



July 2026

Creating, Conserving, & Connecting Parks, Trails, & Greenspace in Sandy Springs

MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

Hello to all of the supporters and friends of the Sandy Springs Conservancy. I hope that you have had a great summer so far. The Conservancy has been focused like a laser on two things - the Morgan Falls Trail 2C Segment and the City's Next Chapter planning process.

Morgan Falls Trail Segment 2C

Design work on Morgan Falls Trail Segment 2C continues to make progress. The Conservancy is working with City staff, PATH Foundation, and Kaizen Collaborative to help shape this 1.6-mile addition to the Morgan Falls Trail system. We think that this trail segment is noteworthy. Beginning at Morgan Falls Overlook Park, the trail will extend east, following a scenic tributary of the Chattahoochee River through mature forest, past dramatic rock outcroppings and beautiful waterfalls before connecting all the way to Roswell Road. When completed, Segment 2C will expand the Morgan Falls loop from 1.8 miles to approximately 3.4 miles, bringing us significantly closer to a continuous 5.6-mile trail loop around Morgan Falls.

City Council is expected to consider funding for Segment 2C before the end of the year. As we have noted recently, we encourage you to contact each City Council member and let them know how important it is to keep the momentum moving forward. You can find email addresses for SS Council members here: [Council Members and Council Districts | City of Sandy Springs](#).

A big year for community planning in Sandy Springs.

As the City updates both its [Comprehensive Plan](#) and its [Recreation and Parks Plan](#), we have a great opportunity to get trail and park concepts into both plans.

We look forward to showing how our city can seamlessly reconnect through trails and discover vibrant new benefits in our parks.

Later this year, we will host our *Thought Leaders Dinner*. For 25 years, the Conservancy has been a leading voice for local greenspace. We know the path toward our next major milestones won't be easy—and that is exactly why we invited Mitchell Silver to join us.

Mitchell is an award-winning planner with over 40 years of experience. He is internationally recognized for his leadership and contributions to contemporary planning issues. Mitchell is a prolific public speaker and strategic advisor specializing in urban planning, parks, placemaking, and implementation strategies.

Mitchell Silver will share best-practice planning strategies and funding options for trails and parks. He will also showcase how greenspace investments deliver high yield returns compared to other public spending. With an eye toward strategy, the Conservancy will also ask Silver to help us identify which projects to build first to maximize community walkability and successfully unlock a fully connected, city-wide trail system.

Let me close with a special invitation to anyone who would like a guided tour of the proposed trail 2C. Likewise, if you would like more information or if you would like to volunteer for the Conservancy, please contact our executive director John Maximuk at John@SandySpringsConservancy.org.

Thank you again for your continued support.

Jack Misiura
Chair
Board of Directors
Sandy Springs Conservancy

FIND YOUR PARK!

A closer look at the Abernathy Greenway Park North



Where and What

The Abernathy Greenway Park North park is located at 70 Abernathy Road Northeast, Sandy Springs, GA 30328. Amenities include a Playable Art structures playground, pavilion, picnic tables, and restrooms.

Beginnings

Springs Conservancy played a key role in bringing together stakeholders and neighbors to design the park. When increasing traffic along Abernathy Road necessitated a state road widening project, the City worked with federal, state and county agencies to fund land acquisition along Johnson Ferry Road, acquiring 42 homes in total. In a joint venture, the state acquired needed right-of-way space, and the city acquired what the state didn't need for road expansion – about 20 acres, creating a linear park on both the north and south sides of the road.

Exploring

The 6.6-acre linear park opened in 2014. Today groups are welcome to use pavilions on a first-come, first-served basis. If a pavilion is not in use when you arrive, you are welcome to use it. While you're there, check out the playable art pieces including:

- It's You & Me, Kid — Frank Swanson, Littleton, CO: Laser-cut granite boulder creating a three-piece positive and negative space explorative sculpture.
- Spider Walk — Phil Proctor, Atlanta, GA: Interactive climbable sculpture in the form of a playful, stylized spider for children to climb, occupy, and be enveloped within.
- Wonder Wall — Reham Aarti, Boise, ID: Mosaic of kiln-dried glass on a concrete and steel frame that invites children to explore texture, stimulate curiosity, and inspire interaction.
- The Big Imagine — Jeff Hackney, Hillsborough, NC: Reinvented functional swings with no upper cross-members to obscure the view of the sky.
- Dragonfly — Alexis Gregg and Tanner Coleman, Tupelo, MS: Industrial brick, concrete, steel, mortar, polished concrete slides, climbing ropes, and dalle de verre windows.
- Twist and Shout — Beth Nybeck: A nonlinear jungle of stainless steel tubing that loops, whoops, curves, and twists, creating spaces to hang from, climb on, crawl under, and walk through.

Playable Art Source: City of Sandy Springs

Sandy Springs is PLANNING in '26!

It's not too late to get involved in the Comprehensive Plan Update and the Recreation and Park Plan. See [The Next Chapter](#) to get involved. For more information about Conservancy work on this plan, please contact Conservancy executive director John Maximuk at John@sandyspringsconservancy.org.



Meet the Sandy Springs Conservancy Board Alex Beasley

Alex Beasley is one of the 23 current members on the Sandy Springs Conservancy Board. Alex is a Sandy Springs resident and Director of Planting at [Trees Atlanta](#). He is a Board-Certified Master Arborist and holds a Tree Risk Assessment Qualification (TRAQ). Executive director John Maximuk caught up with Alex this week.

Maximuk: We've only talked once and so this is a good introduction for us and for our Conservancy followers. It helps to get to know all board members so let's get started.

Q: What's the most interesting place you've ever visited? Beasley: A: The place was [Monteverde](#), Costa Rica. I lived there for three months. When I was there, UGA managed the *Ecolodge*. I had a landscape architecture internship right there in the middle of paradise."

Maximuk: **Q: "How did you get into your field of work?"**

Beasley: A: "My Mom. Growing up, she always preached environmentalism. For the

longest time, I just rolled my eyes. But then one year - I saw the Redwoods! From that point on, I wanted to learn about this world we live in. Soon after, I changed my major from art to landscape architecture, but the journey started early - with my Mom.”

Maximuk: Q: “What are you working on?”

Beasley: “As Director of Planting with Trees Atlanta, there are two major things that I focus on everyday – the downtown (Atlanta) tree master plan and the Atlanta Beltline. For downtown, my work is based on implementing a federal *Inflation Reduction Act* (IRA) grant for urban and community forestry. So for us in Atlanta, that means proving that there is a positive return on investment for solutions such as floating paver systems and increased tree canopy. Secondly, I’m always working on the Beltline and that means tree diversity and number of trees.”

Maximuk: Q: “What’s a good day look like?”

Beasley: A: “A good day is a hybrid – when I’m inside and outside.” I really like to sit with my managers, pour into the work with my managers. Then, I like to go outside - for pruning and planting. You know, I used to be outside all the time, so a hybrid is much better. Overall, I love the people that I work with and for.”

Maximuk: Q: “What is one thing that you wish people knew about your work?”

Beasley: A: “I’m going to jump on the soap box right now. People don’t really understand how non-profit organizations are similar to private sector businesses! Most of my non- profit colleagues work extremely hard and take their missions extremely seriously. And as an added stressor, not all our activities make money!

So, we have to raise that money; we're completely dependent on donations, foundations, etc. People's livelihoods and organizational missions are dependent on others' generosity. And some people think it's sunshine and rainbows!

However, the culture at non-profit organizations (such as Trees Atlanta) is amazing because - even though we don't always agree on things - the one thing is the mission! It's about being surrounded by people working on that mission."

Maximuk: Q: "What have you enjoyed as board member on SSC?"

Beasley: A: "A while ago, Sandy Springs Conservancy Board Member Laura Jones invited me to deliver a presentation about the Trees Atlanta Front Yard Tree Program for the Sandy Springs Society. Afterwards, Laura invited me to attend the Conservancy's next *Thought Leaders Dinner* and so I went. I ended up meeting other Conservancy Board members including Doug Morgan and Carolyn Axt, the Mayor, and others. Not long after, I was invited to serve on the Conservancy's board. Since then, I have found it astonishing how the organization's members have been chipping away at this work! Take Old Riverside Park - which is near my house - after a lot of effort this renovation is finally happening. It is cool to see - all these different people, with different professional backgrounds - pouring themselves into this mission. It's a real working board; it's true altruism. And, it is awesome to see the patience."

Maximuk: Q: "What would you like the SSC to do in the near future?"

Beasley: A: "What would be cool would be a city-wide survey or poll to see just how important trails and parks are for people. That would help us to be able to prove to our policy makers just how important these

spaces are. I have always wanted to live in Sandy Springs. When I was a kid, I saw the trees and these homes and how they co-exist. It would be helpful to see what percentage of residents want to see parks and trails so that others can see that too.”



The Former University of Georgia Ecological, Monteverde, Costa Rica
Photo Source: GlobalAtlanta.org



Okefenokee Swamp has joined the list of UNESCO World Heritage sites!

Read about this historic designation here:

[Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge - UNESCO World Heritage Centre](#)
[Okefenokee World Heritage Site – Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge UNESCO](#)

STAY ON THE TRAIL

Follow the Sandy Springs Conservancy on Facebook and Instagram

The trails don't stop, and neither do we! Catch all the latest Conservancy news on [Facebook](#)—and keep your eyes peeled for our brand-new Instagram page rolling out this August.

IMPROVEMENTS ALONG THE CHATTAHOOCHEE

The Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area has re-opened Island Ford Trails. Read about it here at [Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area Announces Reopening of Island Ford Trails - Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area \(U.S. National Park Service\)](#)

SUPPORT the Sandy Springs Conservancy!

Our success is made possible by both corporate AND personal support. When you support the Conservancy, you are investing in parks, trails and green space for residents to enjoy today and for years to come.

Your contributions allow us to transform greenspace ideas into reality.





Thank You Sponsors!

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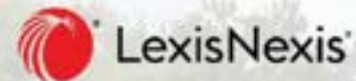
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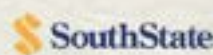


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