



2026 Legislative Session

TNC in Georgia



Executive Summary

Policy and government relations work is an essential component of how The Nature Conservancy achieves conservation progress in Georgia and beyond. TNC Georgia engages with members of Congress, state legislators, city and county officials, and state and federal agency personnel to drive policy and funding decisions that support our programmatic priorities. These are key policy and funding issues we expect to be following at the state and federal levels in 2026.

State Legislative Priorities

Conservation Funding

We will work with partners to ensure robust funding for conservation. We are looking to revise the funding formula for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program to dedicate a larger share of the relevant annual tax revenue to the fund and to remove an overly aggressive trigger mechanism that unduly depletes program funding when state revenues decline. We will also look to advance other funding mechanisms that support conservation.

Protecting the Okefenokee

While the most immediate threat to the Okefenokee Swamp was averted in 2025 when a conservation partner purchased land that was slated to be mined, we remain concerned at the potential for other mining adjacent to the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge that could cause irreversible damage to this unique ecosystem and to the communities that rely on it for jobs and economic vitality. We continue to seek remedies for this threat. Two Okefenokee bills that TNC supported in the 2025 session remain in play for 2026.

Sustaining Healthy Waters

We will seek support to stem the ecological damage being caused in Georgia's streams and rivers by the ill-advised removal of submerged timber and other large woody debris that are critical to aquatic habitats.

Enhancing Georgia's Resilience

Recommendations from recent study committees led to legislation to establish a state Georgia Resilience Office. Similar efforts undertaken by South Carolina and Florida improved the capacity of those states to mitigate and respond to extreme weather. The bill in the Georgia legislature did not pass in 2025 but remains viable in 2026. The Nature Conservancy supports this initiative, which is further supported by a [new report on resilience](#) issued by the University of Georgia in August 2025.

Renewable Energy and Natural Climate Solutions

We will support opportunities to incentivize practices like reforestation and improved forest management that provide dual benefits for climate and conservation. We will also support other measures to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and to expand the use of clean energy in ways that minimize adverse impacts on natural lands and habitats. We are closely monitoring developments related to the growing number of data centers being built in Georgia, which can have significant impacts on energy demand, land use decisions, and water resources.



Federal Legislative Priorities

Congressional Appropriations

TNC will continue to press Congress to maintain strong funding for essential conservation and climate programs.

Ocmulgee Mounds National Park and Preserve

A bill to establish Georgia's first national park was introduced in March and supported by virtually every member of Georgia's delegation in Congress. TNC supports this effort and seeks the passage of this bill (known as HR.2345 in the House and S.1131 in the Senate).

Conservation Land Protection

In his first term, President Trump signed into law the Great American Outdoors Act, which Congress approved with strong bipartisan support. The law guarantees \$900 million annually for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. TNC opposes proposals to divert this essential conservation funding toward unintended purposes. TNC also continues to defend against efforts to sell off large swaths of federal public lands that are important to conservation.



Contact:

Michael O'Reilly
Director of Government Relations
The Nature Conservancy - Georgia
michael.oreilly@tnc.org
404-253-7215

Conservation and Military Readiness

TNC supports legislation that would provide incentives to landowners who help secure lands around U.S. military installations for the dual benefit of military readiness and conservation protection. Bill numbers are HR.1083 in the House and S.439 in the Senate.

Farm Bill

Programs supported through the Farm Bill are critically important for advancing conservation practices on private land. Already behind schedule, the current timeline for Congress to approve a new Farm Bill is unclear.

Forest Health

TNC supports efforts to maintain/restore the health of America's forests. The Disaster Reforestation Act (HR.262/S.1141) and the Fix Our Forests Act (S.1462) are among the bills we are supporting.