



GEORGIA

DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STATE OF THE

DEPARTMENT

Conserving Georgia's Natural, Historic, and Cultural Resources



2023 - 2025

Message from the Commissioner

Walter Rabon

It is my privilege to share with you the 2023–2025 State of the Department update for the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. This report highlights the dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit of the men and women who work tirelessly to sustain, enhance, protect, and conserve Georgia’s natural, historic, and cultural resources for present and future generations.

These past two and a half years have been a period of growth, progress, and meaningful impact across our state. Our teams have met complex challenges with determination while embracing opportunities to expand recreational programs, strengthen conservation initiatives, and engage communities in new and meaningful ways. From protecting wildlife habitats and historic sites, to advancing public education and outdoor experiences, our work has reinforced Georgia’s reputation as a state rich in both natural beauty and cultural heritage.

I am honored to serve as your Commissioner, and I am confident that the Georgia Department of Natural Resources will continue to thrive, serving the people of our state with the same commitment, integrity, and passion that define our mission.

I am deeply grateful for the continued support of Governor Brian Kemp, the Board of Natural Resources, partners, stakeholders, and citizens who share our commitment to preserving Georgia’s rich natural and cultural heritage. Together, we are ensuring that our state remains vibrant, resilient, and full of opportunity for generations to come.

Thank you for your interest in, and support of, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. I invite you to explore this report and see firsthand the remarkable work being accomplished across our agency.

Sincerely,



Walter Rabon



Table of Contents

Board of Natural Resources	1
About the Department	2
Mission and Strategic Goals.....	3
Modernizing Services	4
Workforce Development	5
Strengthening Communication and Brand Awareness	7
Outdoors Beyond Barriers	8
Preserving Department History and Honoring Service.....	10
Under the Gold Dome: Legislative Update	11
Real Estate	12
Engineering and Construction	14
Grants Unit	16
Managing Our Forests.....	17
Tourism and Economic Impact	18
Our Response to Storms	20
Tragedy Hits Sapelo Island	22
Wildlife Resources Division	23
Law Enforcement Division	27
Coastal Resources Division.....	32
State Parks and Historic Sites Division	37
Georgia Natural Resources Foundation	42
Awards and Honors	43

Board of Natural Resources



Nancy Addison



Jeff Andrews



Randy Dellinger



Patrick Denney



Charles DePriest



Dan Garcia



Joe Hatfield



Mark W.
Hennessy



Penn Hodge



Steve Hufstetler



Duncan N.
Johnson, Jr.



Alfred W. "Bill"
Jones, III



Ray Lambert, Jr.



Brent Layton



Mike Peavy



Lesley Reynolds



Paul Shailendra



Jeff "Bodine"
Sinyard



Harley Yancey

About the Department

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) is responsible for the statewide management and conservation of Georgia's natural, historic, and cultural resources. The agency carries out its mission through five divisions: the Coastal Resources Division (CRD), Law Enforcement Division (LED), Parks and Historic Sites Division (PHSD), Wildlife Resources Division (WRD), and the Environmental Protection Division (EPD). These divisions are supported by Administrative Services from DNR headquarters in Atlanta, which includes the Accounting Unit, Budget Office, Engineering and Construction, Real Estate Office, Grants Unit, Office of Human Resources, Information Technology, and the Procurement Unit. Each division provides regulatory oversight, technical assistance, education, enforcement, and outreach within its area of expertise, with EPD operating with increased autonomy under the leadership of Director Jeff Cown.

Through these divisions, DNR manages more than 1.2 million acres of public land; 16,000 miles of rivers and streams; 500,000 acres of reservoirs; 48 state parks; 15 historic sites; 11 partner sites; eight golf courses; three additional sites; eight regional education centers; and 10 fish hatcheries that produce more than 11 million fish annually. The agency also oversees 368,000 acres of protected marsh, 500,000 acres of estuary, 3,400 miles of tidal shoreline, and 105 miles of beach.

DNR operates with an annual budget of \$355 million and a workforce of approximately 2,700 employees, supported by seasonal staff. In addition, volunteers contribute their time and expertise across the agency's divisions, helping to advance DNR's mission alongside full-time, part-time, and seasonal personnel.



Commissioner
Walter Rabon



Deputy Commissioner
Thomas Barnard



Deputy Commissioner
Trevor Santos

Mission and Strategic Goals

Mission

To sustain, enhance, protect and conserve Georgia's natural, historic and cultural resources for present and future generations, while recognizing the importance of promoting the development of commerce and industry that utilize sound environmental practices.

Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning

Recruitment, retention, and succession planning directly impact the long-term sustainability and success of the agency. The failure to address recruitment, retention, and succession planning can have far-reaching consequences, affecting the agency's ability to attract top talent, retain skilled employees, and ensure a smooth transition of leadership.

Improve Aging Infrastructure

Modernize and improve aging infrastructure to meet the increasing demands of population growth and rapidly evolving technology. If left unaddressed, these challenges compound over time, heightening safety risks, reducing efficiency, slowing economic growth, diminishing quality of life, and driving up the cost of emergency repairs.

Increase Public Awareness of DNR Brand

Increase marketing and messaging of DNR's core mission to ensure Georgians appreciate the importance of sustaining and enhancing the state's natural, historic, cultural, environmental, and economic resources. Improving brand awareness will guarantee the agency maintains a positive reputation, fosters customer loyalty, manages crises effectively, and builds strong relationships with stakeholders, employees, and the public.

Outdoor Access for All Georgians

Ensure Georgians of all ages, backgrounds, means, and abilities have access to, and are aware of, all of Georgia's outdoor recreation areas and opportunities.

Modernizing Services

From FY24 to the present, DNR advanced modernization efforts by expanding digital access, improving online payments, and streamlining licensing and permitting systems across multiple divisions. These improvements enhanced customer convenience, increased accessibility, reduced administrative burden, and strengthened operational efficiency.

PHSD launched electronic ParkPass sales, allowing visitors to purchase passes quickly through mobile devices without relying on cash or collection boxes. The system reduces wait times, improves accessibility for individuals with limited mobility, and lowers staff time spent on collections and reconciliation. In FY25, integrating ParkPass purchases into the reservation booking process generated approximately \$203,000 in additional revenue.



The PHSD, in collaboration with the Information Technology (IT) team, has implemented several technology upgrades to enhance visitor experiences, strengthen security, and optimize the use of personnel. These improvements include networking and telephone enhancements such as Starlink and expanded Wi-Fi coverage at 22 sites across the state, as well as the installation of security camera systems at seven sites statewide. In addition, the IT team deployed wireless bridges connecting key facilities at 11 locations across the state to support operations across multiple divisions.

WRD expanded online licensing capabilities, allowing customers to apply for Lifetime, Disability, Veteran, Commercial Trapping, and Nuisance Wildlife Control Operator licenses and renewals online for the first time. Process improvements also streamlined Deer Crop Damage Permits for farmers. These changes resulted in increased license sales, higher revenue, and reduced staff processing time. Additional system enhancements planned for FY26 will allow all DNR commercial licenses to be offered online and will support improvements to vessel and boat registration services. LED partnered with the Hunt Regs App to provide an easy, no-cost tool for the public to report illegal hunting and fishing activity via mobile and online platforms.

CRD launched an online Coastal Permits database and mapping tool to improve public transparency and internal efficiency. The system supports both public access to permitting information and improved regulatory tracking, helping the program manage an approximate 33 percent increase in permitting activity in 2025.

Together, these initiatives demonstrate the DNR's continued focus on modernization, customer service, and responsible operational management.

**Strategic Goal: Improve Aging Infrastructure*

Workforce Development

Workforce development is central to fulfilling our mission to conserve and protect Georgia's natural, historic, and cultural resources. Building a skilled, engaged, and adaptable workforce today ensures the agency's success tomorrow. DNR invests in the professional growth of current employees while creating pathways for the next generation of conservation and public service leaders.

Commissioner's Advisory Council

The Commissioner's Advisory Council launched in 2024 to strengthen employee communication and provide input on cross-divisional issues. The Council facilitates two-way communication between employees across the organization and the Commissioner's Office and includes two representatives from each DNR division, the Administrative Services Unit, and the Environmental Protection Division, along with an ex-officio moderator appointed by the Commissioner. Early accomplishments include establishing governing principles and operational rules, conducting an employee survey on Commissioner's Office roles, and creating an Advisory Council intranet page with an employee suggestion and question system.

Leadership Academy

The DNR Leadership Academy develops emerging leaders to navigate a dynamic agency environment through three pillars: leadership theory, organizational knowledge, and cross-divisional collaboration. Participants study servant and adaptive leadership, gain insight into state budgeting, HR, legislation, and engage with partner organizations and state leaders to learn real-world public agency leadership. The program also breaks down internal silos, strengthening collaboration across DNR's diverse divisions. In its 10 years, the Academy has trained 180 participants, providing extensive leadership instruction.



Career Academy

The DNR Career Academy is a weeklong summer program for rising juniors and seniors, introducing careers in natural and cultural resource management. Students gain hands-on experience with game wardens, park managers, and wildlife, fisheries, and marine technicians, visiting state parks, wildlife management areas, fish hatcheries, historic sites, and Georgia's coast. Activities include electrofishing, prescribed burns, boating and firearms safety, trail management, and fisheries surveys. Participants may receive mentorship and optional technical college credit, learning about career paths, skills, and training for future DNR employment. Since 2021, the program has served 92 students, offering extensive hands-on training and mentorship.

Division-Specific Workforce Initiatives

Parks and Historic Sites Division

- Emphasized succession planning and workforce development in the 2024–2027 Strategic Plan.
- Junior Ranger Programs (2024–2025): 280+ programs serving 1,650+ children at state parks and historic sites.
- Manager in Training (MIT) Program: 14 participants; six advanced to Assistant Manager roles, four continued as MITs.
- Georgia Park Ranger Academy (GPRA): 38 participants trained in administration, customer service, maintenance, resource management, and safety.
- Specialized Trainings: Wilderness First Responder, ATV, chainsaw, archery, paddling, CPR, interpretive training; 100+ participants.
- Interaction Management Series: 71 park rangers trained in supervisory skills; several earned DDI facilitator certification.
- National Leadership Development: Two managers sent annually to NASPD State Park Leadership School; four completed, two in progress.

Wildlife Resources Division

- Established a Training Academy to address increased training needs for new employees.
- Academy provides administrative, technical, and safety instruction for fish and wildlife technicians and biologists.
- Participation: 96 employees with at least three years of service have completed the academy over the past three sessions.

**Strategic Goal: Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Planning*



Strengthening Communication and Brand Awareness

From FY24 to the present, DNR has strengthened internal and external communications to improve transparency, increase public awareness, and better support employees through clear, consistent messaging and modern communication tools. These efforts have expanded public access to information, strengthened employee engagement, improved coordination across divisions, and reinforced DNR's presence statewide.



DNR renewed its emphasis on digital communications with a focused approach to social media as a primary tool for outreach and engagement. Dedicated Instagram and LinkedIn pages were launched to share timely information, support recruitment efforts, encourage professional engagement, and increase visibility of DNR's work. Board meetings are now live streamed, providing the public with greater access to Department discussions and decision making. To further strengthen internal communication, DNR introduced the Wild Workweek, a weekly department-wide update shared with the Board and all employees that highlights accomplishments, shares important updates, and increases awareness of work happening across the state.



Individual divisions have also enhanced communication and brand awareness through their own social media channels, newsletters, media outreach, and internal messaging. These coordinated efforts help ensure the public and employees receive accurate, timely, and consistent information about DNR programs, initiatives, and statewide impact.

**Strategic Goals: Increase Public Awareness of DNR Brand; Recruitment, Retention and Succession Planning*

Outdoors Beyond Barriers

Mission

The Outdoors Beyond Barriers (OBB) program encourages, educates, and empowers people of all abilities to connect with nature by expanding access to hunting, fishing, and other outdoor recreational opportunities. Through skills-based education and adaptive resources, OBB helps participants become confident, independent users of Georgia's natural resources.



Program Overview

Officially established in 2024, OBB is a department-wide initiative that works across all DNR divisions to address physical and social barriers to access within Georgia's parks, wildlife management areas, and natural spaces. Through adaptive equipment, inclusive programming, staff training, and strategic partnerships, OBB advances access to outdoor recreation, education, and conservation statewide.

In Fiscal Year 2024, OBB reached a significant milestone when it received the Innovation Award at the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) Conference. This was the first NASPD award Georgia has received in the organization's 67-year history, bringing national recognition to the Department's leadership in accessibility and inclusion.



Accessibility and Program Growth

Accessibility offerings expanded substantially during this period. Action Trackchairs, initially available at 10 state parks and historic sites, are now offered at 17 sites statewide. In fall 2024, the program continued to grow with the acquisition of four GRIT Freedom Chairs through a NASPD Bronco Wild Fund grant and the introduction of EnChroma color-blind glasses at three major state parks.

First Day Hikes in 2025 emphasized inclusion, featuring two designated OBB hikes at Sweetwater Creek and Tallulah Gorge, which also hosted the first NASPD ADA First Day Hike. Ranger-led adaptive programming grew to include guided hikes, birding walks, adaptive fishing events, and golf programs.

Staff training remained a critical component of program success. The Shepherd Center provided mobility-assistance training to PHSD and WRD staff, supporting adaptive hunting and fishing events. In addition, the Georgia Vocational Rehabilitation Agency delivered Disability Awareness Training during the 2025 Rangers Conference, further strengthening staff readiness department-wide.

In 2024, WRD created a new position dedicated exclusively to adaptive hunting and fishing programs, significantly increasing program capacity. During FY25, DNR hosted five adaptive deer hunts on public land, one adaptive deer hunt on private land, one private-land adaptive turkey hunt, and numerous adaptive fishing events. During the 2024–2025 hunting season, 60 individuals participated in adaptive hunting opportunities, and 353 individuals participated in adaptive fishing events in 2025. Outreach efforts also expanded through participation in events such as GON Outdoor Blast, Fish-O-Rama, and community events in Cobb and Gwinnett counties.

During the 2025–2026 season, OBB expanded to include adaptive dove, deer, and turkey hunts across public and private lands, adaptive shooting events at Clybel Shooting Range, and wildlife-viewing support in partnership with Georgia State Parks. Planned outreach included representation at more than 10 major events statewide, further strengthening public awareness and engagement.

**Strategic Goal: Outdoor Access for All Georgians*



Preserving Department History and Honoring Service

From FY24 to the present, DNR placed renewed emphasis on preserving institutional history, honoring service milestones, and fostering stronger connections between past and present employees. These efforts reinforce organizational culture, uphold public service values, and document the agency's legacy for future generations.



A historic milestone occurred in May 2024 when five of the seven past and present commissioners gathered for the Commissioners' Luncheon at Fort Yargo State Park. The event created a rare opportunity to reflect on the Department's history, challenges, and accomplishments. Later that year, the Coastal Resources Division hosted an all hands meeting featuring former directors Duane Harris, Susan Shipman, and Spud Woodward. The discussion provided staff with historical perspective spanning from the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act of 1970 to recent facility improvements and allowed open dialogue on defining moments in the division's mission.



In April 2025, PHSD staff conducted an oral history interview with former Commissioner Lonice Barrett. His career began during the agency's restructuring under Commissioner Joe Tanner and later included service as PHSD Director and DNR Commissioner, creating a tangible link between past leadership and today's park rangers. During FY25, LED expanded recognition of legacy and service by honoring retired Game Wardens of the Year with commemorative badges, hosting retiree luncheons that connect former and current officers, and highlighting retirees through ongoing newsletter spotlights.



**Strategic Goal: Recruitment, Retention, and Succession Planning*

Under the Gold Dome: Legislative Update

During the 40-day legislative sessions in 2024 and 2025, DNR remained actively engaged, tracking more than 240 bills impacting DNR, state employees, law enforcement, sportsmen and women, conservationists, outdoor enthusiasts, wildlife, and related interests. Over the past two years, several pieces of agency legislation were successfully approved, including HB 244 (2024), which updated statutory language for Georgia’s oyster farming industry and expanded allowable tools for predator hunting; HB 208 (2025), which created two new DNR specialty license plates—Georgia State Parks and Black Bass Conservation; and HB 287 (2025), which standardized the age definition for youth hunters, allowed disabled participants in Department-approved events to receive a courtesy hunting or fishing license, and established two new shellfish crew harvester licenses.



In addition, DNR appeared before numerous legislative committees to provide expertise and testimony on a wide range of issues, including appropriations, Chronic Wasting Disease, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program, hunter education in schools, law enforcement-related legislation, and other key policy matters.

Real Estate

The Real Estate Office (REO) supports DNR's land management and conservation mission by coordinating all property-related transactions for DNR divisions. The office facilitates acquisitions, easements, leases, and disposals, ensuring each action aligns with state law and Department priorities.

FY2023 - Present: Acquisitions and Conservation Easements			
Fiscal Year	Total Tracts	Total Acres	Total Cost
2023	18	18,236.58	\$28,187,874.30
2024	19	10,599.01	\$33,763,899.29
2025	14	13,311.86	\$39,646,853.14
TOTAL		42,147.45	\$101,598,626.73

Since Fiscal Year 2023, DNR has acquired over 42,000 acres of land and conservation easements across Georgia, totaling more than \$101 million. These acquisitions expanded public access and strengthened land stewardship statewide. REO collaborated closely with the State Properties Commission, the Office of Attorney General, and partner organizations to complete high-impact transactions supporting DNR's conservation and recreation goals. These projects span multiple regions of Georgia and support statewide conservation, recreation, and public access priorities. The Department leverages federal funds, grants, and philanthropic donations heavily, with state's investment averaging 25% of the total purchase price.

Notably, in collaboration with DNR Information Technology, REO modernized its real estate database, reducing processing time, improving reporting accuracy, and creating a more streamlined review process for land transactions.

Success Stories

Across recent fiscal years, the Department has made significant progress in land conservation and public access through strategic acquisitions and strong partnerships.

In FY23, the Department acquired 876 acres of the Coleman Ranch Tract in Meriwether and Harris counties, creating an edge holding for Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park, one of Georgia's most highly visited destinations for hikers and backpackers. This acquisition was completed with grant funding from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program and the Knobloch Family Foundations.

In FY24, the Department expanded Dawson Forest Wildlife Management Area through the acquisition of the 2,057 acre Cochran's Creek Tract in Dawson County. Purchased from The Conservation Fund, this high value conservation property enhances public recreation opportunities and protects critical natural resources. The project was made possible through partnerships with The Conservation Fund, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program, the Knobloch Family Foundations, the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

In FY25, the Department completed the acquisition of 8,384 acres spanning Haralson and Polk counties for Treat Mountain Wildlife Management Area and Tallapoosa River Wildlife Management Area. Located within the Dugdown Mountain Corridor, which is identified in the State Wildlife Action Plan as a high priority conservation landscape, this property strengthens connectivity between Paulding Forest and Sheffield Wildlife Management Area. Funding for the acquisition was provided through the U.S. Forest Service and the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program.

In FY26, the Department established the Upatoi Ravines Natural Area in Talbot County through the acquisition of 6,555 acres as Timberlands II Phase 2. Combined with the 2,239 acres secured in FY25 during Phase I, the project now protects a total of 8,794 acres. This landscape supports recovery of the federally endangered fringed campion and provides critical habitat for other high priority at risk species, including the tricolored bat. Funding partners included the Georgia Department of Transportation, the U.S. Forest Service, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program, and the Knobloch Family Foundations.

Stateline TCF Acquisition
Haralson County and Polk County



Engineering and Construction

The Engineering and Construction (E&C) section coordinates and oversees construction, renovation, and infrastructure projects across the Department.

During FY24 and FY25, E&C navigated significant challenges, including a natural disaster, contractor shortages, scheduling and material delays, rising costs, and market fluctuations. Despite these obstacles, the team delivered results by collaborating with partner agencies, leveraging statewide contracts, and implementing strategies to increase contractor participation. Favorable funding in both years, including grants and strong cash flow from an amended budget, supported major projects.

Key projects included:



George T. Bagby State Park: New Welcome Center, RV campground, cottages, fish cleaning station, outdoor amphitheater, and lighted walking paths.



Fort Yargo State Park: Complete transformation of the beach and day-use area, parking improvements, splash pad, miniature golf, pickleball courts, new cabins, and trading post.



Vogel State Park: Visitor center renovation funded by Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), state bonds, and appropriations; modern administrative space, interpretive areas, retail services, and upgraded public amenities.



Charlie Elliott Wildlife Education Center: New construction of the Joe Tanner Discovery Center, creating interactive wildlife exhibits, classrooms, and visitor flow improvements.

Other statewide improvements: Campground renovations at multiple parks, expansion of Mulligan's Grille, Golf Pro-Shop reconstruction at Little Ocmulgee, rehabilitation of Warm Springs historic pools, and new cabins at Chattahoochee Bend, Tugaloo, and Little Ocmulgee State Parks.

Between FY24 and FY25, E&C completed 141 capital and non-capital projects totaling over \$122 million, including \$88.7 million in major improvements and new construction. FY26 began with \$18.9 million in ongoing projects, with more than \$80 million in major renovations planned.

Risk Management processed 62 building and property claims in FY25, including 39 from Hurricane Helene, recovering over \$2 million to date.

E&C manages projects for every division, as well as the North Georgia Mountains Authority and Environmental Protection Division. Responsibilities include bid preparation, coordination with the Georgia State Finance and Investment Commission, design oversight, property insurance claims, and administration of General Obligation Bond funds.

Looking ahead to FY26, E&C planned projects include six new villas at Georgia Veterans State Park, exterior renovations to the Conference Center, campground improvements at Evans and McDuffie Public Fishing Areas, construction of the Region 2 Office at Don Carter State Park, enhancements at Brasstown Valley Resort and Amicalola Falls Lodge, and infrastructure upgrades at Bowen's Mill Fish Hatchery.

Grants Unit

The Department's Grants team successfully completed funding cycles for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP), Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and Recreational Trails Program (RTP), allocating funds to support the development and enhancement of local parks, trails, and state-owned lands, as well as the permanent protection of conservation lands. The team reviews applications to ensure they meet program criteria, provides full oversight of awarded grants, and coordinates with federal partners to maintain compliance with applicable policies and regulations. This oversight includes pre-award inspections, financial workshops, environmental reviews, project agreements, amendments, progress monitoring, and fund disbursements. Program manuals, application forms, and online portals are reviewed and updated annually. To assist applicants, the team conducts in-person and virtual workshops and offers individualized guidance to support successful proposals.

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP):

- Over three funding cycles (2022–2025), GOSP received 125 applications totaling over \$240 million. 36 conservation and nature-based recreation projects were funded, with \$73.9 million allocated.
- These awards supported the acquisition of approximately 31,400 acres by DNR and 2,400 acres by local governments.

Recreational Trails Program (RTP):

- In the 2023–2024 cycle, RTP received 35 applications totaling \$6 million, funding 19 trail projects with \$4.7 million.
- The 2025–2026 cycle received 23 pre-applications totaling \$4 million, currently under review.

Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF):

- Between 2022 and 2025, LWCF received 106 applications totaling \$31.5 million. 47 local projects were funded for acquisition, development, and rehabilitation, along with four DNR projects.
- The nationally competitive Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Grant awarded \$1,080,072 to the City of South Fulton in 2025.
- In total, \$24.7 million was awarded to Georgia LWCF projects during this period.

Through these programs, the Grants team continues to strengthen outdoor recreation, conservation, and access to natural resources across Georgia.

Managing Our Forests

During FY25, PHSD made progress across resource management programs. Prescribed burns increased slightly, with two additional operations and 248 more acres treated, bringing the total to 4,216 acres, just 50 acres short of a record year.

In FY24 and FY25, WRD conducted prescribed fires on more than 167,500 acres to enhance wildlife habitat on public lands. The Forest Management Unit achieved significant progress in forest health and accessibility across multiple wildlife management areas, including:

- 182 miles of access roads improved for operational access
- 3,872 acres prepared for reforestation
- 6,393 acres thinned to improve forest structure
- 200 acres treated for understory and invasive species with herbicides
- 5,200 acres salvaged following Hurricane Helene across seven WMAs
- Approximately \$4 million generated in timber revenue
- 200,000 Longleaf pine seedlings planted
- 100,000 Loblolly pine seedlings planted
- 138,000 Shortleaf pine seedlings planted
- 49,500 Slash pine seedlings planted
- 40,000 Oak seedlings planted
- 2,412 miles of fire breaks created

Nuisance animal control saw decreases in feral hog and goose removals, slight increases in beaver and alligator responses, and the introduction of buzzard mitigation efforts. Overall, FY25 reflected a productive year with expanded habitat management and balanced wildlife control efforts.

These efforts support sustainable forest management, create diverse habitats that benefit wildlife populations, and promote ecological resilience across the landscape.



Tourism and Economic Impact

Outdoor recreation is at the heart of Georgia's identity, drawing millions of visitors each year to hike, hunt, paddle, bike, fish, explore historic sites, enjoy wildlife viewing, or other forms of outdoor recreation.

DNR plays a critical role in the state's economy and quality of life, helping Georgia rank number one for business for 12 consecutive years. Despite challenges from a destructive hurricane season and unusual winter storms, PHSD welcomed over 13 million visitors in FY25, generating an estimated \$1.7 billion in economic impact and supporting more than 13,000 local jobs. This is slightly below the 14 million visitors recorded in FY24, which contributed \$1.8 billion in economic impact and 10,000 jobs.

Our state parks system is home to 48 state parks; 15 historic sites; 11 partner sites; eight golf courses; three additional sites, and more than 900 miles of trails for hiking, biking, paddling, and equestrian use. These sites offer lodging and activities to fit every traveler, demonstrating that conservation and economic vitality go hand in hand.

WRD contributes significantly to Georgia's economy through hunting, fishing, the shooting sports, and wildlife viewing opportunities. Hunters, anglers, shooters, and wildlife enthusiasts contribute \$12.5 billion annually, support local businesses, strengthen rural communities, and create jobs statewide. WRD manages 1.1 million acres of public hunting land across 133 Wildlife Management Areas, 11 Public Fishing Areas, 10 fish hatcheries, and operates 46 public shooting ranges (which receive up to 120,000 visitors annually with a 4.3-star customer rating), and oversees recreational license sales that continue to grow. In FY25, hunting and fishing licenses generated \$37.8 million in revenue, supporting conservation and recreation programs.





DNR also provides extensive water access, with 165 public boat ramps, 4,000 miles of trout streams, 12,000 miles of warmwater streams, and 500,000 acres of lakes and reservoirs, generating \$3.6 billion annually in direct expenditures from trips and equipment.

CRD supports the state's commercial and recreational seafood industries, operating 20 commercial leases, including nine subtidal aquaculture leases. These activities yield 412,000 lbs/year of clams and wild oysters with a dockside value of \$3.5 million, all FDA- and USDA-certified. Georgia's coastal assets encompass 500,000 acres of estuary, 300 square miles of Atlantic Ocean, 3,400 miles of tidal shoreline, 105 miles of beach, 14 barrier islands, and nine estuaries, supporting tourism and the economy across 11 coastal counties with 700,000 residents.

LED protects Georgia's natural resources while ensuring that outdoor activities are safe, legal, and sustainable. By enforcing hunting, fishing, boating, environmental, and shellfish regulations, along with state and federal laws, LED safeguards the public and supports economic growth.

Collectively, these figures reveal that outdoor recreation is not simply a pastime but a vital economic force that advances conservation, enriches communities, and protects Georgia's natural and cultural heritage for generations to come.

Our Response to Storms

The Storms We Weathered | FY24 to FY25

During FY24 and FY25, Georgia faced an extraordinary series of natural disasters that tested the resilience, coordination, and commitment of the Department of Natural Resources. Major events included Hurricane Idalia (September 30, 2023); Tropical Storm Debby (August 2024); Hurricane Helene (September 27, 2024); Hurricane Milton (October 10, 2024); a 500-year flood (November 5, 2024); Winter Storm Cora (January 9 to 11, 2025); and historic Winter Storm Enzo (January 20 to 22, 2025).

Hurricane Helene: Statewide Impact and Response

Hurricane Helene delivered significant and costly impacts, devastating Middle Georgia and severely affecting state parks, historic sites, wildlife management areas, and public fishing areas. DNR teams immediately deployed at daybreak on September 27, 2024, clearing roadways, transporting critical supplies, and supporting citizen safety across 25 counties, particularly between Valdosta and Augusta.

Over a two-week response period, more than 450 DNR personnel contributed 26,800 work hours, including 3,000 chainsaw hours and thousands of heavy equipment hours, without a single injury. Staff continued recovery work for weeks (and some places months), restoring access and sheltering more than 2,000 Florida evacuees ahead of Hurricane Milton.

Damage to Natural Resources, Facilities, and Access

The storm impacted more than 7,500 acres and more than 70 miles of trails, damaged over 115 structures, and disrupted campgrounds, cottages, visitor centers, historic buildings, and staff residences. General Coffee and George L. Smith State Parks, among the hardest hit, remained closed for approximately six months, while partial closures affected Elijah Clark, Fort McAllister, Jack Hill, Magnolia Springs, and Mistletoe.

Disruptions to visitor access resulted in 7,055 reservation cancellations, including 4,264 from Georgia residents. Cleanup costs exceeded \$3.3 million, and by early January 2025, 23 sites were still undergoing debris removal.

Fiscal Impact

Hurricane Helene created unprecedented fiscal challenges across DNR:

- Parks Division revenues declined 5 percent, or \$2.4 million, in FY25, with \$2.2 million in lost revenue tied to cancellations and prolonged closures.
- Timber losses on wildlife management areas approached \$10 million.
- Reimbursable structural damages totaled approximately \$9.9 million across the Parks and Historic Sites, Wildlife Resources, and Law Enforcement divisions.
- Non-reimbursable losses and response expenses reached roughly \$12.2 million.

The Department submitted insurance and Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) reimbursement requests to offset eligible damages, while aging infrastructure needs, already estimated in the hundreds of millions, were further intensified by the storm.

Resilience and Recovery

Despite historic destruction and financial strain, DNR personnel demonstrated extraordinary resilience, professionalism, and dedication to Georgia's citizens and natural resources. Across divisions, staff worked tirelessly to clear debris, restore facilities, reopen public access, and safeguard critical habitats, ensuring Georgia's outdoor heritage remains protected for future generations.



Tragedy Hits Sapelo Island

On October 19, 2024, at approximately 3:50 p.m., the gangway at the Marsh Landing Dock on Sapelo Island collapsed, causing at least 20 individuals to fall into the water. Seven people tragically lost their lives, and numerous others were injured. Two victims remained hospitalized in the days following the incident.

On Sunday, October 20, DNR held a press conference and launched a dedicated webpage to keep the public informed about the Sapelo Island incident. The page provided regular updates and answers to frequently asked questions. In the days following the tragedy, DNR also coordinated local community support efforts. On October 26, Community Support Sessions were held for all affected individuals, offering access to licensed mental health professionals. Costs associated with these services were covered by DNR and the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation, and ongoing mental health resources continue to be made available to those in need.

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources and the Georgia Bureau of Investigation (GBI) immediately opened a joint investigation, which remains ongoing. As part of this effort, the gangway was removed on October 20 and transported to a secured facility for examination. The Critical Incident Reconstruction Team of DNR's Law Enforcement Division, working in coordination with GBI, continues a comprehensive review.

In addition, the Office of the Attorney General retained Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates to conduct an independent investigation into the cause of the collapse. Wiss, Janney, Elstner Associates is a nationally recognized firm of engineers, architects, and materials scientists specializing in the evaluation and repair design of buildings, bridges, and other structures. Findings will be shared publicly once both investigations are complete.

On December 20, 2024, two new gangways were installed, one on the mainland at the Meridian Ferry Dock and the other on the island at Marsh Landing Dock.

The Department of Natural Resources solemnly remembers the individuals who lost their lives:

- Jacqueline Crews Carter, 75, of Jacksonville, Florida
- Cynthia Gibbs, 74, of Jacksonville, Florida
- Charles L. Houston, 77, of Darien, Georgia
- William Johnson Jr., 73, of Atlanta, Georgia
- Carlotta McIntosh, 93, of Jacksonville, Florida
- Isaiah Thomas, 79, of Jacksonville, Florida
- Queen Welch, 76, of Atlanta, Georgia

DNR extends its deepest condolences to the families, loved ones, and communities affected by this tragedy.

Wildlife Resources Division

Mission

To conserve and promote fishing, hunting and wildlife resources through management, education and scientific research.

The Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) regulates hunting, fishing, and the operation of watercraft in Georgia, protects non-game and endangered wildlife, and maintains public education to ensure that Georgia's natural resources will be conserved for our present and future generations.

CEO Section Hits the Ground Running

In May 2024, the Communications, Education and Outreach Section was established within the Wildlife Resources Division to provide consistent, accurate messaging to the public about wildlife, promote hunter education and shooting sports opportunities, and deliver critical training to both new and current staff. Section responsibilities include development and distribution of communications such as social media, news releases, and targeted emails; delivery of wildlife education programming; advancement of adaptive hunting and fishing initiatives; oversight of operations at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center; implementation of recruitment, retention, and reactivation marketing strategies; education for new hunters; and management and development of WRD shooting ranges. Information developed and shared through this office reaches hundreds of thousands of Georgians as they choose to recreate across the state.

The establishment of this new section highlights the growing need for public education and outreach related to wildlife, hunter education, and outdoor recreation. Additionally, the Section led the effort to combine the Hunting and Fishing Regulations Guides into a single publication, reducing costs while improving customer service by placing all regulations in one convenient resource for hunters and anglers.



Director
Ted Will
2020-2025



Director
Chris Harper
Dec 2025-Present

Hunter education remains a core mission of the Wildlife Resources Division. In fiscal years 2024 and 2025, 34,103 new hunters completed the required hunter education course, an achievement made possible through the dedication of Hunter Education volunteers.



Fisheries Management

During fiscal years 2024 and 2025, the Fisheries Management Section achieved significant statewide progress in conservation, public access, and angler engagement. Major accomplishments included completion of a substantial renovation at Dawson Fish Hatchery and the initiation of a second renovation at Bowens Mill Fish Hatchery, continued modernization of hatchery infrastructure, and implementation of advanced fish culture techniques. These investments supported the stocking of more than 21 million fish into Georgia waters over the past two years, strengthening fish populations and angling opportunities statewide.

Recruitment, retention, and reactivation initiatives, highlighted by the Gateway to Fishing Program, helped sustain more than one million certified anglers. Partnerships with industry leaders generated more than \$500,000 in external support and enabled deployment of 12 mobile catch trailers to introduce new audiences to fishing. Targeted outreach campaigns and expanded programming in state parks further increased accessibility and visibility.

Public boating access remained a priority, with the Boating Access Program maintaining more than 165 public access locations, replacing four aging boat ramps, and completing major parking lot renovations at two sites. Despite progress, the Section continues to face challenges related to rising construction costs, recruitment and retention of qualified staff, aquatic nuisance species, and increasing development pressure along lakes and river corridors.



Game Management

In January 2025, routine surveillance of hunter-harvested deer identified Georgia's first positive case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Decades of preparation and planning enabled the Department to respond immediately and effectively, resulting in no disruption to deer hunting season while continuing to provide educational outreach on disease prevention and management.

DNR staff, hunters, landowners, and partners quickly implemented the statewide CWD Management Plan, including establishment of a CWD Management Area and initiation of cluster sampling. For the 2025–2026 hunting season, 203 samples have been collected within the management area to date, including seven positives, 155 not detected, and 41 pending results.

The Deer Management Assistance Program (DMAP) expanded significantly with the hiring of three new biologists, effectively doubling the program's capacity to provide technical guidance to landowners and hunting clubs. Enrollment grew from 19 cooperators in fiscal year 2024, to 58 in fiscal year 2025, with an additional 33 enrolled so far in fiscal year 2026. The program currently maintains 213 active contracts encompassing 471 properties and more than 329,000 acres.

DNR also continued its leadership role in the Georgia Feral Hog Task Force, which initiated landscape-level hog control efforts in South Georgia. In fiscal year 2025, the General Assembly funded a pilot incentive program awarding 20 hog traps valued at approximately \$3,500 each to successful participants. During the first quarter alone, at least 3,260 hogs were reported removed.

The Urban Wildlife Program provided assistance to thousands of residents experiencing wildlife conflicts, aiding 2,849 customers in fiscal year 2024 and more than 3,000 in fiscal year 2025.

Legislative funding significantly expanded the Georgia Hunters for the Hungry program, increasing processor participation and geographic reach. Donated venison rose from 4,791 pounds during the 2023-2024 season to 96,750 pounds in the 2024-2025 season. The current 2025-2026 season has already produced nearly 80,000 pounds of donated meat, demonstrating the program's continued impact in supporting food security while contributing to responsible deer management.



Wildlife Conservation Section

Georgia successfully reached its goal of permanently protecting 65 viable gopher tortoise populations, including conservation of more than 1,200 acres south of Cordele that support over 250 tortoises and essential pineland habitat. Since its launch in 2015, the initiative has grown into a partnership of nearly 30 agencies, organizations, companies, foundations, and private landowners working collaboratively to conserve habitat and restore longleaf pine ecosystems. This achievement played a key role in the federal decision not to list eastern gopher tortoise populations under the Endangered Species Act, and represents a major milestone in long-term species conservation.

Georgia's 2025 State Wildlife Action Plan was completed, and ultimately approved by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on November 12, 2025, following collaboration with more than 100 organizations and stakeholder groups. The updated plan establishes ambitious priorities for conserving the state's native wildlife and habitats over the coming decade.

The Joe Tanner Discovery Center opened at the Charlie Elliott Wildlife Center in April 2025, creating new opportunities for student field trips, overnight programs, summer camps, festivals, and family engagement. The facility includes modern animal care spaces that consolidate the ambassador animal collection into wellness-focused habitats designed to promote animal health and natural behaviors.

The Center honors former DNR Commissioner Joe Tanner, who passed away in November of 2024. His decades of public service shaped conservation policy across Georgia, including the consolidation of state agencies into DNR and the passage of landmark environmental legislation.

A precedent-setting bat mitigation agreement with the Georgia Department of Transportation and partners was completed, allowing critical transportation projects to proceed while protecting bat populations and priority habitats. Funding from the agreement supported acquisition of the Upatoi Ravines Natural Area and Treat Mountain Wildlife Management Area, expanding outdoor recreation opportunities and conserving rare species.



Law Enforcement Division

Mission

To conserve our natural resources and to protect the people we serve. We maintain public support through fair and vigorous law enforcement, quality education, and community involvement. We commit ourselves to our Vision and Mission by practicing our core beliefs, which are trust, fairness, and professionalism.



The Georgia Department of Natural Resources Law Enforcement Division (LED) employs 192 POST-certified game wardens with statewide authority and full arrest powers, supported by 24 non-sworn staff members. Game wardens enforce laws related to hunting, fishing, commercial fishing, environmental protection, and recreational boating, while providing public safety across all DNR-managed properties. The Division operates under a clear chain of command with a Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, two Majors, eight Captains, six Lieutenants, and 174 field game wardens serving as Sergeants, Corporals, Game Wardens First Class, and Game Wardens.



Director
Colonel Mike England

Specialized Training

Georgia game wardens are among the most highly trained and versatile law enforcement officers in the nation. In addition to the 20 hours of annual POST-mandated training, officers completed more than 32,500 hours of in-service training across over 160 courses during FY2024 and FY2025. Courses included pistol optic transition, gas mask, Critical Incident Response Team, underwater ROV operations, semi-automatic pistol levels two and three, SWAT operations, the Georgia Impaired Driving Summit, active shooter response and instructor training, defensive tactics, Pepperball instructor courses, child abduction response, GACP conferences, FBI LEEDS, CPR refresher and AED training, woodland operations, peer support, autism and de-escalation, ethics and professionalism, NASBLA inland boating instruction, and critical incident management.

During FY2024 and FY2025, the 38th and 39th Game Warden Academy classes graduated. Each 15-week academy class completed 594 hours of training covering 24 specialized courses exclusive to game warden duties. Topics included hunting, fishing, and boating laws, wilderness first responder certification, ATV operation, active shooter response, wildlife management, mantracking, boat operation, hunter education, media relations, night hunting enforcement, and officer water survival. The academy added 26 new officers statewide who are now actively working in all six regions.



Aviation

The Aviation Unit provides aerial services to all DNR divisions and other state agencies using three Bell 407GX/GXi helicopters. In FY2024, the Unit flew 235 missions, logging over 500 flight hours. In FY2025, it flew 281 missions, logging 560 flight hours. Aviation training for both fiscal years totaled more than 140 hours and included IFR approach procedures, night vision goggle training, Bambi bucket operations, tactical flight officer training with U.S. Customs Air and Marine, FLIR operations, initial pilot and TFO training, rappel operations, short-haul rescue training, and regional search and rescue coordination with multiple Emergency Management Agencies. Rescue training was also conducted with the U.S. Coast Guard Savannah Air Station, and pilots attended the Bell training academy.

During this period, the Aviation Unit made several upgrades. The hangar on St. Simons Island was repaired following hurricane damage. Tactical flight officers received new uniforms. All helicopters received a new paint scheme, Harris radios were installed, and one aircraft received FLIR integration. Rescue operations were enhanced with vacuum spine boards, standardized equipment storage, Axnis communication systems, and new pilot helmets.

Mission highlights included assisting Camden County authorities in locating a violent sexual offender, standing by during a warrant involving venomous snakes, conducting aerial searches during the Lake Oconee missing-person investigation, remotely operated vessels for the Sapelo Island gangway collapse response, recovering bodies from a hang-gliding accident on Lookout Mountain, and transporting bear cubs to support biodiversity initiatives.



Enhanced Resources and Operational Readiness

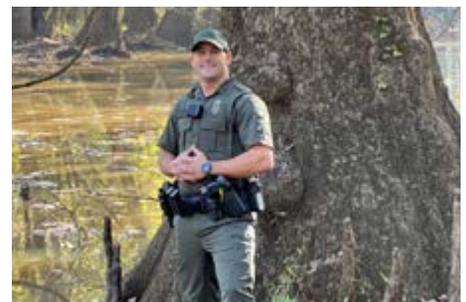
During FY2024 and FY2025, LED's Investigative Unit expanded with the addition of a full-time corporal and two detachment positions. This growth provides two investigators in North Georgia, two in South Georgia, and a unit coordinator at LED headquarters in Social Circle. The unit also partnered with the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to access the Intelligence Fusion Center and related databases and acquired Cellebrite digital forensics technology through the National Wild Turkey Federation's Superfund Program. Maintaining statewide coverage and keeping technology current will require additional investigators and sustained funding.

The Sonar Team strengthened its capabilities by acquiring two new remotely operated vessels equipped with integrated sonar and cameras, along with a pontoon vessel featuring a custom side-scan sonar reel system designed by Keith Cormican of Bruce's Legacy, who also provided a three-day operator training session. Updated boat-mounted sonar systems with live scan, 360-degree scan, and side-scan capabilities would significantly improve efficiency and effectiveness, particularly in confined or timbered environments.

During the same period, LED acquired new vehicles, technology, and equipment to enhance officer safety and operational effectiveness. Chevrolet trucks were added to the fleet and outfitted with updated graphics, emergency lighting, and Southern Linc/Harris radio systems. OD green field uniforms were issued to all sworn personnel. Department-issued pistols and rifles were equipped with Aimpoint optics, while Special Operations Group rifles received Vortex optics, KGM suppressors, and Cerakote finishes. Automated External Defibrillators were also issued to all sworn personnel thanks to a partnership with Georgia Power.

To further support search and rescue, manhunts, and evidence recovery operations, the Division acquired two remotely operated vessels and two Skydio drones. Seven Starlink satellite internet systems were deployed, one in each region and one at headquarters, to provide high-speed connectivity in areas with limited cellular service. Computer-aided dispatch systems were upgraded statewide, and a LiveScan fingerprint system was implemented to support background investigations and GCIC compliance.

Training equipment was also modernized. Defensive tactics gear was replaced, use-of-force scenario training tools were added, and quick-detach holster systems were introduced to provide more realistic and effective training for sworn personnel.



Patrol and Enforcement

Game wardens dedicate significant time patrolling Georgia's waterways, lands, and coastal areas to ensure public safety and protect natural resources. Officers patrol 16,000 miles of rivers, 500,000 acres of impounded waters, 100+ linear miles of shoreline, and extend operations up to 200 miles offshore. In FY2024, game wardens logged 20,118 hours on water patrols, checking over 21,000 vessels, and in FY2025, they logged 19,438 hours while checking over 18,000 vessels. During the peak boating season, from Memorial Day weekend through Labor Day weekend, enforcement and public education initiatives included Operation Dry Water, boating safety events, and media outreach through the Belts & Jackets Media Tour at Lake Lanier, Lake Oliver, and Lake Blackshear. In FY2025, the Division partnered with the Alabama Law Enforcement Agency Marine Patrol Division and the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission to hold a joint press conference at Lakepoint State Park for National Safe Boating Week, promoting safe boating practices.

Game wardens patrol more than 38 million acres of public and private lands, including all of the state's Wildlife Management Areas, 11 public fishing areas, and Georgia's state parks and historic sites. In FY2024, they responded to 120 boating incidents, checked over 27,000 hunting licenses and more than 34,000 fishing licenses, and devoted over 4,800 hours to land and water search and rescue operations. In FY2025, officers responded to 127 boating incidents, checked over 27,000 hunting licenses and more than 36,000 fishing licenses, and devoted over 8,000 hours to land and water search and rescue operations.



Crime Suppression

During FY2024 and FY2025, game wardens were deployed to Atlanta to assist in crime suppression efforts. This initiative, led by Governor Kemp, involved collaboration with the Georgia State Patrol, Georgia Bureau of Investigation, Atlanta Police Department, Fulton County Sheriff's Office, and the City of South Fulton. The goal was to reduce criminal activity, illegal street racing, and unauthorized ATV use in and around Atlanta. In FY2024, 20 crime suppression details were conducted, totaling nearly 5,200 personnel hours. In FY2025, five details were completed, logging 1,889 hours as crime levels decreased.

Community Involvement

Game wardens remain actively involved in education and outreach across the state. In FY2024, officers conducted 1,561 hours of hunter education, 350 hours of boater education, and 6,424 hours of public education programs, youth events, and general outreach. In FY2025, game wardens provided 1,479 hours of hunter education, 282 hours of boater education, and 6,570 hours of community outreach and youth engagement programs. These efforts strengthen public understanding of Georgia's natural resources and promote safe and responsible outdoor recreation.

Through these efforts, game wardens protect Georgia's natural resources and the public while promoting safe and responsible outdoor recreation.



Coastal Resources Division

Mission

To balance coastal development with protection of the coast's natural assets, socio-cultural heritage, and recreational resources for the benefit of present and future generations.

The Coastal Resources Division (CRD) has primary responsibility for managing Georgia's marshes, beaches, and marine fishery resources. Based in Brunswick, CRD administers permitting programs under the Coastal Marshlands Protection Act and Shore Protection Act; issues revocable licenses for use of state-owned water bottoms; monitors coastal water quality; and manages shellfish harvest areas. CRD conducts research; management and development activities associated with recreational and commercial fishery resources; represents Georgia on regional marine fishery boards and commissions; and builds boat ramps, artificial reefs, and fishing piers. CRD has primary responsibility for the Protection of Tidewater/Right of Passage Acts.



Director
Doug Haymans

Georgia Clean Marina

In late 2023, CRD revitalized the Georgia Clean Marina program in partnership with the University of Georgia (UGA) and Georgia Marine Business Association, which administer the program, to recognize coastal marinas for their commitment to going beyond regulatory requirements to protect coastal waterways using voluntary pollution prevention best management practices. Certified marinas proudly fly the Program's flag and display the logo. By the end of 2025, nine marinas have been certified in two years.



Georgia Coastal Resilience Leadership Academy

The inaugural Georgia Coastal Resilience Leadership Academy was held in February 2025, in collaboration with the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government, for 16 elected officials from coastal counties and municipalities. The Academy is an educational program that equips elected officials and community leaders with the knowledge and tools to address coastal hazards like sea-level rise and storms, risk assessments, nature-based solutions, and community planning. The Academy is part of a broader effort by CRD to enhance resilience through partnerships and initiatives.

CRD Outreach Events

The Coastal Management Road Show returned in FY2024 and FY2025, with CRD staff attending more than 20 local government commission and council meetings across Georgia's coastal zone. The traveling road show expands awareness of Coastal Management Program services, with a focus on the Coastal Incentive Grant program, which funds small but impactful projects that promote stewardship of and access to coastal natural resources. The effort has strengthened working relationships with coastal communities, facilitated discussions of natural resource needs, and supported the development of grant project ideas. As elected officials and local government staff change over time, the road show ensures CRD and Coastal Management Program services remain top of mind.



CoastFest, the Division's free annual event, celebrates Georgia's coastal heritage and natural resources while educating the public through hands-on learning, live wildlife, exhibits, and activities for all ages. The 29th annual CoastFest, held March 22, 2025, at Mary Ross Waterfront Park in Brunswick, welcomed approximately 7,500 attendees and featured 47 exhibitors representing state and federal agencies, universities, nonprofits, and local educators. The festival offered wildlife encounters, interactive demonstrations, marine science activities, and opportunities to learn how DNR sustains, protects, enhances, and conserves Georgia's coastal ecosystems. Returning favorites included the "Hawg Trough" giant aquarium, funded by the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation, alongside new attractions such as the "Wild Georgia Shrimp Eating Contest," highlighting the fishery and its economic impact. As the largest single-day outreach event hosted annually by a DNR division, CoastFest remains a vital platform for connecting scientists and resource managers with the public, inspiring stewardship, and fostering a deeper understanding of Georgia's unique coastal environment.

In October 2025, CRD hosted its third Georgia Resiliency Conference, formerly the Georgia Climate Conference, on Jekyll Island. The event engaged more than 300 attendees and 120 speakers, demonstrating Georgia's statewide commitment to resilience. Sessions addressed local government resilience strategies, public health, fisheries, agriculture, community engagement, and energy, while highlighting research, technical tools, and resources available to resiliency practitioners. CRD will host the conference again in 2029.

Dock Stakeholders

CRD manages requests for private recreational docks under authority to issue Revocable Licenses for the use of state-owned property which has been delegated to CRD by the Governor. In 2024, CRD convened a stakeholder committee of citizens, NGOs and dock owners, builders and consultants, along with ex-officio agencies and academia, to discuss draft regulations for use when approving licenses for docks in the coastal zone. Facilitated by the UGA Carl Vinson Institute of Government, the stakeholders debated siting, size criteria, and other important management considerations. A town hall meeting was held to share the stakeholder committee's recommendation and CRD expects to have new rules drafted by Spring 2026.



Grant to Enhance Flood Resilience

CRD was awarded a grant through the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law/NOAA in 2023 for the conservation of an approximately 4-acre tract in the City of Brunswick to enhance flood resilience. CRD partnered with the City, Glynn County Board of Education and a willing seller to acquire the strategically located parcel, proposed for high density development, for open space to reduce stormwater, high tide/sunny day, and compound flooding impacts on nearby residences, roads and middle school. The property was conveyed to the City in December 2024, and CRD is working again with partners to develop a long-term stewardship and flood management plan for the property. This project supports CRD's efforts to enable coastal communities to become more resilient to natural hazards and sea level rise.

Noyes Cut Ecosystem Restoration Project

Starting with a Senate Resolution (#267) and request from CRD to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (Corps) in 2013, the Noyes Cut Ecosystem Restoration Project was able to rehabilitate degraded marine fisheries, water quality and boating access to over 4,500 acres of saltmarsh and 30 miles of tidal creeks and tributaries in southeast coastal Georgia. Manmade shortcuts through the marsh were created in the 1930s and '40s to facilitate river transport of timber and the creation of the Atlantic Intracoastal Waterway, but that allowed co-mingling of salinity from three separate riverine systems and increased erosion that degraded the entire basin. CRD worked on the Corps' Project Development Team for a decade to design a \$13M restoration project to separate the three riverine system with 900 linear feet of 25' – 72' wide rock dams and obtain funding through the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP). Over 75% of the project was federally funded and it was the first Bipartisan Infrastructure Law-funded project to be constructed in the United States. Phase 1 of the Noyes cut restoration was completed in 2023 and Phase 2 is scheduled to begin early 2026.



Oyster Farming Industry Takes Off

In 2024, CRD accomplished a critical milestone for oyster mariculture with the development of a *Vibrio* Control Plan to guide harvest procedures that minimize the proliferation of virulent bacteria that can pose serious public health risks to immuno-compromised individuals consuming raw or undercooked oysters. The Control Plan provides time/temperature controls for safe harvest under different water temperature scenarios and lays the important foundation for year-round, including summer, harvest of oysters. CRD's Shellfish Program and Control Plan was audited by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in Summer 2025 and received the highest marks with no reported deficiencies or recommendations. In 2025, the Shellfish Program proposed new rules to guide commercial shellfish harvest, including new provisions to allow for closed-season harvest of oysters, or Summer Harvest, based on the state's new *Vibrio* Control Plan. Two firms were certified for summer harvest which concluded on October 1, 2025, with no known oyster-related illness outbreaks having been reported, which is a testament to both CRD's careful planning and the harvesters' meticulous adherence to the requirements. As of this year, the Georgia Shellfish Program has established three oyster mariculture (farming) zones with the most recent located in Jointer Creek, Glynn County, totaling nine leases.



State Management of Offshore Species

In 2025, the Coastal Resources Division submitted an Exempted Fishing Permit request to the U.S. Secretary of Commerce seeking authority to extend the Red Snapper season off Georgia's coast. The request was coordinated with other South Atlantic states and represents an important step toward state management of traditionally controversial offshore species such as Red Snapper.

Improvements to state-level fisheries catch data collection also began in 2025 through state legislative appropriations. This funding expanded support for the Access Point Angler Intercept Survey (APAIS) by adding creel clerks and equipment, marking the first time state resources have directly supported angler-dependent data collection.

Additional enhancements included the creation of an offshore for-hire guide observer position. This role directly observes offshore fishing trips and records catch disposition, improving estimates of fishing mortality and strengthening the scientific data used for fisheries management.

Marine Habitat Enhancement

On December 21, 2023, CRD deployed two MARTA passenger railcars at Reef L, the first of what is hoped to be several hundred over the coming decade. Donated by MARTA as part of a fleet upgrade, the steel and aluminum cars will over time become encrusted with natural biota. This live growth, combined with structural relief, creates excellent habitat for a variety of reef fish.

In spring 2025, CRD restored oyster reefs along more than half a mile of shoreline in the Teakettle Creek Recreational Shellfish Harvest Area (McIntosh County). This location was selected to increase public oyster collection opportunities in Georgia’s most overharvested area and to create essential fish habitat within the Sapelo Island National Estuarine Research Reserve. Approximately half an acre was restored using loose shell and wire-mesh modules, totaling around 270 tons of recycled shell collected through the “We Recycle Shell” partnership. Strong community engagement supported the project, including volunteers from the Boy Scouts of America, Wallenius Wilhelmsen, The Wesley Center at Chattanooga, and Oglethorpe Charter School. Early monitoring indicates excellent oyster recruitment and growth.

In 2023, CRD removed 160 feet of wooden bulkhead at the Coastal Regional Headquarters campus and replaced it with a living shoreline. The project consists of four 40-foot sections demonstrating various construction methods and materials. Sections A and B feature a two-tiered design, while Sections C and D are graded to a 6:1 slope. Erosion control mats, straw jute nets, and native vegetation were used across the sections, with a stone infiltration trench along the top to manage runoff. The shoreline has matured into a functional marsh-upland interface and serves as a demonstration site for campus visitors.

In July 2025, CRD released *Living Shorelines in Coastal Georgia: A Comprehensive Guide to Understanding and Designing Living Shorelines on the Georgia Coast*. The guide provides practical, science-based criteria and standards for assessing site suitability, developing designs, and applying best management practices in shoreline stabilization projects.

Since July 1, 2023, the Habitat Enhancement and Restoration Unit has accomplished:

- Recycled 2,060 bushels of oyster shell
- Mapped 6,500 acres of ocean bottom with side scan sonar
- Restored Oysters along 3,770 feet of shoreline across three sites
- 820 feet of shoreline at two sites in the North Newport River (2023-2024)
- 2,950 feet of shoreline in Teakettle Creek (2025)
- 11 Artificial Reef Deployments
- 41’ tugboat “Brenda K” at Reef KBY (2023)
- Two MARTA railcars and 1,200 tons of concrete at Reef L (2023)
- 50’ sailboat “Guanahani Honey” at Reef CDH (2024)
- 40’ sailboat “Satisfaction” at Reef SFC (2024)
- 60’ tugboat “G.A. Franklin” at Reef HLHA (2024)
- 63 tons of concrete blocks at Reef SAV (2024)
- 62’ tugboat “Sarah Katlin” at Reef JY (2024)
- 40’ tugboat “Miss Laci” at Reef DRH (2024)
- 46’ retired tugboat “Megan” at Reef CDH (2025)
- 110’ barge loaded with 100 tons of concrete rubble at Reef A (2025)
- 130’ barge at Reef A (2025)

State Parks and Historic Sites Division

Mission

To protect our state's natural beauty and historic integrity while providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education.

DNR's Parks and Historic Sites Division (PHSD) manages more than 60 properties that preserve the state's environment and history. From the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Colonial Coast, these sites offer an exceptional variety of activities, such as hiking and biking, fishing and boating, picnicking, ranger programs, historic enactments and golf for more than 13 million people each year.

Strategic Goals

Following the introduction of DNR's strategic plan after the appointment of Commissioner Rabon in 2023, PHSD developed a divisional strategic plan that aligns with DNR's overarching priorities while emphasizing the division's mission, vision, and core values. The plan centers on employees, resources, facilities and infrastructure, visitor experience, and responsible fiscal stewardship. Together, these priorities provide clear direction for staff and ensure continued progress across the division.

Georgians First for Park Reservations

As visitation to Georgia State Parks increased by more than 30 percent in recent years, it became more difficult for Georgia residents to reserve campsites or cottages within their own state. In April 2024, PHSD introduced an expanded reservation window for Georgia residents, allowing bookings up to 14 months in advance, one month earlier than the standard 13-month window available to other visitors. From April 2024 through June 30, 2025, Georgia residents made 5,954 reservations using this expanded access.



Director
Angie Johnson

First State Parks Art Contest

In 2024, PHSD launched its first High School Art Contest, inviting students across Georgia to submit original drawings or paintings inspired by a Georgia State Park or Historic Site. Ranger-led programs provided art supplies through the Friends of Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, and students also had the option to create artwork independently. The 10 winning pieces were displayed at the Georgia State Capitol during Keep Georgia Wild Day in January 2025. Student artists attended the event and observed legislative proceedings. The contest received 118 submissions and strong social media engagement, prompting the division to continue the program in 2025 with the goal of establishing it as an annual tradition. Submissions more than doubled in the second year, reaching 266 entries.



ADA Facility Improvements

Significant accessibility improvements were made at state parks and historic sites statewide. At Jarrell Plantation, upgrades included a new ramp off the back porch, trail widening, and two new ADA parking spaces, while Fort King George saw the addition of a new ADA-accessible boardwalk. The newly renovated campground at Stephen C. Foster State Park also featured three ADA-accessible campsites.

PHSD accessibility enhancements expanded to include a new ADA campsite at Magnolia Springs, additional cottages at Fort Yargo and Cloudland Canyon, bringing the total to 63 ADA-accessible cottages, and a statewide increase in ADA campsites from 77 to 84. PHSD offered six accessible yurts, 49 picnic shelters, and 35 group shelters.

Recreational opportunities were enhanced with ADA-accessible mini-golf courses at Fort Yargo, Hard Labor Creek, Jack Hill, and Vogel; 35 accessible fishing docks statewide; accessible horse-mounting platforms at Don Carter and A.H. Stephens; and accessible kayak launches at Hard Labor Creek, Jack Hill, and Vogel. Trails and bridges were expanded by adding a new connection from the City of Winder to Fort Yargo's trail system improving ADA outdoor access. Fully accessible water access features are also in development for Tallulah Gorge and Stephen C. Foster State Parks. Additional features included ADA splash pads at Fort Yargo, Jack Hill, and Magnolia Springs, and expanded specialty hunts offering opportunities for mobility-impaired participants.

Innovation Award for OBB

In FY24, DNR's Outdoors Beyond Barriers program expanded access to outdoor recreation for individuals with limited mobility. The program received national recognition with the Innovation Award at the NASPD Conference in September 2024, the first award Georgia has received in NASPD's 67-year history.



Parking Pass Increase

Created in 1994, the Georgia State Park Pass supports essential infrastructure repair and maintenance across the park system. On October 28, 2025, the Board of Natural Resources approved the first fee adjustment in 16 years. Since 1994, visitation grew 44 percent, from 9.1 million visitors in 2009 to more than 14 million in 2024, while inflation and aging infrastructure significantly increased operational costs. Deferred maintenance needs exceeded \$500 million statewide as the system approached its 100-year anniversary.

To address these challenges, the Park Pass fee increased:

- Daily pass: \$5 to \$10 per vehicle
- Annual pass: \$50 to \$70

Discounts remain available for seniors, military members, and disabled veterans, and free passes can be checked out at public libraries statewide. All additional revenue is dedicated exclusively to repairing and maintaining roads, trails, campsites, cottages, and public facilities across Georgia's more than 60 state parks and historic sites, ensuring safe, clean, and high-quality visitor experiences.

Interpretive and Ranger-led Programming

Providing Park Ranger-led interpretive programming is one of the fundamental responsibilities of Georgia State Parks. Ranger-led programming for visitors across Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites continued providing engaging experiences through a wide range of special events and interpretive opportunities. In FY24, rangers led 14,642 programs, attracting 263,887 attendees. In FY25, 14,200 programs were offered, reaching 243,071 attendees.



Statewide initiatives highlighted the variety of impactful park programming. First Day Hikes expanded from 62 to 76 hikes, drawing 2,812 participants, a 53 percent increase from FY24. Super Museum Sunday experienced a 29 percent rise in attendance with over 4,000 visitors. 2024's Annual Interpretive Theme, "Tales of Scales," showed significant growth compared to the previous year's "Take Flight" theme. 645 "Tales of Scales" programs were offered, engaging over 10,600 attendees.

Other key events included Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day with 33 sites and 493 attendees participating. Your State Parks Day, which was canceled in FY25 due to Hurricane Helene, returned strong in FY26 with 59 sites, 136 projects, and 1,265 volunteers.

Overall, ranger-led programs in FY24 and FY25 continued inspiring stewardship, outdoor recreation, and education across Georgia's state parks and historic sites, connecting thousands of visitors to the state's diverse natural and cultural heritage.

Junior Ranger Program

The Junior Ranger Program, a foundational program in Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, continued playing a vital role supporting PHSD's mission by inspiring future park rangers. In the most recent year, the program saw great success, with 105 camp opportunities offered and 842 Junior Rangers attending between April and July, a 28 percent increase in total camps and a 44 percent increase in attendance compared to the previous year. Camps were designed for various age groups, including toddlers, families, and children ages 6-12, with themes such as archaeology, Wild Georgia, adventure, and history.



Office of Archaeology and State Preservation

The Office of the State Archaeologist (OSA) is housed under PHSD but supports all of DNR providing guidance and technical support to all divisions, other county, city and state entities as well as private citizens. In FY24, OSA completed over 80 projects, with over 40 projects completed for WRD and 40 for PHSD, in addition to outside entities from city and county municipalities and private citizens. In FY25, when an OSA position was vacated it was reclassified as a Deputy State Archaeologist to allow for future succession planning opportunities within the office. Over 70 projects were completed in FY25 in spite of several months with the vacancy, with 32 projects completed for WRD, 32 for PHSD and eight for other entities (CRD, DOT, LED, GFC, county/city, etc.).

In January 2024, there were changes to the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) requiring all funerary objects on exhibit to be removed or covered. As a result, the Mound Room at Kolomoki Mounds was closed to the public in April 2024. This was a significant step toward being a respectful steward of this significant heritage site. In May of that year, all funerary items on display were removed and placed in curation. Over the following year, three new field trip outlines were developed for different age groups focusing on the people who lived at Kolomoki. In FY25, with the addition of a Park Naturalist, the park offered 404 programs compared to 65 in FY24, a 521 percent increase.

To ensure DNR follows the new NAGPRA regulations, funerary objects were also removed from exhibit at several other PHSD sites including Fort McAllister and Fort King George, as well as items from the Capitol Museum.

Ongoing work continued at Etowah Indian Mounds due to the NAGPRA claim that began in Fall 2022. By January 2023, all artifacts were removed from display with a goal to repatriate the artifacts and ancestors. Throughout 2024, the museum was transformed into an interactive learning space with interpretive panels as well as hands on stations around the room for visitors to learn about the people who lived at Etowah.

In 2024, in collaboration with Kennesaw State University, 15 new Historic Site Brochures were developed. This was the first time a project like this was completed so the division now has a new uniformed look for all the site brochures.

Several multi-year historic preservation projects have also been conducted, including the restoration of all 44 windows at the Robert Toombs House between FY23 through FY26 and the repair and reupholstery of 40 pieces of historic furniture from the Reynolds Mansion on Sapelo Island due to use from visitors. An interpretive assessment of the Reynolds Mansion rooms and site artifacts was also conducted.

In collaboration with an interpretive consulting firm, a design concept was developed for the Hofwyl-Broadfield Museum which included the removal of the public restrooms from the former slave dwelling. This allows for future interpretation of the daily life of the enslaved workers. A new restroom was installed by the historic house. An additional project was completed at the Broadfield Cemetery that spanned FY23 through FY25 and included community listening meetings, vegetation clearing, boundary delineation, installation of a new fence, internal grave mapping, herbicide treatments, cleanup of garbage and debris, and the removal of trees of concern.

Archaeological services and technical assistance were provided for several long-term projects on Ossabaw Island. These included the West House renovation project, emergency installation of the new Hunt Camp Dock on South End, and the Living Shoreline project along Newell Creek. Support consisted of ensuring all restoration work to the house was historically accurate, archaeological testing prior to installation of new utility lines, septic, and drainage systems as well as the concrete footer for the dock and ahead of the expansion of a borrow pit. Technical assistance included navigation of the Section 106 and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers permitting processes, review and comment on agreement documents, and recommendations for alterations to designs to minimize impacts to archaeological resources.



Georgia Natural Resources Foundation

About the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation

The Georgia Natural Resources Foundation (GNRF) was established by law in 2010 to serve as the official nonprofit and fundraising partner of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR), providing critical support for projects, programs, and strategic initiatives across the Department, strengthening its ability to fulfill its statewide conservation mission.

Weekend for Wildlife

As host of Weekend for Wildlife, the Foundation plays a vital role in advancing the work of DNR's Wildlife Resources Division, particularly its Wildlife Conservation Section. For 37 years, this signature event has brought together conservation leaders, outdoor enthusiasts, corporate partners, elected officials, and generous supporters who share a common goal: ensuring Georgia's wildlife and wild places thrive for generations to come. With strong support from Governor Brian Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp, Weekend for Wildlife has earned a reputation as one of the nation's premier conservation fundraising events, raising more than \$25 million to protect and restore Georgia's most treasured natural resources.

In 2024 and 2025 alone, Weekend for Wildlife generated more than \$6 million in support of DNR's divisions and programs. Of note, the 2024 direct appeal raised more than \$460,000 to launch DNR's new adaptive hunting and fishing program, now part of the Outdoors Beyond Barriers initiative, and the 2025 direct appeal generated more than \$250,000 to support a collaborative effort between DNR and MARTA to deploy decommissioned railcars into the Atlantic Ocean, creating artificial reef habitats that enhance marine ecosystems and recreational fishing opportunities. Every dollar raised strengthens DNR's ability to conserve Georgia's wildlife and natural heritage.

Additional Support for DNR

Beyond Weekend for Wildlife, GNRF continues to provide strategic financial support to DNR divisions and priority programs through targeted grants and direct investments. The Foundation remains the largest financial supporter of the DNR Career Academy, investing nearly \$25,000 annually to ensure participants can take part in this workforce development program with limited personal costs. This investment not only supports current participants but also strengthens the future of DNR through recruitment and development. Additionally, the Foundation annually selects a recipient for the Nathan Deal Conserve Georgia's Natural Resources Scholarship, awarding \$10,000 to support the next generation of conservation leaders.

Through these sustained investments, GNRF enhances DNR's capacity to protect Georgia's natural resources, cultivate future conservation leaders, and deliver meaningful programs that benefit citizens statewide.

Awards and Honors

2023

Kelly Hill, CRD
Outstanding Partner Award
UGA's Marine Extension and Georgia
Sea Grant

Russ Singletary, WRD
Manager of the Year
National Wild Turkey Federation

Theron Menken , WRD
Wildlife Biologist of the Year
Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources
Division – Game Management; Safari
Club International

Ryan Meckel, WRD
Wildlife Technician of the Year
Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources
Division – Game Management; Safari
Club International

Lori Downs, WRD
Employee of the Year
Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources
Division – Game Management

Cpl. Tyler Lewis, LED
Game Warden of the Year

Sgt. Jeremy Bolen, LED
Supervisor of the Year

Cpl. Tyler Lewis, LED
Georgia Boating Officer of the Year

Cpl. Brock Hoyt, LED
Investigative Game Warden of the
Year

GWFC Drew Beverly, LED
Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award

GWFC Jared Wood, LED
James R. Darnell Award Recipient

Sgt. Cody Jones, LED
NWTF Officer of the Year

Cpl. Jason Bennett, LED
Hunter Education Instructor of the
Year

GW TR Dooley, LED
Torch Award

Cpl. Jonathan Segars, LED
Operation Dry Water Officer of the
Year

Brenda Tanner, LED
Administrative Professional of the
Year

2024

Jason Carter, PHSD
Henry Struble Manager of the Year

Jason Webb, PHSD
Si Longmire Ranger of the Year

Kathy Knowlton, CRD
Project Recognition: SciFish Core
Development
Atlantic States Marine Fisheries
Commission's Outreach & Advocacy
Contributions

Brian Vickery, WRD
Manager of the Year
National Wild Turkey Federation

Hunter Roop, WRD
Distinguished Service Award
American Fisheries Society

Amory Cook, WRD
Certificate of Appreciation
American Fisheries Society (Georgia)

Marissa Peebles, WRD
Hidden Hero Award
American Fisheries Society (Georgia)

McDuffie PFA and Hatchery, WRD
Fisheries Team of the Year
American Fisheries Society (Georgia)

Rick Lavender, WRD
One-time Publication Brochure
"Conserving Georgia's Nongame
Wildlife: FY23 Summary" (2nd Place)

Association of Conservation
Information

GW Cory Bohannon, LED
Game Warden of the Year

Sgt. Matt Garthright, LED
Supervisor of the Year

GW Cory Bohannon, LED
Boating Officer of the Year

Cpl. Eric White, LED
Investigative Game Warden of the
Year

GWFC Phillip Nelson, LED
Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award

GWFC Jared Wood, LED
James R. Darnell Award Recipient

GWFC Jared Wood, LED
NWTF Officer of the Year

GWFC Ryan Buice, LED
Hunter Education Instructor of the
Year

GW Jaron Hollinshead, LED
Torch Award

Cpl. Ryan Locke, LED
Operation Dry Water Officer of the
Year

Debra Hollar, LED
Administrative Professional of the
Year

2025

MiKayla Spencer, PHSD
Henry Struble Manager of the Year

Jason Baker, PHSD
Si Longmire Ranger of the Year

Josh Pettit, PHSD
Golf Superintendent of the Year

Arrowhead Golf Course, PHSD Most Outstanding Golf Course Operations of the Year	Steve Gay, WRD Hidden Hero Award (Go Fish Education Center) American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Calvin Cole, WRD IHEA Host State of the Year International Hunter Education Association
Brian Vickery, WRD Chief's Leadership Award Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division – Game Management	Angela Spinks, WRD Professional of the Year in Fisheries Management American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Rick Lavender, WRD ACI 2025 External Newsletter “Georgia Wild” (3rd Place) Association of Conservation Information
Anthony Kroeger, WRD Wildlife Biologist of the Award Southeastern Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies	Richmond Hill Hatchery , WRD Fisheries Team of the Year American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	GWFC Hunter Rush, LED Game Warden of the Year
Anthony Kroeger, WRD Wildlife Biologist of the Year Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division – Game Management	Tim Barrett, WRD Career Contribution American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Cpt. Derek Dillard, LED Supervisor of the Year
Ellie Hanson, WRD Wildlife Technician of the Year Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division – Game Management	Steve Schleiger, WRD Career Contribution American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	GW Ben Hawkins, LED Georgia Boating Officer of the Year
Forest Management Unit, WRD Group Achievement Award Georgia DNR Wildlife Resources Division – Game Management	Maxie Gray, WRD Career Contribution American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Cpl. Shawn Elmore, LED Investigative Game Warden of the Year
Bob Sargent, WRD 10 Years of Service/Lifetime Achievement Award Atlantic Flyway Council	Carletha Bryant, WRD Career Contribution American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Cpl. Jason Bennett, LED Rocky Wainwright Waterfowl Award
Tim Bonvechio, WRD Thom Kwak Distinguished Service Award American Fisheries Society (Southern Division)	Scott Robinson, WRD Career Contribution American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Cpl. Zach Griffis, LED James R. Darnell Award Recipient
Don Harrison, WRD Distinguished Service Award American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Kim Morris-Zarneke, WRD Millie Graham Award Georgia Association of Marine Education	GW Drew Weathersby, LED NWTF Officer of the Year
Hunter Roop, WRD Distinguished Service Award American Fisheries Society	Kim Morris-Zarneke, WRD Stewards of the Tide Award Georgia Association of Marine Education	GW Noah Osborne, LED Hunter Education Instructor of the Year
Amory Cook, WRD Distinguished Service Award American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Jennifer Davison, WRD IHEA State Coordinator of the Year International Hunter Education Association	GW Thomas Ledford, LED Torch Award
Michael Sellers, WRD Hidden Hero Award (Gateway to Fishing Program) American Fisheries Society (Georgia)	Jennifer Davison, WRD NASP – 20 Year Coordinator Recognition National Archery in the Schools Program	Cpl. Ryan Locke, LED Operation Dry Water Officer of the Year
		Tasha Lamb, LED Administrative Professional of the Year
		GW Errol Hall, LED S. Atlantic Fisheries Marine Council OOY

CELEBRATING

15 years



GEORGIA NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION
ROOTED IN SERVICE | GROWING FOR THE FUTURE



GEORGIA

NATURAL RESOURCES FOUNDATION