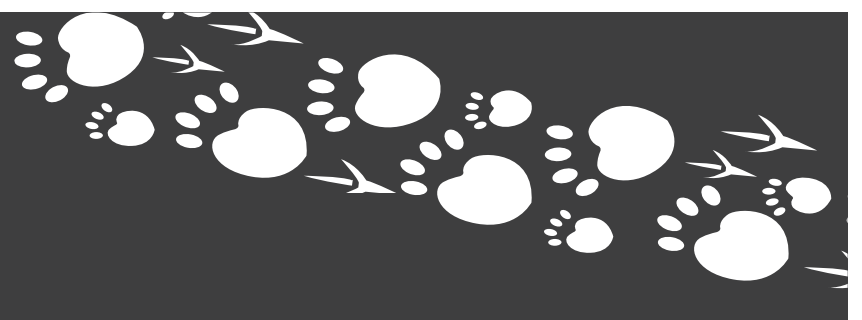


# OUTDOORS



## Governor, DNR announces Forestry for Wildlife Partners for 2026

Gov. Brian Kemp and First Lady Marty Kemp joined Georgia Department of Natural Resources leaders this week in recognizing four corporate forest landowners for stewardship and land management practices benefiting Georgia's wildlife.

Weyerhaeuser, Forest Investment Associates, Georgia Power and PotlatchDeltic – now called Rayonier since recently merging with that company – were named DNR's Forestry for Wildlife partners for 2026.

Forestry for Wildlife Partnership has promoted wildlife conservation and sustainable forestry as part of forest management for almost three decades. Partner projects are coordinated by DNR's Wildlife Resources Division and focused on improvements supported by the Bobwhite Quail Initiative and State Wildlife Action Plan, two statewide strategies. Work varies from restoring habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers to preserving wetlands used by rare amphibians and prairies with rare plants. The partnership also provides public recreation opportunities such as wildlife viewing, hunting and fishing.

On Monday, this year's partners were introduced at the state Capitol by the governor, first lady and DNR leaders. DNR Commissioner Walter Rabon explained that work by the 2026 Forestry for Wildlife partners benefited wildlife on nearly 1 million acres.

"Forestry for Wildlife Partnership shows how working lands can also work to conserve native wildlife and natural habitats," Rabon said. "That connection is critical in Georgia, where more than 90 percent of the land is privately owned. These partners are part of an effort that is successfully syncing forestry and conservation to restore and protect wildlife and wild places, now and for future generations."

Forestry for Wildlife Partnership is a voluntary, non-competitive and participant-driven program that:

- Enhances wildlife conservation on the holdings of large landowners.
- Helps deliver wildlife technical assistance, training and outreach.
- Recognizes partners for their wildlife conservation achievements.

The Wildlife Resources Division honored the 2026 partners for:

- Incorporating wild-

life management into land-use planning and timber management practices.

- Supplying valuable data for Wildlife Resources Division research projects.

- Providing internal training opportunities for employees on how to blend forestland management with wildlife-friendly practices for multiple natural resource benefits.

- Offering public recreational opportunities on partner forestlands.

- Participating in partnerships with conservation organizations.

- Managing riparian forests for wildlife use and water quality protection.

More specifically, partner projects included:

- Surveys and management benefiting the rare and beautiful Chapman's fringed orchid.

- Donating land to help conserve protected species, including red-cockaded woodpeckers.

- Coordinating with DNR to conduct prescribed burns on properties bordering conservation lands

- Monitoring and protecting bald eagle and swallow-tailed kite nests on company lands.

- Helping survey and preserve habitat for en-

dangered fringed campion.

- Restoring priority habitats such as longleaf and shortleaf pine savannas.

- Managing land to conserve and increase populations of gopher tortoises, a keystone species and Georgia's state reptile.

- Providing public opportunities to enjoy the outdoors via hunting, fishing and wildlife viewing.

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.

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 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.

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