

Staff Report

Subject: Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) Grant Application for the Treutlen Trail Project

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Department: County Manager

Meeting Date: 10/15/2024

Item Description: Consideration for the Effingham County Board of Commissioners (ECBOC) to approve the application for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant to support the expansion of the Treutlen Trail.

Summary Recommendation:

Staff requests ECBOC's approval to apply for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant to secure funding for the Treutlen Trail Project, which will extend the trail by 3.1 miles as part of the larger Georgia Hi-Lo Trail initiative.

Executive Summary:

Effingham County seeks to expand the Treutlen Trail, a critical segment of the 211-mile Georgia Hi-Lo Trail, connecting communities from Union Point to Savannah. The expansion will extend the trail by 3.1 miles, promoting outdoor recreation, eco-tourism, and regional connectivity. This project will enhance hiking, biking, and wildlife viewing opportunities, benefiting residents and visitors.

Effingham County has already allocated Transportation Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (TSPLOST) funds to cover the required 25% match. The GOSP grant will provide the remaining 75% of funding, helping to complete this transformative project, which aligns with state conservation goals and promotes long-term economic and environmental benefits.

The GOSP grant will cover costs related to trail construction, signage, landscaping, and other infrastructure improvements, ensuring the trail meets accessibility and environmental standards. The project will be a significant asset for Effingham County and contribute to regional outdoor recreation and conservation efforts.

Background:

1. There is a 25% cost share requirement to be covered by TSPLOST funds, equaling \$735,000
2. The requested amount is \$2,940,000

Alternatives for the Commission to Consider:

1. Approve ECBOC's application for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant
2. Do not approve the application for Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant
3. Provide Staff with Direction

Recommended Alternative:

Staff recommends Alternative number 1—Approve the application for the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant

Attachments:

Resolution Approving application to the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Program (GOSP) grant