

Board Prospectus

**You can make a real difference in your community, and in your children's future . . .
Please consider joining the Board of Southern Conservation Trust**

- o Does the loss of natural areas in your community concern you?
- o Do you want to improve your local water and air quality, and decrease habitat loss for wildlife?
- o If you could, would you like to make a lasting difference and leave a legacy of nature for future generations?
- o Are you a visionary and possess the skills and contacts to help bring about positive change in our community?
- o Would you like to serve on the Board of an established, successful, dynamic, and growing community nonprofit?

Benefits of Board Service



- o Personally contribute to protecting valuable natural land for future generations
- o Be a leader in improving your community's quality of life
- o Gain expertise in conservation tools and benefits and nonprofit management
- o Expand your business & professional network

The Problem

- o Now that new construction projects have begun throughout the greater South Metro Atlanta area, it is even more important than ever that efforts be made to maintain a balance of nature and development. Prior to the slowdown, almost half the development in Metro Atlanta was taking place on the Southside. This may be the case once again as Fayette County experiences growth with the addition of Pinewood River Studios and Coweta develops its growing medical community.
- o Fayette, Coweta, and neighboring counties still have an abundance of open land, and it is now more affordable than ever. Investors will take advantage of these depressed prices. Development pressures are once again increasing as the economy and real estate markets rebound.
- o As development pressure returns and land prices increase, agricultural land values and property taxes will inevitably rise. This translates to escalating carrying costs for landowners, potentially making farming and open space unaffordable in developing areas.

- o Loss of open space = loss of productive forests and farmland, polluted water, reduced habitat for wildlife, loss of community character and deteriorating quality of life. In a five year period surrounding the 2000's real estate peak (2002 – 2007), Fayette County lost almost 35% of its farmland. Left unprotected, this rate of conversion will undoubtedly happen again.
- o Who gets the farm? The average age of farmers in Fayette County is 60, in Coweta and Meriwether Counties its 58. Even now, land costs are a barrier for younger farmers.
- o Water quantity and quality of the Flint River Basin is and continues to be at risk.
- o You explored in the woods, waded in streams, ran through open meadows . . . do your children? Will your grandchildren and their children have the same opportunity to connect to the natural world?

The Opportunity

- o Open space is still available in the Southern Crescent, and it will eventually be at risk for development
 - 10% of Fayette County is farmland; 29% is forested
 - 26% of Coweta County is farmland; 62% is forested
- o Growth of niche agricultural markets: organic produce & meat; locally grown “slow” food; ornamental horticulture; Christmas trees, etc
- o Agriculture is a valuable component of our local economy
- o Increasing interest in greenspace protection/the environment/climate change
 - Voters in seven Metro Atlanta counties, and in the city of Smyrna, have passed land acquisition funding measures in the past decade
- o Open space is good for the economy: it increases property values, makes our communities more desirable places to live and do business



The Solution

Southern Conservation Trust is a community land trust. The Trust owns, manages, and permanently preserves natural land.

- o An accredited land trust with a focus on the Flint River corridor
- o Well capitalized, with a \$500,000 + Operating Reserve and generous property endowment funds set aside for conservation programs
- o A history of success: 2428+ acres owned, managed, and permanently protected from development
 - 5 public preserves provide education and recreation opportunities for local families
 - Conservation easements in five counties
 - Strong partnerships with funders, conservation partners, local governments, civic organizations and businesses



Mission & History

Southern Conservation Trust is a nonprofit conservation and environmental education organization based in Peachtree City, Fayette County, Georgia. The Trust was established in 1993 by community leaders who played active roles in the development of Peachtree City. The Trust was organized as a *land trust* - a private nonprofit organization whose purpose is to permanently protect land and natural resources.

Southern Conservation Trust currently owns, manages or protects over 2,428 acres of conservation land in Fayette, South Fulton, Meriwether, Oglethorpe and Clayton Counties. The Trust manages 6 public nature areas for outdoor recreation and as an environmental education resource. We also host nature programs to build appreciation for our community's natural resources.

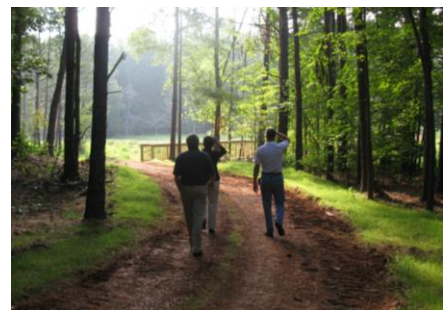
Southern Conservation Trust has built a deserved reputation as a responsible, well managed, and fiscally sound nonprofit with more than \$3.8 million in assets. The Trust is well positioned to grow strategically in support of our mission.

Current Programs & Achievements

Our Nature Preserves

o Public Preserves

- o **Peachtree City Preserves:** The Trust operates two public preserves for the City of Peachtree City with the ongoing assistance of local businesses, civic organizations, and dedicated volunteers.
 - o The Trust managed the construction of the 1000' boardwalk and nature trail at **Flat Creek Nature Area**, installed tree identification signage and publishes an educational brochure.
 - o At **Line Creek Nature Area** the Trust installed more than two miles of trails, constructed a fishing dock, picnic gazebo and small meeting area and installed an information kiosk. This year new trail signage and rehabilitation of the trails is in process. The new wetland stormwater project is now in process.
- o **Sams Lake Sanctuary**, donated to the Trust in the mid-90's, offers 3 observation decks, a wetland overlook and benches that provide visitors a close-up look at a naturally evolving wetland habitat and diverse wildlife. Partners include the City of Atlanta, the Rotary Club of Peachtree City, and local Eagle Scouts and community volunteers.
- o **Nesmith Preserve/Environmental Study Area**, opened in 2015 so Starr's Mill Complex students may have hands-on experiential environmental learning. The 200' boardwalk through the wetlands of the preserve provides sampling platform allowing access to the pond. More than 9,000 students will explore the area annually. Area is open to the public on evenings and weekends.
- o **The Morgan Grove Preserve** was donated to the Trust in 2006. Half of the 60 acre property was logged, so the Trust is developing the preserve as a re-forestation demonstration site with wildlife enhancements and a professionally designed trail system including educational components.
- o **Fayetteville Preserve:** Now in development is The Ridge Nature Area through a partnership with the city of Fayetteville. This 308 acre nature preserve will have a host of features – planned to open 2016.

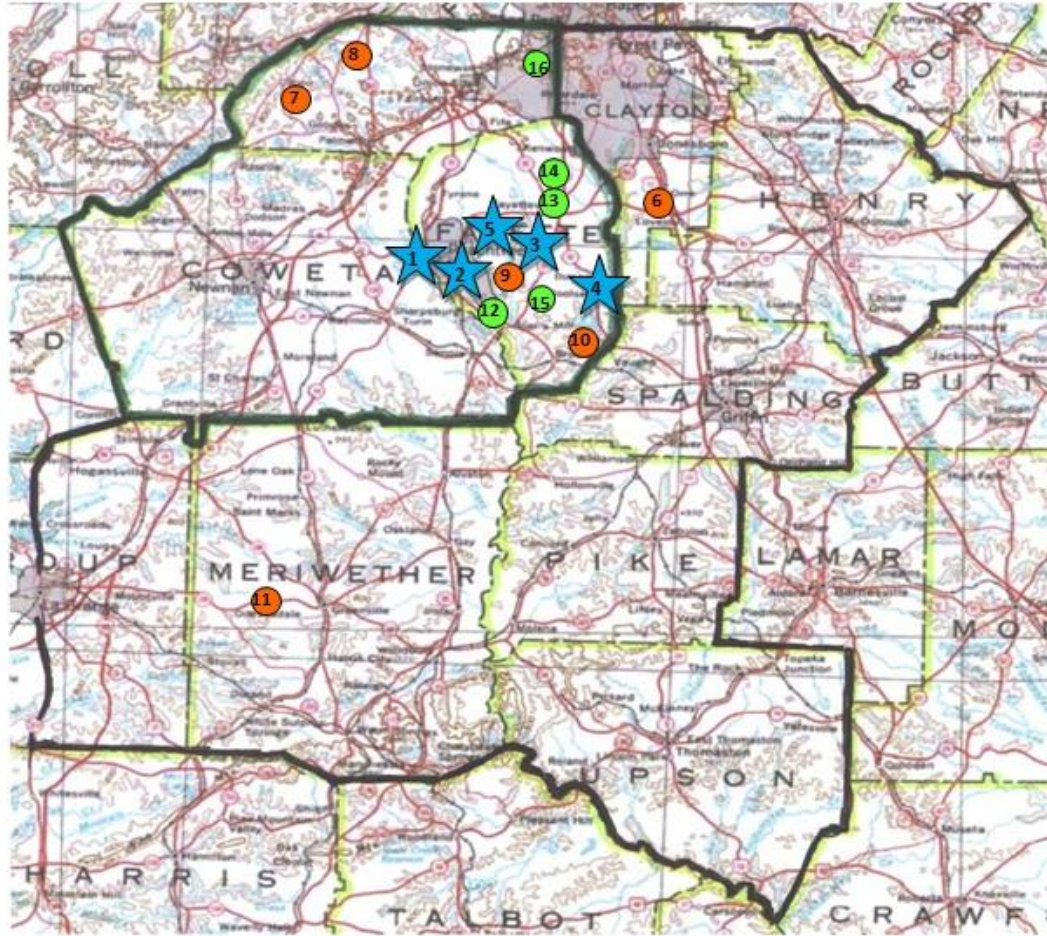


- o **Private Preserves:** The Trust also owns 5 private preserves in Fayette and Fulton Counties.
- o **Permanent Preserve Fund:** To cover ongoing management costs, the Trust administers a Permanent Preserve Fund. The Trust raises resources from the community to enhance the preserves it owns and manages.

Map of Protected and Managed Preserves:



CONSERVATION PORTFOLIO



★ Public Nature Areas ● Private Preserve ● Conservation Easement

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|-----|---|------|---|
| ★ 1 | Line Creek Nature Area - Open to the public | ● 8 | "Cackle Corner" - Conservation Easement |
| ★ 2 | Flat Creek Nature Area - Open to the public | ● 9 | Camp Southern Ground/GM - Easement |
| ★ 3 | Sams Lake Bird Sanctuary - Open to the public | ● 10 | Rowland Rd - Conservation Easement |
| ★ 4 | Morgan Grove - Open to the public | ● 11 | Bogle Family Farm - Conservation Easement |
| ★ 5 | The Ridge - In development | ● 12 | Nesmith Preserve - private preserve |
| ● 6 | Hudgins Wetland Preserve - Easement | ● 13 | Bay Branch - private preserve |
| ● 7 | "The Retreat" - Conservation Easement | ● 14 | Shockley Preserve - private preserve |
| | | ● 15 | Cowan Preserve - Private Preserve |
| | | ● 16 | Legere Preserve - Private Preserve |



Private Land Conservation

Southern Conservation Trust permanently protects private property from development by accepting the donation of a conservation easement, which allows the landowner to continue to own and use his land as he wishes, and offers potential federal, state, estate and property tax benefits. The Trust holds 9 easements in 5 counties, including 2 in Chattahoochee Hills through Georgia's 1st transfer of development rights program.

As the easement holder, the Trust has a perpetual responsibility to monitor each protected property annually and enforce the easement terms, including legal action if necessary. To cover these costs, the Trust manages an Easement Stewardship Fund of \$77,000.

The Trust hosts educational programs throughout our focus area to spread the word about land conservation tools and the tax benefits available.

Outreach, Fundraising & Administration



The Trust seeks to increase its visibility as the region's conservation leader through its Nature Matters newsletter, monthly email blasts, a dynamic website, press releases, educational programming, and community events. The Trust seeks to expand its influence through networking with national and state conservation organizations, and local and state government agencies.

The Trust has a pro-active fundraising effort, which includes membership, events, direct appeals, grants, and a business stewardship opportunity.

Additional resources include scout, civic and community support.

Organizationally, the Trust:

- o is compliant with federal and state nonprofit regulations
- o adheres to Best Management Practices for Nonprofits
- o has adopted the Standards & Practices of the national organization for land trusts, the Land Trust Alliance, and achieved Trust Alliance Accreditation in 2015.
- o is a member of the Georgia Alliance of Land Trusts and the Georgia Center for Nonprofits.
- o is governed by an annual Work Plan and Budget of approximately \$200,000.

Looking to the Future



In 2016, the Board will help accomplish Conservation Program goals including acquisitions, managing the development of the Ridge Nature Area, and engaging in a partnership with the American Rivers and Flint Riverkeeper along with conservation groups to protect the Flint River corridor.

The Board's most critical role will be to develop and lead the implementation of the Trust's fifth Three Year Strategic Plan, which will provide the direction and resources for the Trust's next phase of conservation success.

Strategic Plan goals include: strengthening the skills of the Board of Directors; engaging the Trust's Advisory Board to assist with building organizational capacity; having an effective committee structure; and increasing organizational capacity with an increase in volunteer or project specific expertise and productive staff.

The Board of Directors

In planning for the future, the Board is seeking to add dedicated members who will bring a diversity of perspective, share their management expertise, and are willing to tap into their community network to provide the resources that will support the Trust's current programming and future growth.

Recruitment priorities include:

- o Strategic Planning
- o Environmental/Business/Nonprofit Development
- o Marketing, Technology & Public Relations
- o Business Management & Finance
- o Strategic alliances and partnerships

Responsibilities of a Board Member

- o To have a genuine commitment to the Trust's land conservation mission, and interest in understanding the way it functions--its uniqueness, strengths, and needs.
- o To prepare for, regularly attend, and actively participate in monthly Board and committee meetings. Each Board member is expected to serve on at least one of the following committees: Land & Property Enhancement, Human Resource/Board Development, Financial Resource Development, Community Engagement/PR/Marketing, and occasional ad hoc committees relating to events. Total expected time investment = 4-10 hours/month.
- o To responsibly manage the Trust's assets, both land and financial resources, for long-term viability.
- o To be an ambassador, both in heightening awareness of the Trust among business, community, and government leadership, and in bringing to the organization information from its stakeholders that is vital for planning.
- o To be available for consultation and willing to share expertise to enhance the organization.
- o To lead fundraising efforts, including participating in fundraising training, hosting and attending events, identifying potential financial resources, developing in-kind donations for the organization, providing access to your network of business and personal associates, participating in outreach to donor prospects, and making a "personally substantial" contribution.
- o Commitment for 2016:
 - o Three year commitment
 - o Assist with fundraising through personal donation, introductions and one-on-one solicitation

Are you ready to make a real and lasting difference in your community? For a small investment of time and resources, you can leave a legacy of beautiful natural land, abundant resources, and a thriving community for future generations.

Please contact us about serving on the Trust's Board of Directors; we look forward to hearing from you soon.