



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
February 22, 2018

CONTACT: Joselyn Baker
joselyn@butler-baker.com

Land Conservation Measure Unanimously Passes Key Committee

The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act, which would dedicate annual funding to land conservation projects across the state, was passed unanimously this morning by the House Natural Resources Committee. The measure in its current form would generate approximately \$20 million annually without raising or creating any new taxes.

“This measure is important to both our quality of life and our economy,” commented lead bill sponsor Representative Sam Watson (172 – Moultrie). “The projects this funding will move forward will have a positive impact on our water quality, access to lands for hunting and fishing, and parks and trails in communities throughout the state. They will also allow us to not only maintain, but grow, our \$27 billion outdoor recreation industry and the jobs that come with it.”

Based upon estimates of annual sales of outdoor recreation equipment, the legislation in its current form (HB 332) proposes the dedication of 0.40% of existing state sales tax collections. Together with companion legislation (HR 238) calling for voter approval of the required constitutional amendment, the proposal allows the General Assembly to grow or decrease the amount of dedicated funding as needed to meet the state’s conservation and financial needs.

“We are appreciative of the tremendous support we have received from our bill sponsors and the leadership and the members of the House Natural Resources Committee. We’re hopeful that the other members of the General Assembly will agree this is a positive step forward for our state,” said Thomas Farmer, executive director of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Coalition. “This legislation if passed will have a transformative impact on land conservation in Georgia, ensuring access to clean water and outdoor spaces for future generations.”

Both HB 332 and HR 238 now await approval by the Georgia House of Representatives.

The Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Coalition is comprised of The Conservation Fund, Georgia Conservancy, Georgia Wildlife Federation, The Nature Conservancy, Park Pride, and the Trust for Public Land.

###