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GEORGIA

Nature is hard at work for Georgia. Georgia's forests, farms, coasts, and waters are the cornerstone of local livelihoods and quality of life. Investing in conservation and natural infrastructure supports jobs across the state in sectors like agriculture and outdoor recreation, which are vital to local communities. With strategic conservation and thoughtful management, healthy lands and waters can provide even bigger economic benefits for Georgia in the future.

HEALTHY LANDS AND WATERS SUPPORT FARMS AND FORESTS.

Georgia's farmers and private foresters are leaders in protecting and stewarding working lands to power the state's \$91.4 billion agriculture sector and its \$41.3 billion timber products industry.¹

Agriculture drives local economies across Georgia and shapes the state's health and prosperity.²

- In 2023, food and fiber production and related industries supported more than 381,200 jobs
- Georgia produces more than one-half of the nation's peanuts
- Farms utilize nearly 10 million acres of land in Georgia
- Georgia farmers and ranchers have leveraged \$544 million in conservation funding from USDA's Conservation Programs since 1995, helping to prevent erosion, maintain wildlife habitat, and improve water quality³

Forestry is another economic pillar of Georgia, and it provides environmental and social benefits for all. Healthy forests play a key role in supplying clean drinking water across the state.⁴ As a domestic and global leader in forest product manufacturing and forest conservation, Georgia's economic vitality is connected with maintaining healthy

forests. Sustainable forest management is critical to reducing wildfire risk, supporting recreation, and improving wildlife habitat. The timber products industry supports 143,946 jobs in Georgia, and Georgia is the top state in the nation for:

- Privately owned timberland (22 million acres)
- Annual harvest volume (growth exceeds removals by 48%)
- Forest product exports of 21 commodities with an estimated trade value of \$3.9 billion
- Seedling production for reforestation

OUTDOOR RECREATION BOOSTS THE ECONOMY, ATTRACTS BUSINESSES, AND SUPPORTS QUALITY OF LIFE.

Nearly 5.4 million Georgians (53%) participate in outdoor recreation.⁵

- Overall, the outdoor recreation economy in Georgia generates \$18.5 billion in value added annually and supports 161,816 jobs and \$9.3 billion in wages⁶
- Nearly 820,000 hunters generate \$2 billion in spending and support 19,560 jobs in the state⁷
- Over 1.1 million people participate in fishing in Georgia, supporting 38,280 jobs and generating \$4.4 billion in spending⁸

CONSERVATION SUPPORTS MILITARY READINESS.

Military lands comprise 662,801 acres across Georgia, and the military accounts for a significant portion of the state's economy, with an annual economic impact of over \$13 billion.⁹ But military installations here face increased pressures from surrounding land uses that hamper their ability to fulfill the full range of their

missions. The Department of Defense's Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program has been a resounding success in addressing this challenge in a way that benefits military readiness and conservation. The program utilizes partnerships involving the military, conservation groups, and state and local governments that share the cost of acquiring easements or land from willing sellers to preserve compatible land uses and natural habitats near installations. REPI projects support installations across Georgia, including Fort Benning, Fort Stewart, Fort Gordon, Robins Air Force Base, Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, and Townsend Bombing Range.



For the full report
*Nature's Dividends: The Economic, Health,
and Safety Benefits of Investing in Nature.*

Fort Benning Approved by the Department of Defense in 2006, Fort Benning's REPI program (originally known as the Army Compatible Use Buffer program) is governed by an advisory board whose members represent Fort Benning, The Nature Conservancy, the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the Georgia Forestry Commission, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service.¹⁰ The purpose of the program is to create land conservation partnerships between the Army and outside organizations to protect land from development that is incompatible with essential military activities. To date, over 37,000 acres on the western Fall Line have been protected, halfway to the program's overall goal of 75,000 acres. The 30,000-acre Chattahoochee Fall Line Wildlife Management Area is available for outdoor public recreation and is a direct result of the program.



PHOTO CREDIT | ERIKA NORTEMANN/TNC

1. University of Georgia College of Agriculture and Environmental Sciences. (2025). Georgia Ag Impact Report. <https://discover.caes.uga.edu/georgiaagimpact/> 2. Ibid. 3. Environmental Working Group (EWG). (2025). EWG Farm Subsidy Database [Dataset]. <https://farm.ewg.org/> 4. Georgia Forestry Association. (2023). Georgia: The #1 Forestry State in the Nation: Assessing the economic and environmental benefits of Georgia's 22 million acres of working forests and \$41.3 billion forest product industry. Georgia Forestry Association. https://gfagrow.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/2023-Report_1-Forestry-State-in-the-Nation.pdf 5. Outdoor Industry Association. (2025). 2025 Outdoor Participation Trends Report. <https://outdoorindustry.org/blank-full-width-pardot/> 6. Bureau of Economic Analysis. (2024, November 20). Outdoor Recreation 2023. Outdoor Recreation. <https://www.bea.gov/data/special-topics/outdoor-recreation> 7. Sportsmen's Alliance. (2024). 2024 Economic Impacts of Hunting and Target Shooting Report. Sportsmen's Alliance. <https://sportsmensalliance.org/research/2020-economic-impacts-of-hunting-and-target-shooting-report-2/> 8. American Sportfishing Association. (2025). Economic Impacts of Recreational Fishing. <https://asafishing.org/economic-impacts-of-recreational-fishing/> 9. Department of Defense. (2025). REPI State Fact Sheets: Georgia. https://www.repi.mil/Portals/44/Documents/State_Fact_Sheets/Pennsylvania_StateFacts.pdf 10. River Valley Regional Commission & Carl Vinson Institute of Government, University of Georgia. (2023). The River Valley Community Compatible Development Plan.