

# The Lincoln Journal



*"To thine own self be true, and it must follow, as the night the day, thou canst not then be false to any man."*

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Lincoln County Agriculture and Natural Resource Agent Robyn Stewart takes a stroll down the nature trail located behind the new agricultural center on Rowland York Road. The trail isn't completed but is open to the public.

## New public nature and walking trails offer a network of options for hikers

At long last, envisioned walking and nature trails, an outdoor classroom, and pollinator garden will become a reality at the new agricultural center at the Curry Colvin Recreational Complex since grant monies for the project were recently received by the UGA Cooperative Extension Service.

Furthermore, groundbreaking on the nature trails occurred on February 10 thanks to the Lincoln County Public Works Department. Though incomplete, the public is now welcome to use the trails.

"We're excited for this," Extension Coordinator Robyn Stewart said. "We're just excited for the accessibility this project provides us. It'll give us more educational space for Lincolnton and county residents."

The monies – amounting to \$15,000 – were awarded through the Thomson Chapter of Georgia Power's Legacy Foundation, and were met with approval from the Lincoln County Board of Commissioners in December.

The nature trail, classroom, and garden – all of which are designed by UGA County Extension – were

talked of last year, as Stewart explained she had been searching for a grant to fund the project back in September. Seeing those monies come to fruition meant the project would get underway this winter with expected completion in March.

"We'll use the new trail and outdoor classroom for our programming for students, for the community and 4-H, and for some of our adult learning," Stewart said. "We'll use the wooded space around the front and side of the agricultural building."

When completed, the walking trails will also be marked with educational signage describing plant and animal species. An additional opportunity involved in the project includes the possibility of constructing walking trail bridges later on.

The outdoor classroom ideally will be constructed in an open area with woodland seating for children. Specifically, the goal is to construct a 30x40 foot outdoor classroom with seating for up to 30 people with signage for educational use. The area would also in-

clude the construction of a border with mulch being spread around.

Both the classroom and trail will be utilized for educational programming and events held through the Extension office along with 4-H. It will be open to the public for excursions as well.

Since ground breaking, as of right now the trail network includes the 1.19-mile Exterior Trail and three interior loops named the Creek Trail (0.3 miles), Wetlands Trail (0.45 miles), and Hill Trail (0.79 miles).

Because these trails are now open to the public for use, hikers should be advised that trail lengths are approximate. Other combinations of the trails can be used to make both longer and shorter hikes as well.

"They are not handicap-accessible at this time," Stewart warned. "If you are unsure about your ability to hike the trail, we recommend walking one of the shorter loops first to ensure your comfort with the terrain. We do not recommend walking the trail directly after a period of heavy rain as there will

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## School teachers to be eligible for COVID-19 vaccine March 8

By BEAU EVANS  
Capital Beat News Service

Teachers, school staff and certain other vulnerable groups in Georgia will be eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine starting on March 8, Governor Brian Kemp announced last Thursday.

Vaccines will be available for pre-K and K-12 school teachers and staff, Kemp said. Georgia adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities, as well as the parents of children who have complex medical conditions, will also be eligible on March 8.

Kemp traced his decision to expand vaccines to teachers on encouraging signs of increasing vaccine production from the Biden administration and the new Johnson and Johnson-brand vaccine that won high safety marks from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration this week.

"Today, we will be taking another step to protect the most vulnerable and get Georgia back to normal," Kemp said at a news conference Thursday.

Professors and staff at Georgia colleges and universities will not

be on the March 8 list of newly eligible vaccine recipients since they are "dealing with an older population" of adult students who have more options to avoid infection than teachers of younger students in grades pre-K through 12, Kemp said.

The governor stressed he wants all Georgia public schools to return for in-person classes before year end as teachers are vaccinated, saying online classes amid the COVID-19 pandemic have dampened students' education progress for too long.

"Virtual schooling is leaving too many children behind and parents at their wits' end," Kemp said. "We must have students back in the classroom, five days a week."

The upcoming vaccine expansion for teachers drew praise from State School Superintendent Richard Woods, who called it a critical step in returning Georgia kids to in-person schooling.

"This is an important step in ensuring all Georgia students have access to in-person instruction and ensuring the safety of students, staff and families," Woods said. "It has been an incredibly challenging year for educators and families alike, but I believe we are beginning to see the light at the end of the tunnel."

Teachers and other soon-eligible groups will join health-care workers, nursing home residents and staff, first responders, and Georgians age 65 and older who have qualified for the vaccine for several weeks.

Kemp noted Georgia has doled out nearly 1.9 million vaccines so far, including to more than 800,000 people age 65 and older who have received at least one of the needed two doses of Pfizer and Moderna vaccines.

Newly eligible teachers and other Georgians clamoring for the vaccine could still face headaches in scheduling appointments for their shots given the state's limited allotment, Kemp said. Currently, state officials are receiving 198,000 doses a week from the federal government.

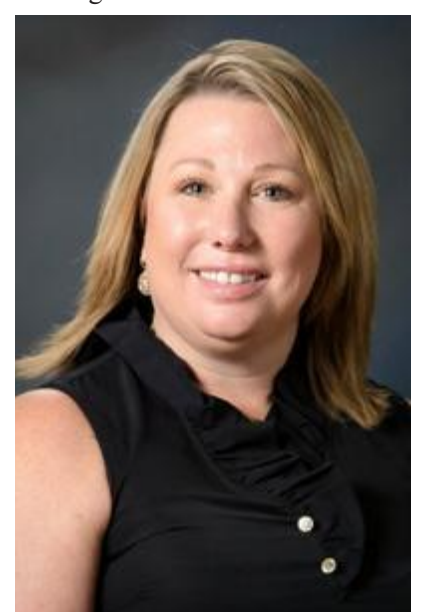
"We will continue to see more demand than supply," Kemp said. If all goes well with the March 8 rollout to teachers, Kemp said he will move to expand vaccine eligibility again in late March to addi-

tional groups that tend to be more vulnerable to contracting the virus. Local school administrators will be largely left to their own to decide how teachers and staff should receive their shots, including whether to host vaccines on-campus at their schools, Kemp said.

State officials are also working with hospitals and health clinics to decide which parents with children who have complex medical conditions will receive the vaccine, said Georgia Public Health Commissioner Dr. Kathleen Toomey. "We are doing that in conjunction with providers who care for those children," she said.

Officials stressed Georgians should go ahead and pre-register now for a vaccine appointment on the state's sign-up website, even if they are not yet eligible. The website, <https://myvaccinegeorgia.com/>, will automatically alert people once they're eligible and will schedule an appointment.

Roughly 812,000 people had tested positive for COVID-19 in Georgia as of Thursday afternoon, with nearly 185,000 more reported positive antigen tests indicating likely positive results. The virus has killed 14,989 Georgians, according to state numbers.



### Arthur presented award

Lincoln County Elementary School pre-kindergarten teacher Elizabeth Arthur has been presented the Golden Apple Award by WJBF, News Channel 6, along with Augusta Flooring, Kroger, and Great Deals on Furniture. Arthur's interview will air during the 5:30 p.m. broadcast on Tuesday, March 9.



### Mobile food distribution continues to deliver meals to families

Lincoln County Food Pantry volunteers (l-r) Megan DeRaps, Emily Enelow, and Katelyn Enelow load blessing bags filled with chips, honey bun, a can of ravioli or lasagna, ramen noodles, juice, milk or shake, peanut butter crackers, fruit cup, instant oatmeal and other kid-friendly items for delivery to Lincoln County Middle and High Schools on Thursday, February 25.

The partnership between the Lincoln County School District, Camp Lakeside YMCA, and LCFP continues with Superintendent Dr. Samuel Light delivering 150 bags to the pantry for the drive-through mobile food distribution on Thursday. The bags were filled with an assortment of items including fresh produce.

LCFP distributed can goods, eggs, frozen whole chicken, pollack nuggets, cheese sticks, bottled distilled water, and paper products to approximately 160 families. The next drive through mobile food distribution will be held from 10 a.m. - noon on Thursday, March 11, at the Firetower Road location.



### Free martial arts lesson offered at Post 194

American Legion Post 194 is sponsoring free martial arts classes with instructors (l-r) Salvador Rodrigues Jr., Victoria Rodrigues, and (not shown) Salvador Rodrigues during the month of March. Classes are being offered to children of all ages and adults. For senior adults, a movement class similar to Tai-Chi is offered.

Instructors are experts in taekwondo, karate, mixed-martial arts, and aero-kicks for self-defense. Classes will be held at 4 p.m. on Tuesdays.

For more information contact event coordinator Al Ewing at 661-666-3749 or post adjutant Joe Kelly at 706-825-2363. For class details contact SRE Taekwondo School of Martial Arts at 706-452-1801, 706-401-2241, or email SRETAEKWONDO@gmail.com