

Another Conservation Success Story...

Dekalb County, Georgia

December 2006

Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance Protects Natural Preserve

The Arabia Mountain Heritage Alliance is a collection of private citizens, civic groups, localities and State and Federal agencies that have joined together to protect and enhance the Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve and the surrounding area which is under strong development pressure due to a new mall.

NRCS first became involved in 1998 when the Alliance successfully applied for a grant from the Urban Resources Partnership in Atlanta to put up educational signage at the Preserve.

Urban Resources Partnership (URP) was a coalition of local conservation agencies funded primarily by the NRCS and the Forest Service that provided cost-share grants for locally led conservation projects in many metropolitan areas across the country.

In 1998, Congresswoman Cynthia McKinney wrote a letter to then Secretary of Agriculture, Dan Glickman, asking for United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) assistance with preserving farmland in the area.

Butch Goff, Retired Assistant State Conservationist, and Steve Leslie, District Conservationist, attended the next meeting of the Alliance and talked to the group about the conservation programs that are available and what technical services they might provide.

Since then Steve Leslie has continued to participate with the group and provided an assessment of a pond dam on the property, as well as soil survey information.

Later the Alliance successfully applied for another URP grant to produce a video that introduced school children to the Nature Preserve before they visited. Both URP projects have since been completed.

The Nature Preserve has grown along with the Alliance through land acquisitions funded by over \$30 million of private, County and State, as well as, in-kind services.

Most recently an additional \$10 million in Federal funding through the Park Service was approved by President

Bush to officially designate it as a National Heritage Area.

A smart growth plan has been drawn up for the area, which includes plans for an environmental magnet school and a trail system that would link the Preserve with Panola Mountain State Park and with other public properties along the South River.

For more information please go to <http://www.arabiaalliance.org/>

Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve has been officially designated as a National Heritage Area. A smart growth plan will eventually link the Preserve with Panola Mountain State park.

Urban Resources Partnership

The Urban Resources Partnership (URP) is an initiative of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) that makes federal resources available directly to community-based and community-driven environmental projects in under-served neighborhoods of select metropolitan areas.

Seven federal agencies, including the USDA Forest Service, Cooperative Extension and Natural Resource Conservation Service, United States Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the National Parks Service and Fish and Wildlife Service, are providing funds and on-site technical assistance to education and restoration efforts in 13 cities throughout the country.

The Urban Resources Partnership Program advocates and assists community-based action through local partnerships to enhance, restore, and sustain urban ecosystems in their respective cities. These actions contribute to the improvement of the social, economic, and physical well being of the people and their natural environment.



Shoals of unidentified stream within Arabia Mountain Heritage Area



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Dekalb County Soil And Water Conservation District