will prevent improvements from being made?

1. Low priority/support of outdoor recreation
 2. Need to make outdoor recreation more appealing to all ages including activities that are more teen oriented
- Other frequently mentioned obstacles:
- Ignorance/lack of education about benefits/value of outdoor recreation
 - Lack of money
 - Development pressures/competition
 - Perception not safe/secure

1. Low priority/support for recreation
 2. Competing interests/needs/values (specifically, development pressures)
 3. Lack of funding, specifically lack of a consistent funding stream
- Other frequently mentioned obstacles were:
- Ignorance/lack of education on benefits/value of outdoor recreation
 - Inadequate planning, specifically lax land use/development regulations
 - Lack of flexibility/fear of trying something new

1. Doing more with less, decreasing funds, budget cuts
2. Increasing demand/use
3. Competing interests, needs, and values (particularly related to fisherman vs. paddlers and ATVs)
4. Demographic shifts (especially related to ethnic/cultural diversity)
5. Development pressure on public lands (e.g., hotels and resort development)

Appendix C: How SCORP Relates to Other Planning Documents and Surveys of DNR and DHR

- 1 Coastal Management Plan
- 2 2005 Survey by DNR of Attitudes of the Public, Stakeholders, and Employees
- 3 DNR Strategic Plan
- 4 Georgia Land Conservation Plan
- 5 DHR Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan
- 6 Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy

Coastal Management Plan

Guiding Principle or Issue	Plan Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
Database development for natural & social elements	Obj. 1; Program Goal	Call for database
Promote recreational opportunities	Obj. 2; Program Goal	Self-evident
Promote impact assessments for green developments	Obj. 4; Program Goal	Promote good development
Promote collaborative participation	Obj.3; Goal 3; Program Goals	GORP
Encourage public input	Obj.3; Goal 4; Program Goals	Survey, calls for constituent-preference monitoring, database development, etc.
Technical assistance to local governments	Obj.3; Goal 3; Program Goals	GORP, Technical Assistance Branch
Support of wildlife and biodiversity conservation	Obj.1-5; Goal 1; Resource Goals	Resource Conservation one of three tenants of the SCORP
Support for clean water	Obj.10; Goal 1; Resource Goals	Wetlands per Section 303, discussion of environmental quality & ecosystem services
Support for wetlands	Obj.14; Goal 1; Resource Goals	Wetlands focus per Section 303

2005 Survey by DNR of Attitudes of the Public, Stakeholders, and Employees

Guiding Principle or Issue	Survey Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
DNR & Employees cited preservation and maintenance of existing historic and archaeological sites a major concern related to urban sprawl	Exec. Summ. 4th bullet	Urbanization a continual theme. Focus on maintenance and operation of sites also a continual theme
Public cited too few facilities or poor quality facilities for outdoor recreation	Exec. Summ. 5th bullet	Too few, poor condition a continual theme
Public cited sub-par performance for DNR in non-regulatory assistance and land acquisition	Exec. Summ. 13th bullet	GORP, Technical Assistance Unit
Public cited great performance for DNR in recreation	Exec. Summ. 14th bullet	Attentive to public preferences
Public said education and outreach were very important, but DNR's performance was not up to par	Exec. Summ. 15th bullet	Identified need for additional outreach
Public placed the highest level of importance among issues of recreation, education, non-regulatory assistance, outreach, and communications	Exec. Summ. 22nd bullet	GORP, Technical Assistance Unit
Top performance ratings among public was for management of state parks	Exec. Summ. 24th bullet	Attentive to public preferences
Land acquisition very important to public – more so than other programs of importance	Exec. Summ. 34th bullet	Strong focus on land acquisition
Lowest ratings for DNR performance were related to issues of land protection for urbanizing areas, obtaining federal funding, and long-range planning	Exec. Summ. 35th bullet	Continual theme
Largest disparity between importance and DNR's performance was with land acquisition	Exec. Summ. 39th bullet	Continual theme
DNR employees rated land acquisition performance highest for parks, historic, archaeological, cultural areas, and public fishing areas	Exec. Summ. 41st bullet	Attentive to public preferences
Public: Top importance for recreation was for variety of opportunities	Exec. Summ. 57th bullet	Focus on diversity of activities and attentiveness to demographic groups
Public: Importance ratings higher than performance ratings for outdoor recreation opportunities, and for recreation on state lands	Exec. Summ. 59th bullet	Continual theme
Public & Employees: Importance ratings for recreation were highest for recreation opportunities beyond fishing, hunting, or boating	Exec. Summ. 60th, 63rd bullet	Focus on diversity of activities and attentiveness to demographic groups
All groups: Importance ratings inverse of DNR performance ratings for recreation	Exec. Summ. 62nd bullet	Attentive to public preferences
Education on state parks rated highly among all groups with respect to importance	Exec. Summ. 69th bullet	Attentive to public preferences, Focus on education & outreach
Public rated high importance for programs providing grants and technical assistance	Exec. Summ. 79th bullet	GORP, Technical Assistance Unit
Public rates most important outdoor recreation issue: 21% (second highest response) Not enough parks	p. 14	Attentive to public preferences
Outdoor recreation was the highest rated issue among employees of DNR and stakeholders	p. 16, 18	Attentive to public preferences Focus on acquisition & activities diversification
Public: low quantity/quality sites a top problem	p. 20	Focus on facilities rehabilitation



DNR Strategic Plan

Guiding Principle or Issue	Plan Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
Resource inventory and monitoring	p.3	SCORP Survey of public opinion & assets
Public use and access	p.3	Re-occurring theme and conclusion
Safe, high-quality recreational opportunities	p.7 (Objective 1 - Public Access Issue)	A continual theme
Building a conservation ethic	p.6	A continual theme
Public education, outreach, and communications	p.7 (Objective 1)	A continual theme
Science-based decision-making	p.7 (Objective 1 - Resource Management Issue)	A continual theme
Ecosystem functions - clean water, clean air, biodiversity, recreational and educational opportunities	p.10	Focus on wetlands
Recognition that DNR is only one part of resource conservation in the state (DNR facilitates collaboration) & need for stakeholder-participation	pp.10, 12	Elevation of importance of local service providers
Public/private partnerships	p.10	GORP, DNR w/ local service providers, cooperating with NGOs
Expand DNR technical assistance	p.11	Technical Assistance Unit, GORP
All levels of government	p.12	Continual theme throughout document
Recognize economic benefit of tourism	pp.12, 14 (Objective 2 - Public Access Issue)	Economic benefits of recreation areas one of three Strategic Directions
Recognize a diversity of outdoor activities - not heavily skewed toward hunting	p.13 (Objective 2 - Resource Management)	SCORP survey, recognize need to diversify based on culture and age preferences
Quantify economic impacts	p.14	Element of economic vitality
Encourage tourism	p.14	Tourism a continual theme
Resource awareness & responsibility	p.18 (Obj. 1 - Public Ed)	Educating public & officials of value of recreation & recreation lands
Public involvement	p.19 (Obj. 1 - Public Ed)	SCORP survey, call for local needs assessment
Sustainable economic development	p.2 (Obj. 3 - Regulatory Issue)	Encouraging developers to build 'green'

Georgia Land Conservation Plan

Guiding Principle or Issue	Plan Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
Prioritizing land protection	Recommendation 1	Local needs assessment
Integration of local governments	Recommendation 2	Focus on local service providers
Partnerships	Recommendation 3	Continual theme
Secure reliable (consistent) funding source	Recommendation 7	Repeated objective
Explore alternate funding sources	p. 71	Repeatedly mentioned
Critical value of land resources	Guiding principles	Repeatedly mentioned
Quality of life, economic competitiveness	Guiding principles	Repeatedly mentioned
Focus on planning	Guiding principles	Repeatedly mentioned, particularly for local service providers

DHR Nutrition and Physical Activity Plan

Guiding Principle or Issue	Plan Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
Greenspace in developments	p.34 Community Setting #4	Recommendation in the Economic Vitality section
Educate community officials	p.34 Community Setting #4	Continual theme
Promote pedestrian and non-motorized protection	p.34 Community Setting #4	Continual theme, focus on active recreation
Skill-building for physical activity	p.37 Community Setting #8	Outdoor recreation facilities and activities are safe
Assessing barriers	p.40	A fundamental element of SCORP
Promoting access to activity programs	p.40	Mirrors effort to improve access to recreation areas
Assessing college curriculum (targeted to medical)	p.49	Mirrors effort to support leisure-services curricula
Provide joint-training opportunities (including CMEs and CEUs).	p.50	Mirrors effort to support leisure-services curricula
Educate health insurance plan providers and legislators on the benefits of physical activity in preventing disease	p.50	Implementation issue discussed for GORP, not in SCORP per se
Promote reimbursement for physical activity via Medicare, PeachCare, private insurance and state health benefits plans.	p.50	Implementation issue discussed for GORP, not in SCORP per se
Provide training to schools via resource guides for physical activity / outdoor recreation	p.52	Outdoor classroom concept
Promote state standard for physical activity in schools	p.55	Outdoor classroom concept
Provide skill-building opportunities as part of worksite wellness programs.	p.57	Implementation issue for GORP. Work with private partners
Maintain and enhance current surveillance systems to monitor physical activity.	p.58	Monitoring attendance, use, preferences, DCA Comprehensive Planning Docs, etc.
Implement tools to monitor policy changes related to physical activity at the community level.	p.58	Educating local governments, rewarding and assisting proactive partners
Collaborate with the Philanthropic Collaborative for a Healthy Georgia.	p.58	GORP, more than SCORP, calls for working with philanthropic community

Comprehensive Wildlife Conservation Strategy

(a.k.a.: State Wildlife Action Plan)

Guiding Principle or Issue	Plan Reference	SCORP Continuity - Cohesion
Conduct a statewide wetland mapping and assessment effort.	p. 172 Statewide Themes: Highest Priority Actions	Wetlands focus
Develop projections of future land use trends.	p. 172 Statewide Themes: Highest Priority Actions	Land-use trends, local assessment of recreation needs
Assess environmental literacy among the public.	p. 180	Conservation-ethic, education missions
Develop educational materials to deliver conservation messages to the public.	p. 181	Education of public & officials on value of recreation areas
Establish a network of regional educators and community contacts to provide workshops and programs for key conservation.	p. 181	Education of public & officials on value of rec areas
Establish a consistent source of funding for land protection for wildlife conservation.	p. 181	Continual theme
Improve capacity to work with corporate landowners.	p. 181	A task identified for GORP
Provide technical support through staff or contractors.	p. 181	GORP, Technical Assistance Unit

D

SCORP



Appendix D: SCORP Public Comment Summary

The public comment period for the draft plan of the 2008–2013 Georgia State Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) was open from May 22, 2007 to midnight on June 22, 2007. Interested people could download the draft plan from the PRHSD website and submit their comments at the same site. PRHSD also accepted written comments mailed to their office. Staff also mailed hard copies of the draft plan to those people who requested. Both online and mailed comments are included in this summary.

Eighty total responses, some with multiple comments, were received during the public comment period.

There were five categories of comments that were mentioned more than five times. They are listed below:

Increase equine access/opportunity (20 mentions)

Specifically mentioned were the following:

- Longer trails, 10 to 20 miles
- Areas for camping with horses
- Space for trucks and horse trailers
- More opportunity in southwest Georgia

Increase conservation/preservation of natural resources including land and wildlife (14 mentions)

Specifically mentioned were the following:

- Conservation of large, undeveloped tracts
- Conservation of native species and habitats
- Conservation of greenspace
- Less development in parks
- More coastal parks
- Conservation of land along streams, rivers and in watersheds

Increase birding access/opportunity (11 mentions)

Increase access/opportunities for OHV (off highway vehicle)/ATV/motorcycle (7 mentions)

Specifically:

- Increase access in Atlanta area
- Keep horse and hiking trails separate
- Tighter restrictions on off highway vehicles

Increase number of state/public parks (6 mentions)

Specifically:

- In the Savannah area
- In the Lake Lanier area
- In rural areas of the state

There were many other topics that came up more than once. These are listed below:

Increase land acquisition (5 mentions)

Specifically:

- Near residential areas
- Near work areas
- Near small/rural towns
- Both local and state acquisitions

Increase access to, use of, and increase variety of activities offered in existing parks and facilities (5 mentions)

Specifically:

- Open Wildlife Management Areas to more activities

Increase tent camping (4 mentions)

Specifically:

- Allow reservation of specific sites
- Separate from RV camping areas
- Increase quiet/peaceful camping areas away from more active recreation
- Increase camping opportunities in the Atlanta area

Increase number of trails (4 mentions)

Specifically:

- Hiking
- Biking
- Interpretive
- Near Atlanta

Increase outdoor recreation funding (4 mentions)

Specifically:

- For school recreation equipment
- For parks and historic sites
- For wildlife management
- For construction/acquisition of new facilities

Increase water access (4 mentions)

Specifically:

- Boat ramp at U.S. Hwy 41 and the Chattahoochee River
- Increase law enforcement and good stewardship on water

Increase use of volunteers (4 mentions)

Specifically:

- Trail maintenance
- Interpretation

Improve/increase use of technology (3 mentions)

Specifically:

- Improve online reservation system
- Increase details of park facilities on website
- Provide for wired and wireless internet access in parks

Increase interpretation (3 mentions)

Specifically:

- Increase interpretive staff, perhaps using volunteers
- Increase interpretative signs, trail maps and other media

Increase linear parks and connectivity between parks (3 mentions)

Increase separation between quiet/passive activities and active/noisy activities (3 mentions)

Increase funding for maintenance and operations (2 mentions)

Increase nature based education (2 mentions)

Increase/improve access for disabled and elderly (2 mentions)

Increase collaboration between parks (2 mentions)

In addition to the previous comments that were identified more than once, there were several individual comments and some that were specific to areas of the state. These follow:

Playground at Kennesaw Mountain National Battlefield Park

Increase yurt access

Increase use of fire to promote biodiversity

Albany, Georgia issues, specifically:

- Radium Springs site needs to be improved so people can access it
- Chehaw Park needs stable funding

Outdoor recreation is a vital urban escape

Increase off-leash dog areas

No more hotels should be constructed in state parks

Bid concession services out to private contractors

Number of Comments by City or Town

Acworth	1	Dacula	1	Lithia Springs	1
Albany	1	Dallas	1	Loganville	1
Alpharetta	1	Decatur	1	Macon	1
Athens	2	Douglas	1	Marietta	6
Atlanta	4	Duluth	1	Nicholson	1
Augusta	1	Dunwoody	1	Palmetto	1
Avondale Estates	1	Eatonton	1	Rincon	1
Bainbridge	1	Elberton	1	Rome	1
Barnesville	2	Ellijay	2	Snellville	2
Bishop	1	Fitzgerald	2	Statesboro	2
Blairsville	1	Glendale	1	Suches	1
Blue Ridge	2	Greensboro	1	Summerville	1
Bonaire	1	Grovetown	1	Talking Rock	1
Bowdon	1	Haddock	1	Tennille	1
Calhoun	1	Hampton	1	Toombsboro	1
Canton	1	Hiram	1	Tucker	3
Cleveland	1	Hogansville	1	Tybee Island	1
Conyers	2	Hoschton	1	Valdosta	1
Culloden	1	Kennesaw	2		
Cumming	1	Lawrenceville	2		

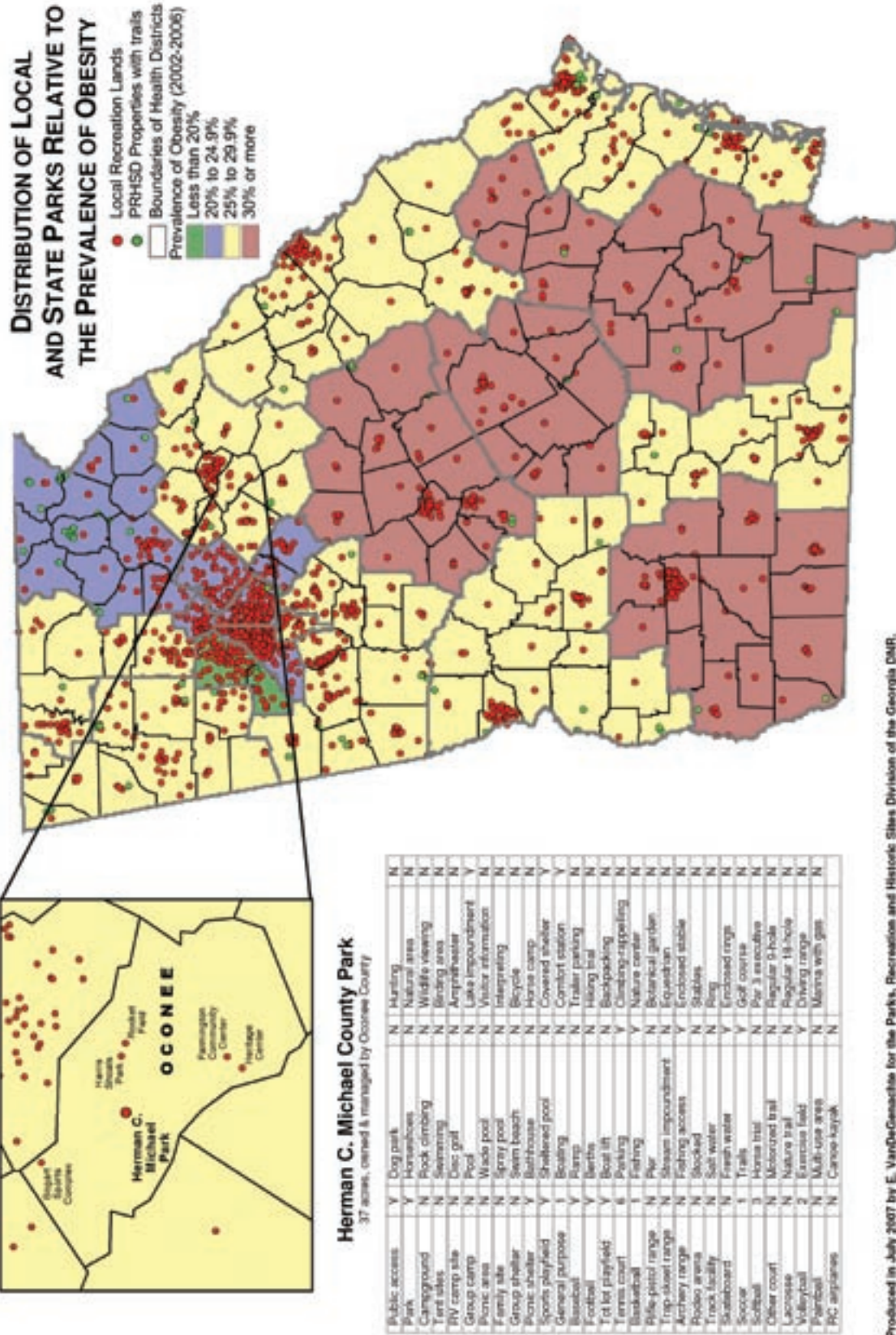


Appendix E: Interactive Website Mapping of Recreation and Conservation Areas

The PRHSD is working with several partners to make it easy for people to locate local and state parks and to learn about the amenities they provide by producing an online mapping program. As it is envisioned, the public would be able to search for recreation sites that provide specific amenities, or simply identify parks that are close to their homes or travel destinations.

The map on the following page provides an idea of the kind of results visitors can expect to see from the website once it is up and running.

While this interactive website is still undergoing development, a link will be established on the PRHSD website once it is ready for public launch sometime before the summer of 2008. The link is www.GeorgiaStateParks.org/SCORP.



Produced in July 2007 by E. VanDeGensdille for the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division of the Georgia DNR.



RESOLUTION

Georgia Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) 2008-2013

WHEREAS, Georgia Code 12-3-1 requires the Department of Natural Resources to appraise recreational needs in Georgia, assist local governments in recreation planning, establish and promote recreation standards and develop a state policy on outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, a Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP) is required for continued eligibility for federal funding under the Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), as managed by National Park Service for the United States Department of Interior; and

WHEREAS, over the past 40 years, Georgia's SCORP has guided the federal allocation of over \$75 million in LWCF grant funds to the state and its local governments; and

WHEREAS, these funds have been matched to achieve over \$150 million in direct outdoor recreation investments for Georgia citizens and visitors; and

WHEREAS, through these LWCF-leveraged investments, Georgia has protected important natural resources, developed an array of outdoor recreation facilities, rehabilitated existing outdoor recreation assets and provided affordable and accessible recreational opportunities for all; and

WHEREAS, to fulfill the requirements of the law and LWCF program, the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division convened an Advisory Committee to assist in updating SCORP; and

WHEREAS, SCORP 2008-2013 is based on extensive public input, a comprehensive inventory, an analysis of trends and benchmarks, a statistically-valid public opinion survey, as well as input from a broad array of allied federal, state and local governments and non-profit agencies; and

WHEREAS, the findings of the eighteen month effort reveal a sense of urgency due to rapid urbanization and loss of greenspace, changing demographics, obesity and declining health, a diminished conservation ethic, the desire for economic growth in local communities, and the growing support for outdoor recreation; and


WHEREAS, SCORP 2008-2013 addresses the findings through forward thinking strategic actions that will guide and enable jurisdictions to work with citizens, non-profit support organizations, business and service delivery partners to address the challenges facing our state and find new and innovative ways to maximize opportunities to ensure a healthy and prosperous Georgia with abundant greenspace and recreation opportunities for future generations to enjoy; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Georgia Board of Natural Resources adopts SCORP 2008-2013 as Georgia's official policy document guiding the provision of outdoor recreation for the next five years; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Department of Natural Resources Commissioner will incorporate this resolution into the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division's operating policy manual and seek all opportunities to ensure continuous implementation of SCORP 2008-2013, including the creation of the Georgia Outdoor Recreation Partnership (GORP), a task force comprised of the SCORP Advisory Committee, representatives from state agencies, allied organizations and others charged with the responsibility to ensure implementation of SCORP recommendations.


Adopted this 29th day of August, 2007

Respectfully submitted by:

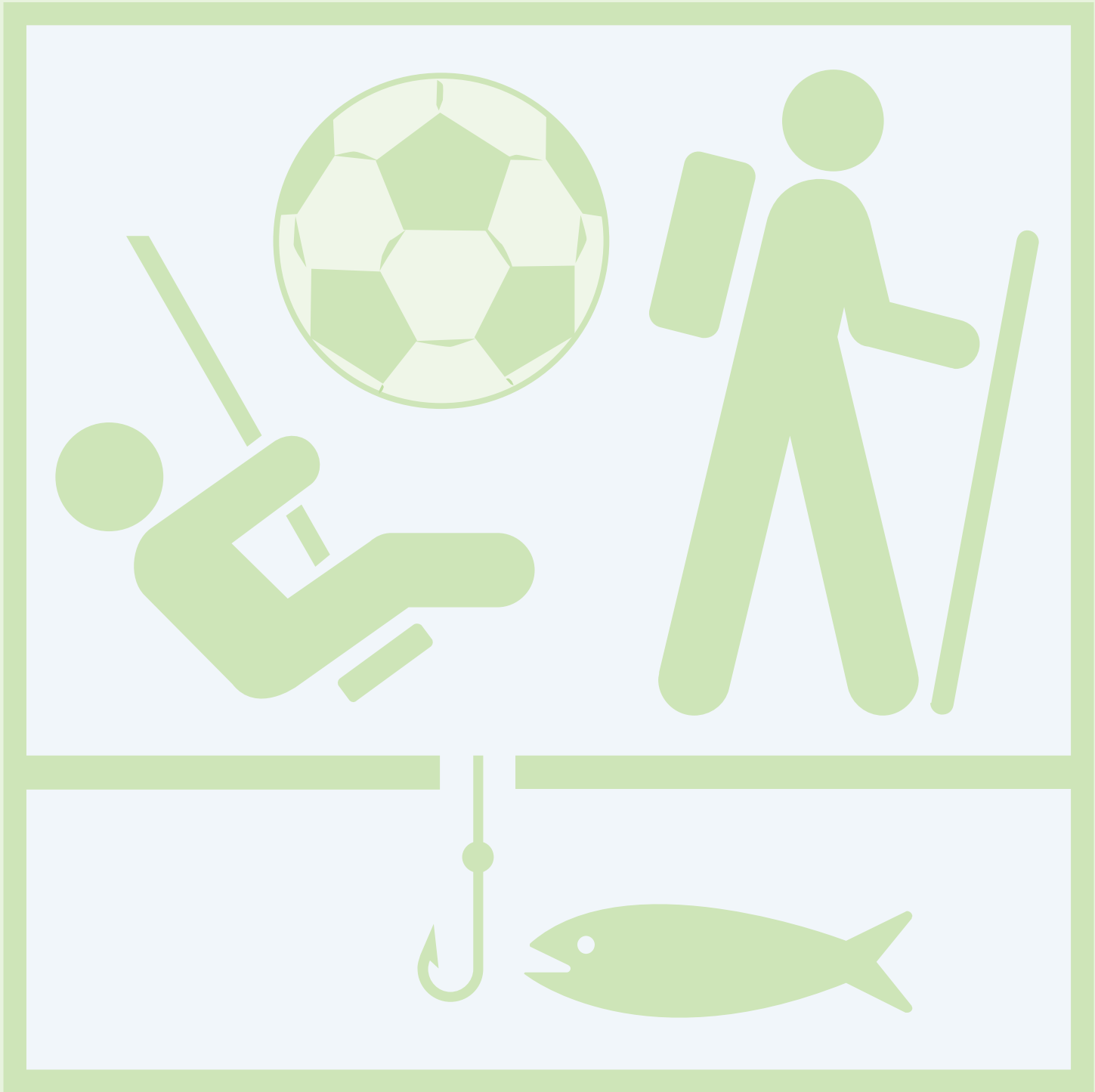


J.A. Walters, Chairman
Georgia Board of Natural Resources

ATTEST:



Secretary



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Outdoor
Recreation
Strategies to
Enhance
Georgia's
Future for
Health and
Livability,
Economic
Vitality and
Resource
Conservation

SCORP

Georgia Statewide Comprehensive
Outdoor Recreation Plan 2008-2013

