

Georgia Conservancy



FYE 2016

IMPACT REPORT

A Georgia where People and the Environment thrive.

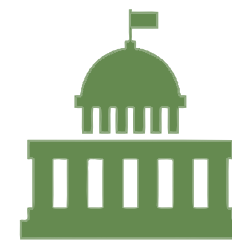


The Georgia Conservancy is a statewide, member-supported conservation organization. Our work for environmental advocacy, land conservation, coastal protection, sustainable growth and outdoor stewardship recognizes the connection between the environment, the economy and our quality of life.

Our Mission Is To Protect & Conserve Georgia's Natural Resources Through Advocacy, Engagement & Collaboration.

WHAT WE DO

The Georgia Conservancy's five programmatic areas work throughout the state to advance our mission and conserve Georgia's land and water.



ADVOCACY



SUSTAINABLE
GROWTH



LAND
CONSERVATION



COASTAL
GEORGIA



STEWARDSHIP
TRIPS

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

OUR GOALS FOR THE FUTURE

1

Protect, conserve, and restore Georgia's land, water, and biodiversity.

2

Promote and implement sustainable practices throughout Georgia.

3

Remain Georgia's leading conservation organization.

4

Acquire the resources needed for long-term financial viability.

As we approach the Georgia Conservancy's 50th Anniversary in 2017 and settle into our new offices in a resurgent Downtown Atlanta, it is natural to reflect upon the many ways that the Georgia Conservancy has played a role in advancing a culture of conservation in this state. Whenever we set foot on the deserted beaches of Cumberland Island, or explore the bottomland forests of the lower Altamaha River, or take a stroll down a vibrant main street in one of our small towns, we are reminded of the collaborative vision and tremendous efforts that it took to conserve these incredible precious places.

This history has not only laid the foundation for our ongoing efforts during the last 12 months, its inspiration also remains very present in our programmatic work in land conservation, advocacy, sustainable growth and stewardship trips.

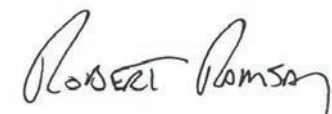
Many of our early successes in land conservation, starting the late 1960s, are now public properties such as Sweetwater Creek State Park and Panola Mountain –well-known destinations of hundreds of thousands of people seeking respite and recreation every year. Though the model for large-scale conservation at the Georgia Conservancy has shifted much of its focus to the conservation and restoration of private lands through conservation easements and other mechanisms, our efforts still include support for the addition of ecologically-rich lands into the public realm. In 2015, through the collaborative advocacy efforts of the Georgia Conservancy and many partner groups, the State acquired 4,000-acre Altama Plantation in Glynn County – a tract that will restore connectivity to other conservation corridors on our coast and along the lower Altamaha River, as well as provide recreation opportunities as a state Wildlife Management Area.

Our advocacy efforts at the State Capitol during the 2016 legislative session continued to forward the vision that our founders had for the organization in 1967. By being proactive, engaging and willing to listen to all sides of an issue, our advocacy team successfully pushed for a moratorium on petroleum pipelines in our state until measures are secured that can ensure our state's natural resources remain protected. Our approach to private land conservation led us to pursue and successfully advocate for an extension of the state's land conservation tax credit program, providing for thousands of Georgia landowners a strong financial incentive to restore or conserve their lands.

During the 20th Anniversary of our Blueprints for Successful Communities, this past year, the work of our Sustainable Growth program was very much in the spotlight. A fun and successful 2015 ecoBenefete honored our long and fruitful partnership with Georgia Tech's College of Architecture, showcasing the more than 30 Blueprints studios on which we have collaborated. It was also an opportunity to share the leadership and innovative work that the Georgia Conservancy is providing in the areas of school siting, Good Urbanism, and rural town resiliency and sustainability.

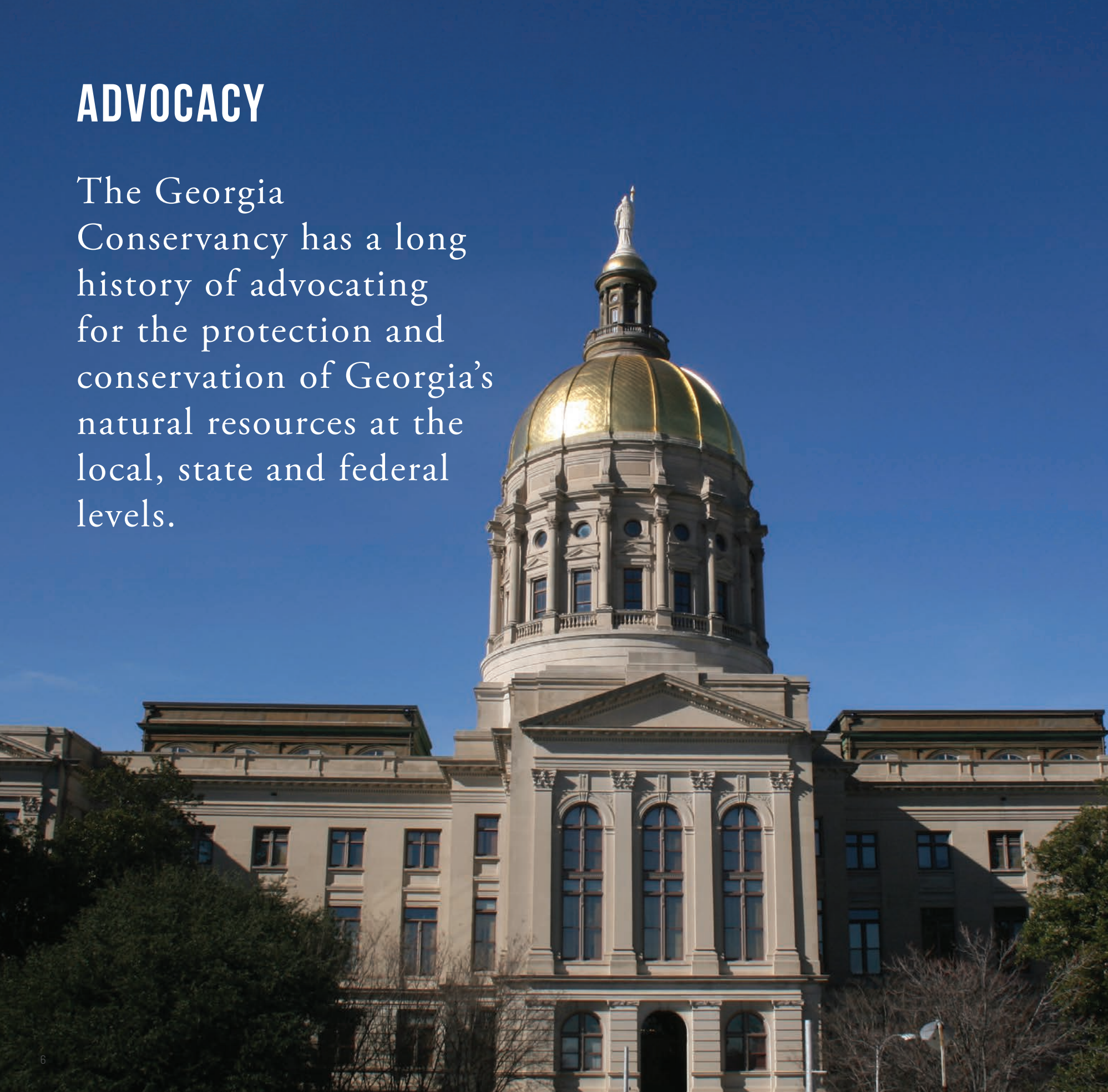
It's no wonder that for many, their introduction to the Georgia Conservancy is through our Stewardship Trips program. Since 1967, we've led trips across Georgia to not only expose people to the wonders of our outdoors, but to inspire active advocates for the protection of our lands and waters. During the last year, we've taken more than 1,000 adventurers onto our rivers, into our mountains and out to our barrier islands. And through our Stewardship Trips program, we continued our decades of stewardship of Cumberland Island National Seashore by restoring all 50 miles of this island's trails, utilizing more than 450 volunteers during the course of eight months.

We are proud of the work that we've put forth during this last year, and as you learn more about these efforts, keep in mind that our mission will continue into the next 50 years. We are excited about where this journey through Georgia will take us!


Robert Ramsay, President

ADVOCACY

The Georgia Conservancy has a long history of advocating for the protection and conservation of Georgia's natural resources at the local, state and federal levels.



IN FYE2016

ASSISTED IN PASSING LEGISLATION TO PLACE A **TEMPORARY MORATORIUM ON PETROLEUM PIPELINE CONSTRUCTION**

550+ HOURS AT THE CAPITOL

ADVOCATED FOR SUCCESSFUL EXTENSION OF LAND CONSERVATION TAX CREDIT FOR **5 YEARS**

MORE THAN 50 PIECES OF LEGISLATION THAT WOULD IMPACT GEORGIA'S NATURAL RESOURCES WERE TRACKED

The Georgia Conservancy has a long history of advocating for the protection and conservation of Georgia's natural resources at the local, state and federal levels.

Our advocacy team has decades of experience in state politics and is dedicated to using the political process to help protect our state's precious natural resources. We're at the state capitol every day of the legislative session pushing for conservation-minded bills and fighting against legislation that would roll back advancements we've already made.

The Georgia Conservancy's advocacy work doesn't stop at the capitol steps. We're working year-round on key issues such as transportation, energy, water resources, land conservation and development to make Georgia a place where people and the environment thrive.

If you have any questions about our Advocacy Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Advocacy Director Leah Dixon* at ldixon@gaconservancy.org.

SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

The Georgia Conservancy's mission is to protect Georgia's natural resources. But in today's world, that means more than just protecting critical lands and habitats from development. It also requires that built spaces - our cities, towns and neighborhoods - grow and develop in a more sustainable fashion.

IN FYE2016

22 WEEKS ENGAGED A COMMUNITY THROUGH A PRESENTATION
EVERY OTHER WEEK OF THE YEAR

52 WEEKS

3 MAYORS INVOLVED IN A PILOT
'MAYOR'S CLINIC FOR COMMUNITY DESIGN'

4 NATIONAL PRESENTATIONS
(SAFE ROUTES TO SCHOOL NATIONAL CONFERENCE, NATIONAL MAIN STREET CONFERENCE, NEW PARTNERS FOR SMART GROWTH, AND THE INSTITUTE FOR TRANSPORTATION ENGINEERS)

8 GOOD URBANISM CLASSES AND MORE THAN **200** PARTICIPANTS

The bottom line: Better planning helps the environment, enabling communities to grow while using fewer resources and disturbing less open space.

The Georgia Conservancy's Sustainable Growth program works to foster smart, sustainable development across the state through the following initiatives:

- Blueprints for Successful Communities
- Good Urbanism
- School Siting Workshops
- Small Town Sustainability

If you have any questions about our Sustainable Growth Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Program Director Katherine Moore* at kmoore@gaconservancy.org.

LAND CONSERVATION

Georgia is richly blessed with natural resources and a varied landscape of spectacular beauty, from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the stately pine forests of the Coastal Plain and the barrier islands and sweeping marshes of our coast. We also have abundant water in our 14 river basins.

IN FYE2016

**FACILITATED LANDOWNER OUTREACH
ALONG 83 MILES OF RIVER** DESIGNATED AS
HIGH PRIORITY

FIELDLED LANDOWNER INQUIRIES FROM **34** GEORGIA COUNTIES

7,843 ACRES CONSERVED WITH
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

GLYNN	4,000	CALHOUN	953	PULASKI	1,220
WAYNE	250	CAMDEN	1,420		

With the population of our state at 10 million, development is putting more pressure on our rivers and streams, and poses a threat to our biodiversity. The Georgia Conservancy believes that land conservation is a key to protecting our water resources, our plants and animals, and our citizens. It is for that reason that we have made land conservation a cornerstone of our work.

In 2015, the Georgia Conservancy helped to protect nearly 28,000 acres of land in Georgia, bringing our five-year Land Conservation Initiative total to almost 54,000 acres protected.

If you have any questions about our Sustainable Growth Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Coastal Director Charles McMillan* at cmcmillan@gaconservancy.org.

COASTAL GEORGIA

Georgia's coast stretches for nearly 100 miles and features some of the nation's most pristine beaches, remote salt marshes and protected maritime forests.



IN FYE2016

61 MILES OF COASTAL RIVERS PADDLED

5,670 ACRES CONSERVED WITH CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN COASTAL COUNTIES

COMPLETED A LANDSCAPE SCALE PLANNING EFFORT COMBINING CONSERVATION GOALS AND GOOD DEVELOPMENT PLANNING PRINCIPLES.

A string of barrier islands, some only accessible by boat, remain largely untouched, offering a sanctuary for migrating birds and a home to a number of endangered or threatened species.

Protecting our coast has been a priority of the Georgia Conservancy for more than 40 years. We maintain an office in historic downtown Savannah, headed by Coastal Director Charles McMillan, and are working on a range of projects to protect this precious natural resource.

If you have any questions about our Sustainable Growth Program or would like to learn more, please contact *Coastal Director Charles McMillan* at cmcmillan@gaconservancy.org.



COASTAL GEORGIA CUMBERLAND TRAILS

After 8 months of hard work in paradise, Cumberland Island Trail Restoration Fellow Laura Buckmaster has returned to the mainland. Her work on Cumberland Island National Seashore was generously supported through REI's Every Trail Connects campaign and made possible by everyone who took the time to vote last summer for Cumberland Island! Thank you!

IN FYE2016

450 VOLUNTEERS

MORE THAN 900 WORK HOURS

33 SERVICE GROUPS

6,300 VOLUNTEER HOURS

Your support paid off:

All 50 miles of Cumberland Island National Seashore's trails have been restored, marked with appropriate signage and GPS mapped.

Work was performed by 33 separate service groups. A total of 450 volunteers provided service on Cumberland. In all, the Georgia Conservancy spent 900 hours leading volunteers.

And, a grand total of 6,300 total volunteer hours were contributed to restoring Cumberland Island's trails! The first ever GPS enabled map of Cumberland's trails are available in print at the Bitter Southerner General Store, and for download on our website.

If you have any questions about our work on Cumberland Island, please contact *Stewardship Trips Coordinator Laura Buckmaster* at lbuckmaster@gaconservancy.org

STEWARDSHIP TRIPS

We are in the business of conservation, yes, but to succeed, we must also be in the business of love. Love for the rivers, the barrier islands, the marshes, the plains, the canyons and even the urban parks and the cities that surround them. We want folks breaking bread on Georgia's riverbanks or singing songs around a campfire, from the mountains through the coastal plain and to our amazing saltwater-marsh and barrier islands.

IN FY2016

3,852 CUPS OF CAFE CAMPESINO COFFEE

155 MILES OF RIVER PADDLED

**1,056 PEOPLE TAKEN OUTSIDE
OVER 56 DAYS**

Our goal is simple: Create a connection between some of Georgia's most underutilized, stunning natural places and the people we need to help us protect them. In 2017 we're leading trips to the Ogeechee, Altamaha, Ocmulgee, Oconee, Flint, Ochlockonee, Chattahoochee, Satilla, Suwannee and Conasauga rivers; to Ossabaw, Sapelo, Cumberland, Blackbeard, Jekyll and Little St. Simons islands; to the Okefenokee Swamp, Cloudland Canyon, Howard's Waterfall Cave, Panola Mountain, Broxton Rocks, Radium Springs, the Len Foote Hike Inn, Augusta Canal, Ebenezer Creek, Sweetwater Creek, Spring Creek, the mighty Cohutta Wilderness.

If you have any questions about our Stewardship Trips Program or about any upcoming trip, please contact *Stewardship Trips Director Ben Fowler* at bfowler@gaconservancy.org

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to the individuals, corporations, foundations and organizations who generously supported the Georgia Conservancy and its leadership role in managing statewide environmental initiatives to protect Georgia's natural environment and resources.

Due to space limitations, we are pleased to acknowledge gifts of \$250 or more from the following individuals, foundations, corporations and organizations in FY16. We thank you for your generous support of the Conservancy's programs, projects and operations. Every effort was made to correctly list these donors from July 1, 2015 - June 30, 2016. If you notice an omission or error, please contact the development team at 404-876-2900 or mail@gaconservancy.org.

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969 first time contributors

4,162 unique donors

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INCOME AND EXPENSES

Income	FYE2016	FYE2015
Contributions	\$405,743	\$393,091
Membership	\$160,882	\$166,112
Program Services	\$102,188	\$86,519
Special Events (net)	\$235,523	\$222,944
Restricted Contributions	\$685,991	\$497,450
Other Income	\$18,742	\$34,345
Total	\$1,609,069	\$1,400,461
Expenses	FYE2016	FYE2015
Outreach, Education and Advocacy	\$512,055	\$392,894
Sustainable Growth	\$345,453	\$357,300
Land	\$117,750	\$186,235
Coastal Program	\$165,359	\$145,535
Membership	\$85,373	\$83,769
Administration	\$181,861	\$183,484
Fundraising	\$200,207	\$146,345
Total	\$1,608,058	\$1,495,562
NET INCOME	\$1,011	(\$95,101)

Audited Balance Sheet	
Cash and Cash Reserve	\$990,328
Endowment Fund	\$150,000
Other Assets	\$141,080
Total Assets	\$1,281,408
Total Liabilities	\$63,372
Unrestricted Fund Balance	\$855,349
Temporarily Restricted Fund Balance	\$212,687
Permanently Restricted Fund Balance	\$150,000
Total Equity	\$1,281,408

The Georgia Conservancy is a private nonprofit organization. The Conservancy's revenues come from a combination of individual memberships, unrestricted gifts, restricted grants, stewardship trip fees, special events and the sale of merchandise. All contributions are tax deductible as allowed by law. A certified public accounting firm audits the Georgia Conservancy annually.

If you have any questions about our Accounting or Financing, please contact Georgia Conservancy Finance Director, Cheri Robinson at crobinson@gaconservancy.org



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Cover photo of Ossabaw Island by WHO
Printing generously provided by Federal Home Loan Bank of Atlanta

