



## City Forest Credits Preservation Project Application

### 1. Project Name

City of Atlanta Carbon Credit Program (2024)

### 2. Project Operator

Organization/Entity: City of Atlanta

Address: 55 Trinity Avenue SW

City: Atlanta

State: Georgia

Zip: 30303

Contact(s): Chandra Farley, John R Seydel

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### 3. Project Location

*Project must be in or adjacent to one of the following. Describe which one of the criteria the project meets and provide the name of the city, town, or jurisdiction where project is located. Provide the parcel numbers.*

- *Urban Area or Urban Cluster boundary per U.S. Census Bureau*
- *Boundary of any incorporated or unincorporated city or town*
- *Boundary of any planning area for a regional metropolitan planning agency or entity*
- *Within the boundary of land owned, designated, and used by a municipal or quasi-municipal entity for source water or watershed protection*

The properties below are all located within the boundary of an incorporated city, the City of Atlanta, Georgia:

Southwest Nature Preserve: Within and owned by the City of Atlanta (178 acres)

- 14F-0041-LL-047-8, 0 Tell Road #Rear
- 14F-0035-LL-071-6, 0 Welcome All Road
- 14F-0034-LL-036-0, 0 No Name Road SW

Utoy Creek Nature Preserve: Within and owned by the City of Atlanta (21.3 acres)

- 14F-0027-LL0062, 0 Benjamin E Mays Dr SW

South River Nature Preserve: Within and owned by the City of Atlanta (15.3 acres)

- 14-0069-LL0596, 0 Pryor Rd SW
- 14-0069-LL0646, 0 Pegg Rd SW

- 14-007000040275, 0 Bagwell Dr SW

Mount Zion Nature Preserve: Within and owned by the City of Atlanta (34.21 acres)

- 14-0062-LL0833, 0 Mount Zion Rd SE
- 14-0062-LL0544, 0 Mount Zion Rd SE

#### 4. Project Description

*Provide short narrative of the project goals, Project Area acreage, land ownership, forest characteristics, and land use/zoning. Provide details about when the property was acquired or potential timeline for acquisition. Include information about when carbon crediting was first introduced into the overall project scope.*

The City of Atlanta aims to expand its Carbon Credit Program to include four newly acquired properties under the City Forest Credits (CFC) 40-year urban tree preservation protocol. The City has demonstrated its commitment to sustainability, climate resilience, and protected urban forests through the successful implementation of the [Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve Carbon Credit Program](#). Building upon this success, the City seeks to expand its Carbon Credit Program to include four additional newly City-acquired properties: Southwest Nature Preserve, Utoy Creek Nature Preserve, Mount Zion Nature Preserve, and South River Nature Preserve. Together, these properties represent a combined portfolio of approximately 252 acres of forested land, offering significant potential to generate additional carbon credits under the validated City Forest Credits 40-year urban tree preservation protocol. This initiative will protect rare, urban, and ecologically significant forested land.

#### Project Area Acreage and Land Ownership

The project encompasses a total of 252 acres across four sites:

- **Southwest Nature Preserve** (178 acres)
- **Utoy Creek Nature Preserve** (21.3 acres)
- **Mount Zion Nature Preserve** (34.21 acres)
- **South River Nature Preserve** (15.3 acres)

All properties are fully owned by the City of Atlanta and are managed as Nature Preserves, helping to support the City's goals to have all residents live within a 10-minute walk (.5 miles) of a park or greenspace and to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40% by 2030.

#### Acquisition Timeline

- **Southwest Nature Preserve:** Acquired by the City on 12/19/2022 via deed with tree trust funds.
- **Utoy Creek Nature Preserve:** Acquired by the City on 11/9/2023 via deed with tree trust funds.
- **Mount Zion Nature Preserve:** Acquired by the City on 8/10/2023 via deed through park impact fees.
- **South River Nature Preserve:** Acquired by the City on 8/10/2023 via deed through park impact fees.

#### Land Use / Zoning

##### Southwest Nature Preserve:

- 14F-0041-LL-047-8, 0 Tell Road #Rear, Zoning Classification: R-3
- 14F-0035-LL-071-6, 0 Welcome All Road, Zoning Classification: PD-H
- 14F-0034-LL-036-0, 0 No Name Road SW, Zoning Classification: R-3

**Utoy Creek Nature Preserve:**

- 14F-0027-LL062, 0 Benjamin E Mays Dr SW, Zoning Classification: RG-2-C

**South River Nature Preserve:**

- 14-0069-LL0596, 0 Pryor Rd SW, Zoning Classification: PD-H
- 14-0069-LL0646, 0 Pegg Rd SW, Zoning Classification: PD-H
- 14-007000040275, 0 Bagwell Dr SW, Zoning Classification: R-4

**Mount Zion Nature Preserve:**

- 14-0062-LL0833, 0 Mount Zion Rd SE, Zoning Classification: R-4
- 14-0062-LL0544, 0 Mount Zion Rd SE, Zoning Classification: R-4

**Forest Composition and Context:**

- All four properties have 1955 imagery that suggests that at least portions of each could have old growth forests that are 65-70+ years old.
- SW Nature Preserve - Composition: Mostly oak-pine-hickory forest
- Utoy Creek Nature Preserve - Composition: Around half Piedmont bottomland forest half mesic forest
- Mount Zion Nature Preserve - Composition: Mostly Piedmont bottomland forest
- South River Nature Preserve - Composition: Piedmont bottomland forest

**5. Project Impacts**

*Provide short narrative of the environmental, social, and health impacts this project will achieve. Examples include how the project addresses increased access to green spaces for under-resourced communities, flood control or watershed protection, benefits for human health and well-being, improved recreation opportunities, or protects bird and wildlife habitat.*

The proposed expansion of the City of Atlanta's Carbon Credit Program will generate profound environmental, social, and health benefits, strengthening the City's resilience and improving the quality of life for its residents. The project will protect 252 acres of mature, ecologically significant urban forests, creating a ripple effect of positive impacts for Atlanta's communities and ecosystems.

**1. Environmental Impacts:**

- a. Flood Control, Stormwater Management and Watershed Protection: These preserved forests play a critical role in stormwater management by reducing runoff, improving water retention, and filtering pollutants. Their proximity to urban watersheds supports the health of critical water systems such as Utoy Creek, the South River, and surrounding areas.
- b. Urban Heat Island Mitigation: Preserving these forested areas helps reduce the urban heat island effect by providing natural cooling through tree canopy shade and evapotranspiration. This contributes to lower neighborhood temperatures, particularly in areas disproportionately affected by heat, improving livability and reducing energy demand for cooling.
- c. Carbon Sequestration: Mature forests with 65-70+ years of growth provide substantial carbon storage, helping to offset greenhouse gas emissions and combat climate change.
- d. Wildlife Habitat: The diverse forest types—oak-pine-hickory, Piedmont bottomland, and mesic forests—offer essential habitats for birds, pollinators, and other wildlife, contributing to regional biodiversity.

## 2. Social Impacts:

- a. **Equity in Greenspace Access:** By preserving these properties as public nature preserves, the project addresses historic inequities in greenspace access. Many of these forests are located near historically disadvantaged communities, ensuring residents have improved opportunities to connect with nature.
- b. **Community Engagement and Education:** These spaces provide opportunities for environmental education, volunteer programs, and community stewardship, fostering a sense of ownership and connection to the land.

## 3. Health Impacts:

- a. **Improved Air and Water Quality:** Forested areas act as natural air and water filters, reducing pollutants and enhancing overall environmental quality. This has direct benefits for public health, particularly in reducing respiratory and waterborne illnesses.
- b. **Mental Health and Well-being:** Easy access to natural greenspaces supports mental health by offering areas for relaxation, stress reduction, and social interaction. The project enhances the walkability and livability of neighborhoods near the preserved areas.

## 4. Recreational Opportunities:

- a. **Active Lifestyles:** The preserves will provide spaces for walking, birdwatching, and other recreational activities, encouraging active and healthy lifestyles.
- b. **Trail Connectivity:** Future opportunities to link these preserves with existing trails will enhance Atlanta's recreational network and promote outdoor activities. This connects particularly well with the timing of the City's first Trails master plan ([Trails ATL](#)), which is currently being drafted for release in Q2 2025.

## 5. Long-term Ecological, Urban Resilience:

Protecting these mature forests ensures they continue to provide ecosystem services for decades to come, strengthening Atlanta's urban resilience in the face of climate change, urbanization, and environmental stressors. By preserving these vital greenspaces, the project will not only contribute to Atlanta's climate action goals but also enrich the lives of its residents through cleaner air and water, enhanced community health, and equitable access to natural areas.

## 6. Additional Information

*Provide additional information about your project. If the Project Area is part of a larger program or preservation effort, include one sentence with more information. Examples include collaboration with other partners to preserve forestland or how this project fits into a regional initiative.*

The City's Carbon Credit Program was first piloted with the [Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve Carbon Credit Project](#) utilizing the designated City Forest Credits (CFC) 40-year protocol and carbon credit registry through special procurement (SP-S/EXEC/2211-1230148). The acquisition of Lake Charlotte, approved by Atlanta City Council in June 2020 ([see 20-O-1215](#)), was one of the largest greenspace acquisitions in city history and the first time the City has used money from the Tree Recompense Fund to purchase land. The Conservation Fund (CF), the City's acquisition partner for the past fourteen years, supported the process and raised the possibility of carbon credits early in this process. Plans for maintenance and stewardship of the land remain to be determined but the Atlanta City Code and 20-O-1215 require the land to be preserved as public forested land in perpetuity. As such, the [Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve Carbon Credit Project](#) helped preserve 196 acres and 93.5% forest coverage, and has already generated 18,478 "Carbon+" unique carbon credits issued by CFC out of the 36,265 validated credits.

Scaling up the City's Carbon Credit Program is a cornerstone of Atlanta's comprehensive climate action, greenspace accessibility, and urban resilience strategy. This initiative supports the City's commitment to reducing greenhouse gas emissions and achieving the goal of providing greenspace access within a half-mile walking distance for all Atlanta residents. In partnership with the City of Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation and the Mayor's Office of Sustainability and Resilience as well as non-profit organizations like the Conservation Fund, and other regional stakeholders, the program focuses on protecting and preserving Atlanta's vital urban forests, reinforcing its legacy as the "City in the Trees."

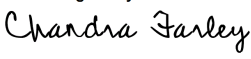
**7. Map**

*Provide a map of the Project Area.*

See the attachments for all four properties.

**PROJECT OPERATOR SIGNATURE**

Signed on December 19 in 2024, by Chandra Farley, Chief Sustainability Officer for the City of Atlanta.

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Signature

Chandra Farley  
Printed Name

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