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CONTACT:

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act Approved by House Committee
Measure would dedicate funding to land conservation

The Natural Resources Committee of the Georgia House of Representatives unanimously approved House Bill 332, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act, earlier today. The legislation proposes that 75% of the existing sales tax on outdoor recreation equipment be dedicated to the protection of the state's water, wildlife and quality of life.

"One of the most important things we can do to ensure prosperity and quality of life for future generations is proactively protect our natural resources, including conservation lands," said the bill's sponsor, Representative Sam Watson (Moultrie). "If we want to maintain Georgia's reputation as a great place to live and work, to preserve family traditions like hunting and fishing while at the same time supporting key industries such as tourism, agriculture and manufacturing, we need to be able to execute a land management strategy that takes into account the needs of people, business and wildlife."

If passed and then approved by voter referendum, the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act would annually dedicate an estimated \$40 million in funding without creating or raising any taxes or fees. Funds would support the acquisition and stewardship of lands critical for water, wildlife and outdoor recreation, including parks and trails.

The legislation is supported by organizations including The Conservation Fund, Georgia Wildlife Federation, Georgia Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Park Pride, Trust for Public Land, Association County Commissioners of Georgia, the Georgia Chamber of Commerce, and the Georgia Hunting and Fishing Federation.

