

# Athens Land Trust



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## **Athens Land Trust receives Merit Award from the Georgia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society**

Athens Land Trust has won the 2010 Merit Award from the Georgia Chapter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. The award, presented at the GaSWCS annual meeting held on Jekyll Island on May 21, recognizes ALT's conservation program, which currently protects 981 acres in the greater Athens area through permanent conservation easements.

The Merit Award is given in recognition of an outstanding effort or activity that promotes wise land use or conservation products and has clearly contributed to bringing about better land use and/or better understanding of natural resource conservation.

"The efforts of the ALT in protecting forests, working farmland, river and stream corridors, wetlands and other ecologically rich areas through conservation easements in north Georgia exemplify the Society's mission of fostering the science and the art of soil, water, and related natural resource management to achieve sustainability," said José Pagán, GaSWCS Awards Committee Chairman.

ALT holds 21 conservation easements in Athens-Clarke, Barrow, Oconee, Walton, and Wilkes Counties, providing permanent protection to 724 acres of working family farmland and 257 acres of forest, wetlands, neighborhood open space, and scenic vistas.

ALT Board Secretary Gregg Bayard, who accepted the award on ALT's behalf, said that James Tillman, State Conservationist with the U.S.D.A. Natural Resources Conservation Service, told him that ALT plays a leading role in preserving farmland in Georgia. "Athens Land Trust holds half of the easements established through the federal Farm and Ranchlands Protection Program in Georgia," he said.

"ALT is truly honored to receive an award from the Soil and Water Conservation Society," said ALT Executive Director Nancy Stangle. "The Society has been a true pioneer in protecting natural resources."

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Conservation Director Laura Hall explained that ALT has a long-standing appreciation for the work of GaSWCS. “The very first farm that we protected belonged to long-time Society member and former Georgia Chapter president Dr. George Langdale, who was known as the ‘Father of Conservation Tillage,’” she said. “He received the GaSWCS Distinguished Service Award in 1990, and we are very glad to be able to help carry on that legacy.”

Athens Land Trust, a nonprofit organization founded in 1994, promotes quality of life through integration of community and the natural environment by preserving land, creating energy-efficient and affordable housing, and revitalizing neighborhoods. In addition to the conservation program, which is certified by the national Land Trust Accreditation Commission, ALT has developed over 100 affordable housing units in Athens-Clarke County and provides homebuyer education and housing counseling services. More information about ALT is available at [www.athenslandtrust.org](http://www.athenslandtrust.org).

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