

Georgia Wildlife Viewing Grants Program

The Georgia Department of Natural Resources is accepting grant proposals for wildlife viewing projects in the state (georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants). Funding for these small grants – up to \$3,000 per project – is provided through Georgia’s Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund.

Administered by the DNR Wildlife Resources Division’s Wildlife Conservation Section, these grants are aimed at helping develop and improve wildlife viewing opportunities that increase public awareness and appreciation of the state’s nongame animals, rare native plant species and natural habitats, and which emphasize species and habitats considered a high priority for conservation in Georgia’s State Wildlife Action Plan (georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeActionPlan). The plan is a comprehensive strategy for conserving these animals, plants and places.

Guidelines Abstract

- **Submit proposals online** using the form at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants.
- **Proposal deadline:** 11:59 p.m. EST Feb. 7, 2023.
- **Funding:** Up to a total of \$15,000 is provided from the Nongame Wildlife Conservation Fund for projects in the 2023 grants cycle. Proposals are limited to no more than \$3,000 each.
- **Scope:** Projects can include facilities (e.g., observation blinds or towers), improvements and other initiatives that provide opportunities to observe nongame wildlife (animals and plants) and natural habitats, and which emphasize species, habitats and conservation actions listed as conservation priorities in Georgia’s State Wildlife Action Plan. Projects must be on property accessible to the public. Nongame means species of flora and fauna indigenous to Georgia and not legally taken through hunting, fishing, trapping or otherwise (without required permits). For grant proposals, nongame must *either* a) be wild and free-ranging, b) part of a permitted captive breeding program to reintroduce a depleted indigenous species into a previously occupied range (otherwise, animals in enclosures are ineligible) *or* c) involve planting native species to create or enhance natural habitats.
- **Eligibility:** Applicants can include local governments, nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations, and for-profit entities. If the project is proposed by a for-profit entity, the applicant must describe how it is not directly linked to the profit of the entity. *Federal and state agencies, including state universities and other DNR divisions, are not eligible.* However, project proposals by nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations, such as a friends group or foundation, and local governments can involve federal and state agencies and their properties. Recipients of a DNR wildlife viewing grant during the previous cycle are ineligible to apply again for one year.
- **Reporting:** Recipients must spend the grant as specified in the project proposal by Dec. 1, 2023. Within 30 days of the completion of the grant-funded portion of the project, as specified in the proposal, provide an invoice of the grant funds spent to the Wildlife Conservation Section, along with documentation of the work (item or contractor invoices, photographs, etc.) and a project summary via the report form at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants. Grants are awarded as a reimbursement for allowed expenditures. If the proposal is part of and dependent on completion of a larger project, the larger project must be completed by July 1, 2024, and a report filed online within 30 days of that completion.
- **Review and recognition:** Signage and interpretive materials produced as part of a grant and referencing wildlife, habitats and Georgia’s State Wildlife Action Plan must be submitted for review by the Wildlife Viewing Grants Program before production. Grant recipients must credit the grant provider (the Georgia Department of Natural Resources’ Wildlife Resources Division) and reference the State Wildlife Action Plan in signage, materials, media announcements and other education or information outreach describing the project.

Instructions for Submitting Proposals

Submit proposals online at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants by 11:59 p.m. EST Feb. 7, 2023. Proposals filed after the deadline will not be considered.

After you submit the online form, a copy will be automatically emailed to you. (Note: Spam filters sometimes intercept these messages.) Also, within two business days you should receive an email from DNR confirming your submission. If you do not receive this confirmation, contact DNR communications specialist Rick Lavender, (706) 557-3327 or rick.lavender@dnr.ga.gov. It is contingent upon applicants to ensure their proposal is received.

The contact person for proposals selected for funding will be notified by March 24, 2023. Selected applicants may be required to submit additional information.

The funding request for each proposal is limited to a maximum of \$3,000.

Applicants can include local governments, nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations, and for-profit entities. If the project is proposed by a for-profit entity, the applicant must describe how it is not directly linked to the profit of the entity. Federal and state agencies, including state universities and other DNR divisions, are not eligible. However, project proposals by nonprofit or not-for-profit organizations, such as a friends group or foundation, and local governments can involve federal and state agencies and their properties. Recipients of a DNR wildlife viewing grant during the previous cycle are ineligible to apply again for one year.

Nongame wildlife means species of flora and fauna indigenous to Georgia and not legally taken through hunting, fishing, trapping or otherwise (without required permits). For grant proposals, nongame must *either* a) be wild and free-ranging, b) part of a permitted captive breeding program to reintroduce a depleted indigenous species into a previously occupied range (otherwise, animals in enclosures are ineligible) *or* c) involve planting native species to create or enhance natural habitats.

It is the responsibility of grant applicants to understand and abide by program guidelines.

Proposal Guide

Proposals should include the following:

- Project title.
- Organization name, contact person and title, and physical address, phone and email.
- A brief description explaining the project location, design, objectives, methods, timeline, innovative aspects, targeted audience(s) – including underserved groups – and what Georgia State Wildlife Action Plan or other nongame wildlife species, natural habitats and conservation actions will be emphasized and how.
- Expected use, results and benefits, including details accessibility and whether the project meets a significant wildlife-viewing need in the community.
- Costs (please provide an itemized budget).
- Support (including cash or in-kind match) for and partners involved in the project.
- Details on how the project will be maintained long-term (funding, personnel, etc.).

A conceptual sketch of proposed signage – if signage is part of the grant request – is encouraged. Also, photos that show the site or illustrate the proposal are welcomed. Selected applicants may be required to submit additional information.

Proposal Review

A panel of Wildlife Conservation Section staff will evaluate eligible proposals on these criteria:

- Does the project inform the public primarily through viewing opportunities of species, habitats and conservation actions considered conservation priorities in Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan (2015 revision)? If so, briefly describe each.
- Does the project include significant matching funds or in-kind contributions from the applicant or other organizations?
- Are project goals clearly defined and the approach and schedule realistic?
- Will the project allow public use with no or little negative impact on the resource?
- What is the project's potential for high public use? High use generally involves an outstanding wildlife viewing site or feature near a population center. Low use offers no outstanding viewing site and is not near a population center.
- Does the project have funding and personnel to maintain it long-term after completion?
- Also: Does the project target an underserved audience or audiences? Does it meet a significant wildlife-viewing need in the community? Does the project provide a creative or innovative experience or wildlife-viewing approach? Does it involve collaborating with partners to raise public awareness of State Wildlife Action Plan priorities? Does the interpretive material rely on sound scientific principles? Is there a realistic strategy designed to attract viewers?

Preference will be given to projects that:

- Address priority species and habitats in the State Wildlife Action Plan.
- Provide significant opportunities for the public to experience such species and habitats without negatively impacting the resource.
- Include significant matching funds and other resources and involvement from applicants and partners.
- Exhibit strong planning, creativity and support for maintaining the projects long-term.
- Target traditionally underserved audiences or meet significant wildlife-viewing needs.

Although DNR Wildlife Conservation Section biologists and other staff cannot be involved in writing proposals, applicants can consult staff about projects and their appropriateness regarding the resource and possible impacts. (Applicants should allow sufficient time if requesting feedback from biologists.)

The contact person for projects selected for funding will be notified by March 24, 2023.

State Wildlife Action Plan

Created in 2005 and revised in 2015, Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan is a statewide strategy to conserve populations of native wildlife species and the natural habitats they need before these animals, plants and places become rarer and more costly to conserve or restore. The plan uses the best available data to provide a comprehensive, adaptable assessment of conservation needs and the best ways to address them. Created by more than 100 partners and stakeholders, the plan lists 349 animal and 291 plant species as high priorities for conservation, plus many high-priority habitats. The 150 conservation actions recommended focus efforts where they're most needed and most effective.

The document is available at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeActionPlan. Grant applicants might find particularly helpful the main report, Appendix A (High-priority Species and Habitats Summary Data), Appendix P (Priority Conservation Actions), the excerpt titled High-Priority Habitats and the discussion of High-Priority Watersheds Data. All are available at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeActionPlan#explore.

Deadlines and Funding

Grant recipients are required to spend the money as specified in the project proposal by Dec. 1, 2023. Within 30 days of the completion of the grant-funded portion of the project, as specified in the proposal, provide an invoice of the grant funds spent to the Wildlife Conservation Section, along with documentation of the work (item or contractor invoices, photographs, etc.) and a project summary via a reporting form at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants.

Funding from DNR will be provided in the form of reimbursement for allowed expenditures.

2023 grant projects that will not be finished by the Dec. 1, 2023, deadline can request an extension. Requests must be made in writing (email or mail) and received by the Wildlife Viewing Grants Program coordinator by Nov. 10, 2023 – 15 business days before the deadline. The decision on whether to grant an extension is solely up to Wildlife Conservation Section administration.

If the proposal is part of and dependent on the completion of a larger project, the larger project must be completed by July 1, 2024, and within 30 days of completion, a project summary provided via the report form at georgiawildlife.com/WildlifeViewingGrants.

Content and Credits

Signage and interpretive materials produced as part of a grant and referencing wildlife, habitats and Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan must be submitted for review by the Wildlife Viewing Grants Program *before* production (this is in addition to any conceptual images of signage included as part of the initial grant proposal). Please provide sufficient time for reviewing drafts and making changes.

Grant recipients also must credit the grant provider (either the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Resources Division or DNR's Wildlife Viewing Grants Program) and reference the State Wildlife Action Plan in signage, materials, media announcements and other education or information outreach describing the project.

Suggested credit: Project funding provided in part by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources' Wildlife Viewing Grants Program, in accordance with the State Wildlife Action Plan. The plan is a comprehensive strategy to conserve native species and the habitats they need before these animals, plants and places become more rare and costly to conserve or restore.

Contact Rick Lavender (details below) for logos and usage guidelines, as well as further details on naming conventions regarding DNR and the State Wildlife Action Plan.

Projects must be available for site visits by DNR staff.

Questions?

- About the program or proposals, please contact Rick Lavender, rick.lavender@dnr.ga.gov or 706.557.3327.
- About forms, invoices or reimbursement, please contact Rebecca Rawlins, rebecca.rawlins@dnr.ga.gov or 706.557.3303.