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CANOOCHEE BOG PROJECT RECEIVES \$27,000 FROM USFWS Effort to Protect Rare Plants, Habitats Nears Fundraising Goal

ATHENS, GA, August 16, 2017 – Carnivorous plants, native orchids, and rare animals can almost call the Canoochee Bogs their forever home, largely in part to a recent \$27,000 grant from the United States Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program. Grant funds were donated to the Canoochee Bogs Project, a partnership between the Oconee River Land Trust and the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, which seeks to permanently protect 50 acres of prime pitcherplant bog habitat by placing the land in a conservation easement. With 75% of project funding secured, only \$14,000 remains to be raised before this unique and beautiful property is permanently protected.

The Canoochee Bogs, which are located in Southeast Georgia, are part of the longleaf pine ecosystem and provide crucial habitat for three carnivorous pitcherplant and seven orchid species, as well as Georgia's state reptile (gopher tortoise), and migratory songbirds. Permanently protecting this habitat from development will safeguard these rare species while allowing for habitat restoration. Ongoing restoration activities include prescribed fire, increasing rare plant populations, and removal of invasive woody shrubs.

Conservation groups from across the state, including partners in the [Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance](#), have worked diligently since the late 1990's to conserve the Canoochee Bogs, which span several privately-owned land parcels. The private landowners' willingness to allow access to their land for rare species monitoring and restoration has been critical to this project's success.

Conservation easements (CE) are voluntary, yet legally binding, agreements which allow private land ownership while restricting development. CEs are used to protect water quality, wildlife habitat, scenic areas, agricultural land, and historic sites. Permanently binding, conservation easements benefit current and future generations. Public benefits provided by conservation easements include the protection of drinking water, clean air, and scenic landscapes.

The mission of the Coastal Program of the United States Fish and Wildlife Service is to achieve voluntary habitat conservation by providing technical and financial assistance in collaboration with partners. This program is one of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's most effective resources for restoring and protecting fish and wildlife habitat on public and privately-owned lands.

For more information about or to donate to the Canoochee Bogs Project, visit:
<http://oconeeriverlandtrust.org/the-canoochee-bogs-project.htm>

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