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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GOV. KEMP, DNR ANNOUNCE 2023 FORESTRY FOR WILDLIFE PARTNERS

ATLANTA, Ga. (June 13, 2023) – Gov. Brian Kemp recognized three corporate forest landowners today for their stewardship and land management practices benefiting wildlife across Georgia. Weyerhaeuser, Forest Investment Associates and Georgia Power are the agency’s 2023 Forestry for Wildlife partners.

Coordinated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Resources Division, the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership is a voluntary program that has promoted sustainable forest and wildlife conservation as part of forest management for some 25 years. Partner projects focus on improvements that sync with Georgia’s Bobwhite Quail Initiative and State Wildlife Action Plan, two statewide strategies.

This year’s partners were recognized at the state Capitol by Gov. Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp and lauded by DNR Deputy Commissioner Walter Rabon and Wildlife Resources Division leaders. With more than 90 percent of Georgia lands privately owned, Wildlife Resources Division Director Ted Will said that working with private landowners to help wildlife is critical.

“Georgia is known for its tremendous diversity of wildlife, woodlands and waters, and it’s our responsibility to pass along that heritage to future generations,” Will said. “These 2023 Forestry for Wildlife partners are showing how conservation and forestry can be combined on working forests to meet that responsibility. We are proud to join the Governor in recognizing them.”

The Wildlife Resources Division honored Georgia Power, Forest Investment Associates and Weyerhaeuser as Forestry for Wildlife Partners for:

- Preparing wildlife conservation plans that detail natural resource inventories and outline management strategies that combine forest and wildlife aspects.
- Providing internal training opportunities for employees on how to blend forestland management with wildlife-friendly practices for multiple natural resource benefits.
- Incorporating wildlife management into land-use planning and timber management practices.
- Providing valuable data for Wildlife Resources Division research projects.
- Providing public recreational opportunities on partner forestlands.
- Participating in partnerships with conservation organizations.
- Managing riparian forests for wildlife use and water quality protection.

Abundant, healthy woodlands are essential for wildlife. Georgia has more than 24 million acres of forestland, and more than 22 million acres are privately owned. Landowners with at least 10,000 acres can take part in the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership.

The work of this year's partners benefited wildlife on about 800,000 acres. Those projects included restoring priority habitats such as longleaf pine savannas, helping with surveys for wood storks, swallow-tailed kites and eastern indigo snakes, protecting and restoring sites for rare plant species including Chapman's fringed orchid and Georgia aster, and managing company woodlands to conserve and increase populations of gopher tortoises, our state reptile. Partners also provided public opportunities to enjoy the outdoors through hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

For information on recent and ongoing partner projects, see the annual report of DNR's Wildlife Conservation Section (<https://georgiawildlife.com/conservation/annualreport>).

All conservation enhancement components and reporting procedures in the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership are compatible with Sustainable Forestry Initiative Inc., a voluntary approach in the forest industry to maintain high environmental standards in land management.

FORESTRY FOR WILDLIFE/AT A GLANCE

Visit <https://georgiawildlife.com/fwp> for details on the Forestry for Wildlife Partnership and <https://georgiawildlife.com/privatelandsprogram> for information on other DNR Private Lands initiatives. The Wildlife Conservation Section's annual report (<https://georgiawildlife.com/conservation/annualreport>) explores on Forestry for Wildlife partner projects.

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