

Georgia

The State of Georgia has a long legacy of supporting the military: home to several of the nation's most important installations and ranges, including Fort Benning, Fort Stewart, Townsend Bombing Range, Robins Air Force Base, and Naval Submarine Base Kings Bay, Georgia hosts key testing, training, and operational missions for all of the Military Services. In particular, the military network stretching over the southern portion of the state provides a full spectrum of testing, training, and operational resources and capabilities to service men and women, including heavy armor maneuver areas, unimpeded air-to-ground ranges, live-fire training facilities, and low-level flight routes. The military also accounts for a significant portion of the state's economic activity, with annual defense spending totaling roughly \$12.6 billion in fiscal year 2015. As a result, a diverse set of partners at the federal, state, and local levels joined together to form the Georgia Sentinel Landscape Partnership in 2017, a collaborative effort that seeks to sustain working farms and forests and protect vital habitat for a number of important species, thereby promoting land uses compatible with the broad set of military missions to which the state is home.

Building on a legacy of successful, collaborative land protection in the state, the Georgia Sentinel Landscape seeks to leverage common interests to further collective goals. Landscape partners from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the military services, the State of Georgia, and a number of private conservation organizations have identified approximately 1.3 million acres within the Landscape's boundary as critical to important natural resources, working economies, and military readiness.



Soldiers prepare to load and rig a howitzer to a CH-47 Chinook at Fort Stewart. (Photo courtesy of the U.S. Army)

SUPPORTING MILITARY READINESS

Through the Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program, DoD has invested over \$140 million to protect and conserve compatible land uses in the vicinity of military installations throughout the state. The Georgia Sentinel Landscape will build on these past accomplishments and help to ensure the long-term sustainability of Georgia's military installations by leveraging partner priorities and funding with DoD efforts to promote compatible development. This collaborative partnership will ensure that DoD installations and ranges in the state can continue to host a diverse and growing set of military missions.

BENEFITING WORKING LANDS

Prime timber and agricultural lands are the fabric that joins together the important conservation lands, communities, and military installations and ranges within the Landscape's boundary. NRCS and USFS have identified areas within the Georgia Sentinel Landscape containing remnant longleaf pine forests, viable timber land, and prime agricultural soils as high priority for protection. Moving forward, the Georgia Sentinel Landscape will work with conservation groups, agencies, and willing landowners to leverage USDA funding sources for the preservation of these high priority working lands, including Forest Legacy, Healthy Forest Reserve Program, Agricultural Conservation Easement Program, and Regional Conservation Partnership Program.

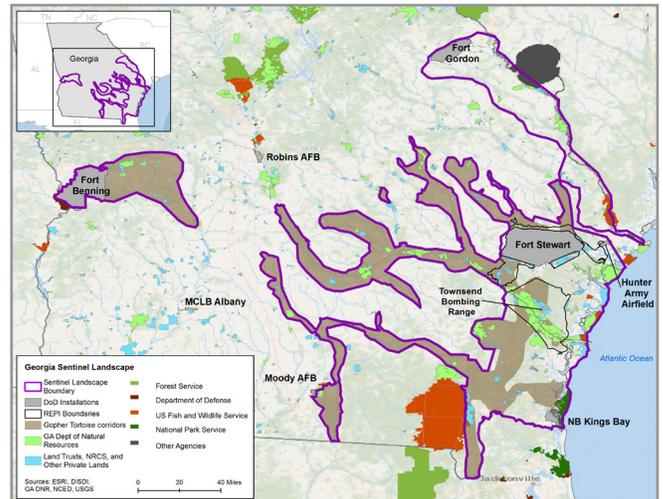
CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES

Longleaf pine forests and other ecosystems within the Landscape's boundary provide important habitat for a number of sensitive species, including the gopher tortoise, red-cockaded woodpecker, eastern indigo snake, and other species of concern.

Partners aim to protect more than 20 additional viable gopher tortoise populations in the next five years through the Georgia Sentinel Landscape, leveraging ongoing efforts such as the Gopher Tortoise Initiative (GTI) and the DoD's Gopher Tortoise Conservation and Crediting Strategy. By ensuring the viability of this important species, the Partnership hopes to preclude listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA), thereby reducing the risk of regulatory encroachment on DoD installations and ranges.

The partnership also seeks to protect much of the remaining, undeveloped segments of Georgia's 100-mile coastline, which will help safeguard important wildlife corridors and provide local communities with unrestricted access to outdoor recreational opportunities. In partnership with the Savannah River Clean Water Fund (SRCWF), the Landscape partners aim to conserve riparian buffers within the Savannah River watershed, thereby maintaining this waterway as a safe and reliable source of drinking water for the city of Savannah and surrounding municipalities while also reducing the need for the dredging of commercial shipping lanes in the strategically-important Port of Savannah. The partners hope to use the SRCWF model to protect other important waterways within the Landscape boundary, including the Altamaha, Ochopee, Alapaha, and Satilla Rivers.

Georgia Sentinel Landscape



LOOKING AHEAD

The partners of the Georgia Sentinel Landscape will continue to unite around a shared vision that recognizes the value of collaborating across conventional boundaries. State and federal agencies, conservation groups, and landowners in the expansive Georgia Sentinel Landscape recognize the important role that protecting working and natural lands plays in promoting healthy, prosperous, and safe communities. Moving forward, partners of the Georgia Sentinel Landscape will strengthen and expand existing programs while also identifying new opportunities to leverage funding and engage additional stakeholders, all to enhance and sustain efforts in areas of shared priority. Promoting compatible development in the Georgia Sentinel Landscape will allow active agricultural and timber operations to continue to thrive and important species to flourish, all while maintaining a vibrant economy and strong military presence throughout the state.

PARTNERS

FEDERAL

- ★ U.S. Department of Agriculture
 - Natural Resources Conservation Service
 - U.S. Forest Service
- ★ U.S. Department of Defense
 - Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) Program
- ★ U.S. Department of the Interior
 - U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

STATE

- ★ Coastal Regional Commission of Georgia
- ★ Georgia Department of Natural Resources
- ★ Georgia Forestry Commission

NGOs

- ★ Bobolink Foundation
- ★ Georgia-Alabama Land Trust
- ★ Knobloch Family Foundation
- ★ National Wild Turkey Federation
- ★ One Hundred Miles
- ★ Savannah Clean Water Fund
- ★ The Conservation Fund
- ★ The Georgia Conservancy
- ★ The Longleaf Alliance
- ★ The Nature Conservancy