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county was \$31,109, less than the median annual income of \$57,652 across the United States. About 20.5% of the population were below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau 2018). Major economic activities include health care and social assistance, manufacturing, construction, retail, accommodation/food services, agriculture, and forestry (Georgia Department of Labor 2019). Land use is primarily evergreen forest, forested wetland, agriculture, clearcut, and urban (University of Georgia 2007).

The counties bordering Lanier County have similar demographics and densities. Major economic activities vary between some of the counties. Atkinson, Berrien and Clinch counties have mostly agriculture and forestry, wood manufacturing, retail, health care and accommodation/food service sector jobs. Echols County industries are mostly related to agriculture and forestry. Lowndes County has the most diverse industries, including agriculture, forestry, textiles, wood/paper production, chemical manufacturing, plastics/rubber manufacturing, furniture, retail as well as technical and professional services (Georgia Department of Labor 2019). Land use among the neighboring counties is similar, with evergreen forests comprising the largest component (range: 30-50%), except for Berrien County, where agricultural lands are the largest component (35%). Next, forested wetlands are the major land use type (range: 15-35%), followed by clearcut or sparse areas (range: 10-15%) and urban lands comprising 10% or the land in each of these counties (University of Georgia 2007).

Banks Lake is primarily a freshwater wetland system. The refuge consists of approximately 5.56 square miles in Lanier County, Georgia (Figure 1).