

# RiverLands project approved for \$3M state grant

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**ATLANTA —** The Georgia Board of Natural Resources put its stamp of approval Tuesday on funding for 13 land conservation, restoration and parks projects across the state, including \$3 million for the Chattahoochee RiverLands Regional Trailhead in Cobb.

The \$3 million awarded to the project is allocated specifically for the development of a park at the corner of Mableton Parkway and Discovery Boulevard in south Cobb, just over the Fulton County line, accord-

ing to George Dusenbury, the Georgia director of the Trust for Public Land.

"The (Georgia) Department of Natural Resources has been an incredible partner on the RiverLands, and this is just the latest in I think, goodness gracious, more than \$13 million that they've invested up and down the 100 miles that make up the RiverLands," Dusenbury said.

Walt Ray, who is directing the Chattahoochee RiverLands program for the Trust for Public Land, noted the park, which the group is calling the RiverLands Gateway Park, will be strategically

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Special - SCAPE Landscape Architecture

Pictured is a rendering of RiverLands Gateway Park, a park envisioned for the trailhead of the Chattahoochee RiverLands project at Mableton Parkway and Discovery Boulevard in south Cobb.



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## GRANT

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situated to provide easy access to the river and different trails along and around it.

Not only does the Trust for Public Land envision the park as a “key access point” for the region, as Ray put it, but they also hope for the park to have the neighborhood park feel based on what those living in the area might be looking for.

The first phase of construction will include ecological restoration, green infrastructure and woodland restoration, in addition to needs for the trailhead like a parking lot, restrooms, entry plaza and trail connections, Ray said. There will also be a kayak launch and boat ramp at the trailhead, he added.

More than \$21.4 million to pay for the RiverLands trailhead and the 12 other projects across the state will come from the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Fund, raised from a sales tax on sporting goods the state’s voters overwhelmingly approved as a constitutional amendment in 2018.

In four previous cycles of funding going back to 2020, the fund has allocated more than \$97 million to projects in 54 counties, Soheila Naji, the program’s coordinator, told board members before Tuesday’s unanimous vote.

Those state funds were accompanied by \$175 million in matching money put up by the state and local gov-



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George Dusenbury of the Trust for Public Land stands by the Chattahoochee River off Mableton Parkway, where a multi-use trail will be built in March 2023.

ernment agencies, recreation authorities, and nonprofit groups that applied for grants, Naji said.

Six of the 13 grants are going to the state Department of Natural Resources (DNR), with the rest going to cities, counties, the Jekyll Island Authority, and the Trust for Public Land.

Here is the list of projects funded through the 2023-24 round of grants:

◆ Trust for Public Land Chattahoochee RiverLands Regional Trailhead: \$3,000,000

◆ City of Ringgold Slabtown Park and South Chickamauga Blueway: \$811,500

◆ City of St. Marys Tabby Trail for Eco-tourism and Stewardship: \$1,735,400

◆ GADNR, Coastal Resources Division Noyes Cut Ecosystem Restoration Project, Phase II: \$1,321,500

◆ GADNR, Wildlife Resources Division Mocama Tract addition to Ceylon Wildlife Management Area: \$2,100,000

◆ GADNR, Wildlife Resources Division Dugdown Moun-

tain Corridor-Treat Mountain Expansion: \$2,100,000

◆ GADNR, Wildlife Resources Division Conasauga Wildlife Management Area — Springbank Tract: \$550,000

◆ GADNR, Wildlife Resources Division Habitat Restoration on State Lands, Phase 3: \$629,500

◆ GADNR, Wildlife Resources Division Outdoor Recreation Enhancements on State Public Fishing Areas: \$1,600,000

◆ Glynn County Coast Guard Beach Park: \$3,000,000

◆ Jekyll Island State Park Authority From Golf to Wildlife Corridor Recreational Park: \$1,602,300

◆ Lanier County Improving Recreation & Water Quality: \$1,491,057

◆ Pike County Parks and Recreation Authority Pike County Recreation Complex Improvements: \$1,500,000

The project list heads next to the Georgia House and Senate budget subcommittees with jurisdiction over the DNR for final approval.