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Georgia Department of Natural Resources
Board of Trustees and Staff of the
Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program
c/o Taylor Brown
2 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SE
Suite 1370 East Tower
Atlanta, Georgia 30334

**Subject: Letter of Support for Conserve Georgia Grant Pre-Application
for Land Acquisition and Development of Troupville River Camp, Lowndes County**

Dear Ms. Brown and Trustees:

I am the sixth-generation owner of the 74 acres at the confluence of the Little and Withlacoochee rivers, a tract adjacent to land held by the Valdosta Lowndes Parks and Recreation Authority that includes the Troupville boat ramp. I have long loved the black water, white sand, cypress stands, palmetto thickets and wildlife in this area, and hope that it can become a public park. Unfortunately, I cannot afford to donate the land, but am willing to sell it at fair market value to a conservation buyer for public use. I fully support the proposed acquisition of this land, its permanent conservation, use for water quality and stormwater control, and improvement with low-impact river campsites and other amenities appropriate for public recreation, environmental education and historical interpretation.

This land is important to me at several levels. First, as a steward of family lands, it is important to me that at least a remnant of what was "Wildwood Plantation" remain in a natural state. Second, as a professional regional land planner with experience around the southeast for more than three decades I recognize land that has a unique combination of significant attributes worthy of public attention. Third, as director of the Trust for Public Land's Georgia, Tennessee and Alabama offices for almost five years I understand the importance (and challenges) of preserving land for people and nature. Fourth, as a former member of the Executive Committee and Board of Trustees for the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation, I am keenly aware of how historic sites once lost are rarely recoverable. Finally, as an advocate for state support for land conservation I would be thrilled to see this project receive funding in the inaugural round of Conserve Georgia funding.

The many reasons this proposal merits serious consideration for state support include:

- **One-of-a-kind site**, ecologically, recreationally, historically significant with established vehicular access, close to Valdosta and the region's residents as well as visitors travelling on I-75
- **Ecological value** of maintaining natural areas for water quality, native plant and animal habitat, and stormwater management along two rivers that form one of the Suwannee River's headwaters.
- Opportunity for a signature **Withlacoochee and Little River Water Trail** with amenities that attract paddlers from throughout the watershed and beyond. (In June 2019 almost 300 canoeists and kayakers put in at the Troupville boat ramp and enthusiastically saluted the property on their way to the Suwannee River during the annual Paddle Georgia water trail trip.)
- Chance to **leverage** existing local and state investments in outdoor recreation. Adjacent to VLPRA's Troupville boat ramp funded by DNR, this site will consolidate public land offering more activities for residents as well as a significant tourism attraction. The resulting 120+ acre destination park will provide both passive and active recreation opportunities.