

Amendment 1: Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Amendment

Overview: This proposed constitutional amendment, if ratified in the November, 2018, state-wide election, allows the General Assembly to dedicate funds towards the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund for the purpose of protecting and preserving conservation land. If this enabling amendment is ratified, it will be implemented by HB 332.

Ballot Language: Georgia Amendment 1, Portion of Revenue from Outdoor Recreation Equipment Sales Tax Dedicated to Land Conservation Fund Amendment

“Without increasing the current state sales tax rate, shall the Constitution of Georgia be amended so as to create the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund to conserve lands that protect drinking water sources and the water quality of rivers, lakes, and streams; to protect and conserve forests, fish, wildlife habitats, and state and local parks; and to provide opportunities for our children and families to play and enjoy the outdoors, by dedicating, subject to full public disclosure, up to 80 percent of the existing sales tax collected by sporting goods stores to such purposes without increasing the current state sales tax rate?”

Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program Details: HB 332 created the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship program which will provide dedicated funding for state parks and state wildlife management areas as well as support to local parks and trails.

Forty percent of the proceeds of all state sales tax from outdoor recreation items would be appropriated for the protection and preservation of conservation land. As the ballot language indicates, the General Assembly has the ability to increase this amount up to the 80%.

Counties would be eligible to apply for grants and loans from this newly created trust fund. A Board of Trustees of the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund is created to oversee the grant/loan applications. The composition of the board could include representatives from local government.

In addition, each county in which is located 20,000 acres or more of unimproved real property belonging to the state and under the custody or control of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (GA DNR), in which such state-owned property exceeds 10 percent of the taxable real property in the county, and in which such property represents 10 percent or more of the assessed tax digest of the county may receive from the GA DNR an annual grant. Only land acquired with Outdoor Stewardship Trust Fund money would be used in the calculation of this grant.

Additional Information: <https://georgiaoutdoorstewardship.org/>