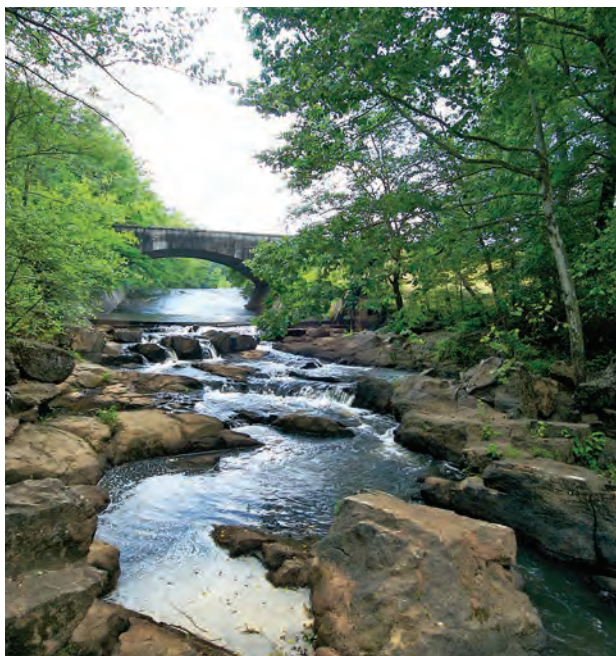
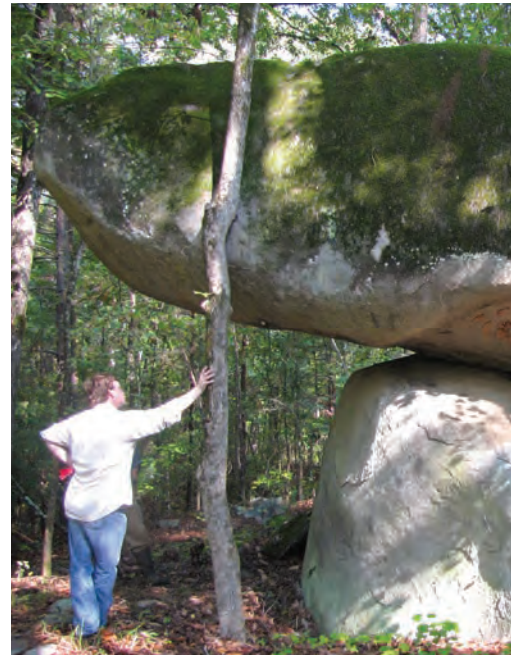


**MADISON-MORGAN  
CONSERVANCY**

PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, AND FRONT  
PORCHES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

**2021-2025  
STRATEGIC PLAN**





# TABLE OF CONTENTS

Plan Methodology ..... p.3

Introduction ..... p. 4

History and Context ..... p. 4

Mission and Vision ..... p.5

Core Beliefs ..... p.5

Operational Assessment ..... p.5

- Environmental Scan ..... p. 6
- Mission Alignment ..... p. 7
- Policies and Procedures ..... p. 7
- Programming ..... p. 7
- 2020 Survey Results ..... p. 8
- Board Self-Assessment ..... p. 8
- Budget History and Financial Projections ..... p. 8

Strategic Direction and Implementation ..... p. 8

Communicating the Plan ..... p.13

Review and Amendment ..... p. 13

Conclusion ..... p. 13

Appendix A: Infographic 2019 ..... p. 14



# MADISON MORGAN CONSERVANCY

PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, AND FRONT  
PORCHES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

## 2017-2021 STRATEGIC PLAN PREPARED BY:

### OFFICERS

President: Whitey Hunt  
Vice President: Bruce Gilbert  
Treasurer: Art Dombay  
Secretary: Shandon Land

### BOARD MEMBERS

Sam Ball  
Elizabeth Branch  
Maryann Dartnell  
Kyle Davidson  
Anne Horstman  
Rachel Kinsaul  
Jill Meeler  
Brooks Pennington, IV  
Michael Redwine  
Elizabeth Rockhill

### EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Christine Watts  
cmccauley@mmcGeorgia.org

### PR COORDINATOR

Theresa Dickinson  
tdickinson@mmcGeorgia.org

### MADISON-MORGAN CONSERVANCY

PO Box 752  
Madison, GA 30650  
(706) 818-8046  
www.mmcGeorgia.org  
info@mmcGeorgia.org

## PLAN METHODOLOGY

Strategic planning is only one part of a larger ongoing planning process but is a significant element of sound organizational management. Typical of most planning processes, this strategic planning process was designed to assess the organization's past performance and determine the goals and implementation plan for the next five years.

In February 2020, the Conservancy Board began its strategic planning process. Due to COVID-19, in-person meetings were not feasible, so it was decided that the following committees would meet virtually over eight months: Executive, Board Development, Fundraising & Membership, Development Review, and Endangered Properties Revolving Fund. During that time, the organization also 1) collected and analyzed data, 2) disseminated a digital survey to members, stakeholders, and the general public, and 3) held personal phone interviews with key stakeholders. This process provided the public the opportunity to help define the strategic direction of the organization and provided the Conservancy a way to engage the community in a meaningful way during a time when so many felt isolated and disconnected.

In addition to the Madison-Morgan Conservancy Board Members, Advisory Board Members, and Staff, the Conservancy was intentional about soliciting input from a diverse group of stakeholders, including members of the local governments, school system, Chamber of Commerce, Convention and Visitor's Bureau (CVB), County Tax Assessor, Conservancy members, Conservancy partners, other related NGOs, private landowners, and conservation easement donors, among others.

Data collected and analyzed included but was not limited to demographics, real estate trends, farmgate statistics, acres in CUVA, acres in conservation easement, properties listed in the National Register of Historic Places, zoning ordinances and locally available sustainable development regulations, 2020 Conservancy survey results, Conservancy Board self-assessment results, and Conservancy membership growth, among others.

In December 2020, a revised draft was presented for discussion and edits. The plan was adopted during the January 2021 board meeting.



## INTRODUCTION

In February 2020, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy embarked on a strategic planning process, in its regular effort to update the organization's strategic direction. Previous strategic plans were adopted in 2007, 2015, and 2017.

In 2017, prior to the Conservancy's strategic planning process, the City of Madison and Morgan County updated their comprehensive plans. During that process, the public prioritized the protection of greenspace, farmland, and historic resources as one of the three most important goals for the future. Because the Conservancy is an integral part of protecting Morgan County's sense of place and aims to protect what is most important to the public, the input and data gathered during the Comprehensive Planning process informed the direction of this strategic plan. Additionally, the Conservancy's strategic planning process included input from board members, staff, stakeholders, and members as well as independent data collection and analysis, all of which provided insight into how the organization can continue to facilitate the community's preservation goals.

The eleven-month planning process resulted in the Conservancy's 2021-2025 Strategic Plan and an action plan to accomplish those goals over the next five years. The plan was adopted on January 4, 2021.

## HISTORY AND CONTEXT

For twenty years, at the edge of (and now included in) the Southeast's largest and fastest-growing metropolitan area, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy has been protecting farms, forests, and front porches for future generations, making significant gains in natural resource conservation, farmland protection, and historic preservation, while creating a culture of conservation.

Morgan County, Georgia, was founded in 1807, relatively early in the colonization of America. Still an agrarian community, its proximity to Atlanta, Athens, Augusta, and Macon presents economic opportunities in tourism and agriculture (Morgan County's two largest industries) and serves as a convenient residential location. Madison, the town seat, is known for its antebellum architecture and is home to approximately 4,000 of the County's 18,000+ residents. The sense of place in Madison and Morgan County is strong, thanks to efforts begun long ago. Since inception in 2000 as Georgia's first countywide conservancy, the Madison-Morgan Conservancy, has been a significant part of that preservation effort.

The Conservancy's unique holistic approach to conservation includes collaboration with land trusts and other partners to:

1) provide education, advocacy, and technical assistance, 2) protect critical resources, and 3) grow the local food system. Thanks to its 500+ members and hundreds of donors, the Conservancy has accomplished a great deal since inception.

See Appendix A for an infographic depicting the following measurable outcomes. By 12/20:

- 7,500+ people reached through 66 educational forums (since 2001)
- 5,100 acres of wildlife habitat, farmland, and historic landscapes forever protected by conservation easements donated by private landowners
- 5 historic assets protected and/or rehabilitated, including the Foster-Thomason-Miller House (first Endangered Properties Revolving Fund project), Sugar Creek Church, and Wallace Grove School
- 1st farm trail in Georgia, FARMeander, developed and published for five years
- 3,100 students in the Morgan County Charter School System have access to local food through the Farm-to-School Program
- 33 acres of greenspace forever protected by transferring development rights from natural areas into developing areas through Madison's newly created TDR program
- 4 historic properties listed on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Centennial Farm Register

The Conservancy's work has been honored by numerous organizations:

**2019 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities:** Presented by Governor and Mrs. Kemp for "humanities and historic preservation," recognizing twenty years of preservation service and most recently the establishment of the Junior Conservancy and Endangered Properties Revolving Fund.



**2018 Outstanding Preservation Leadership Award:** Presented by the Madison Historic Preservation Commission for providing leadership for the preservation of history and historic resources in Madison and for recent initiatives such as establishing the Junior Conservancy and the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund.

**2015 everGreen Award for Excellence in Public Awareness:** Presented by the Madison Greenspace Commission for the city's TDR Program.

**2013 everGreen Award:** Presented by the Madison Greenspace Commission for 1) Washington Park Playground, and 2) the Teaching Garden at Morgan County Elementary School.



### **2012 State Preservation Award for Excellence in Restoration:**

Awarded to our partner Wallace Grove Baptist Church for the restoration of the 1901 Wallace Grove School; presented by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

### **2011 State Preservation Award for Excellence in Preservation**

**Service:** Presented by the Georgia Trust for Historic Preservation.

### **2010 Preservation Excellence Award for Outstanding Heritage**

**Education:** Presented by the Madison Historic Preservation Commission for the 2009 Greenprint Ramble.

**2009 everGreen Award for Public Awareness:** Presented by the Madison Greenspace Commission for the 2008 Sustainability Expo.

**2008 everGreen Award for Excellence in Education:** Presented by the Madison Greenspace Commission for the 2007 Greenprint Ramble.

## **MISSION**

The mission of the Madison-Morgan Conservancy is to provide public education on conservation matters and to protect and enhance the heritage and quality of life of the residents of Morgan County by preserving historic sites, greenspace, farmland, and timberland.

## **VISION**

We envision a thriving Morgan County to be a healthy, beautiful place to live and work for current and future residents, where clean air and water, abundant wildlife, forestry, agriculture, and heritage tourism are vital and contribute to the regional economy. We aim to preserve the beautiful public vistas, agrarian heritage, rural crossroads, and small-town atmosphere while attracting

small to medium sized businesses to provide essential jobs and sustain our balanced tax digest. We envision an organization that makes an impact locally and uses its success to promote conservation and balanced growth throughout Georgia.

## **CORE BELIEFS**

We Believe: A well-informed public makes good decisions.

We Believe: In order to leave this place better than we found it, we must protect our natural, agricultural, and historic resources.

We Believe: In order to sustain our quality of life, we must allow for balanced growth while protecting our agrarian heritage.

We Believe: In order to have a safe and nutritious food supply, we must protect a critical mass of farmland and provide economic opportunities for farmers.

We Believe: In order to provide landowners with options to realize economic value from their land, we must ensure conservation as an option.

We Believe: In order to have a strong economy and healthy community, we must have a healthy environment.

## **OPERATIONAL ASSESSMENT**

Strategic planning is a significant part of sound operational management and should include an analysis of the organization's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT). Through a SWOT analysis, the Conservancy conducted an environmental scan, assessed mission alignment, reviewed policies and procedures, assessed programming, reviewed 2020 public survey results, conducted a board self-assessment, reviewed budget history, and made financial projections.

## **Transferable Development Rights (TDR)**



## Environmental Scan

The Conservancy conducted an environmental scan of politics, culture, economics, demographics, membership, partnerships, and land conservation to assess future internal and external impacts to the organization's strategic direction.

**Politics:** The organization sees the opportunity to continue its working relationship with the local governments and finds favor among many of the elected and appointed officials. The Conservancy assisted the City of Madison in successfully creating and adopting a Transferable Development Rights (TDR) ordinance in 2015 and is currently working with landowners to protect their properties by selling TDRs. While the 2017 Greenprint update was not adopted by the County as part of its Comprehensive Plan, the Conservancy continues to partner with the County on other projects, such as recycling and the Madison-Morgan Meander.

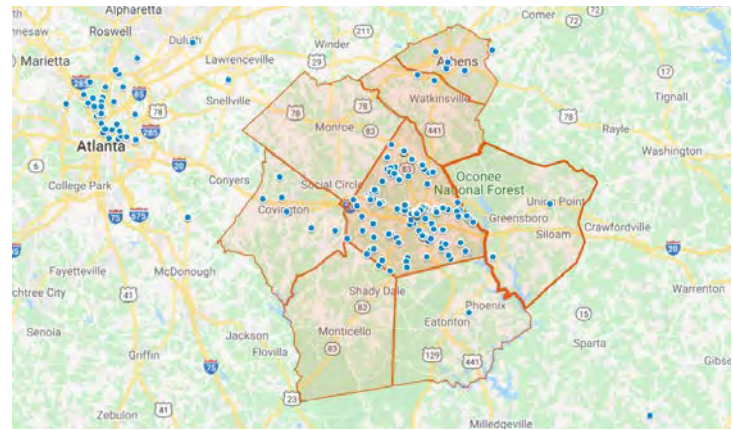
**Culture:** There is a culture of conservation sustained by a collection of preservation organizations in Morgan County. The Conservancy plays an important role in that culture, evidenced by its 500+ members who pay annual dues and who sponsor, coordinate, and attend the Conservancy's social events. The Conservancy's events are very well received, from issue-specific educational forums, to the Greenprint Ramble, to Derby Day. Derby Day (the organization's only fundraiser) has been named one of the best eight derby parties in the nation three times and is one of the community's most popular events. During COVID-19, even though the cultural events were canceled, landowner interest in conservation continued. The organization expects to be hosting its events again in 2022 to reinvigorate that social aspect of the conservation culture.

**Economics:** Due to the global recession caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Conservancy adapted its financial projections. Until 2022, the Conservancy expects a reduction in fundraiser and grant revenue but is hopeful its recent growth in membership will help mitigate the deficit. Despite the recession, both the state and local community are seeing a rise in real estate prices and development pressure, which informs the Conservancy's need for the Development Review Committee and provides opportunities for donations of conservation easements. The EPRF is fully funded and allows the Conservancy to vigorously engage in that work.

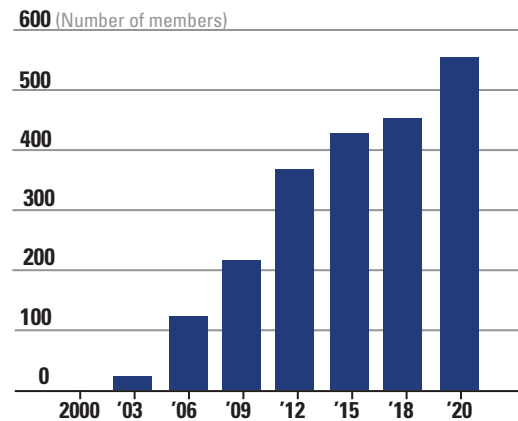
**Demographics:** Morgan County's population of 18,000+ is growing at approximately 8%. 73% of the population is White, 22% is African American, 3% is Hispanic, and 2% is Asian/Islander/American Indian. The African American population is the only sector of the population that is decreasing. The average age is 44.5 and the median household income is \$62,530. 86% of the population graduated from high school, and 21% have a bachelor's degree or higher. The school system is ranked in the top 20% of school systems in the state and has transitioned to a College and Career Academy, consolidating all schools onto one campus. The County's unemployment rate was 2.5% before COVID-19 and is now 4.5%.

**Membership:** The Conservancy's membership has grown significantly in the last few years. Thanks to efforts by the Fundraising & Membership Committee and board members in general, communications between the Conservancy and its members has resulted in a very high renewal rates and more new members than any previous year. New software purchased in 2017 has also provided better tracking and assessment of membership by staff.

### Conservancy Membership Distribution



### MEMBERSHIP



Conservancy membership is representative of Morgan County's demographics with the exception of racial makeup. Only a few members are not White. Despite the Conservancy's efforts to 1) partner with the Boys & Girls Club on annual events, 2) draw interest from African American students for the Junior Conservancy, and 3) assist African American pastors and congregations in protecting church and school buildings, the support from the African American community has not developed.

**Partnerships:** The Conservancy partners with a variety of organizations to accomplish its mission. Locally, the Conservancy works with local governments on special projects (Madison-Morgan Meander, TDR ordinances, development review), hosts educational symposiums in partnership with the Cultural Center, African American Museum, and Landmarks Society; hosts field trips with the Boys & Girls Club and FFA; and promotes agriculture with the Farm Bureau. Regionally, the Conservancy hosts three to four educational forums each year featuring partner presenters and works with multiple regional



land trusts to permanently protect land. Statewide, the Conservancy partners with the GA Trust for Historic Preservation on the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund, with the GA Conservancy on land use issues, with the Conservation Fund on the Working Farms Fund, and with the Association of GA Land Trusts on promoting a healthy land conservation community. Nationally, the Conservancy has been involved with both the Land Trust Alliance and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, receiving grants, accolades, and good press, as well as presenting at both annual conferences (2019-2020).

**Land Conservation:** Recent state and national legislation has improved the potential for conservation funding: the Georgia Outdoor Stewardship Act passed in 2018, and in 2020 the Great American Outdoors Act fully funded the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Also in 2020, in an effort to shut down syndicated conservation easement abuses, Congress introduced the bipartisan Charitable Conservation Easement Program Integrity Act, which will continue to reward honest philanthropy while shutting down those who abuse this charitable incentive for profit.

### Mission Alignment

Throughout the strategic planning process, the board assessed how the Conservancy's goals, objectives, strategies, and tasks aligned with its mission statement. Board and staff discussed past programming, results of that programming, and public perceptions of the Conservancy. In the end, all were satisfied with the existing mission statement.

### Policies and Procedures

In 2010, the Conservancy embarked on a five-year process to create, update, and adopt policies and procedures according to best management practices of non-profits, specifically conservation organizations. To organize this comprehensive effort, the organization used the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta's Managing for Excellence (MFE) Award program as a guide. The Land Trust Alliance's Standards and Practices were also adopted and used to provide direction. A complete set of policies and procedures is maintained and updated as needed.

### Programming

The Conservancy's unique, holistic approach to conservation has been implemented over the last five years with three basic objectives: 1) provide landowners and leadership with education, advocacy, and technical assistance on conservation and sustainable development matters, 2) protect critical resources, and 3) support farmers and grow the local food system.

Due to COVID-19, the organization cancelled all its 2020 events and is contemplating cancelling the majority of its 2021 events, pivoting from hosting multiple events to conducting programming that can be accomplished under social distancing guidelines and that can be funded mostly by membership dues.

During its strategic planning process in 2016-2017, the Conservancy decided to continue its existing programs but identified three new programming strategies it should be implemented in conjunction with its regular programming: 1) create a revolving fund to protect both historic structures and openspace, 2) create a coordinated approach to developing a conservation ethic in Morgan County's youth, and 3) work with partners to permanently protect prime farmland. Each of these strategies have been implemented through the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund, Junior Conservancy, and Working Farms Fund, respectively, and are described in more detail below.

**Endangered Properties Revolving Fund (EPRF):** The EPRF was fully funded at \$1,000,000 by 2020 and saved its first property, the Foster-Thomason-Miller House, protecting the historic structure and an acre of openspace. The EPRF has also purchased another historic building, 137 S. First St, Madison, and intends to rehabilitate it by the Summer of 2021, hold it for five years, and then sell it to replenish the fund. The EPRF is also engaged in protecting open space through two projects: 1) permanently protecting 165 acres of farm and forest near High Shoals with a conservation easement in return for an option to purchase a part of the farm at a price that reflects the Conservancy's investment in the easement; and 2) permanently protecting 18 acres of greenspace, which serves as a critical link connecting the school campus to the Horse Branch Trail system, by investing in the conservation easement in return for a donation of TDRs generated by that conservation easement. The EPRF, designed to protect both historic structures and openspace is doing just that, serving as a model for other NGOs.

**Junior Conservancy (JC):** The JC was developed as a mock board of directors for high school students who design and execute their own conservation-related programming and is in its fourth year. The students meet nine Sunday evenings during the school year for field trips, lectures, and service projects in and around Morgan County. The potential for this program is great, and the Conservancy is working towards hiring a staff person 20 hrs/week to grow the JC into a more robust and more diverse program. Increasing diversity is key, and although there is diversity in age, gender, school, and economic status, only two of the 32 students involved in the first four years were minority students.

**Working Farms Fund (WFF):** The WFF is a new partnership with the Conservation Fund and aims to keep working lands in working hands. The Conservation Fund is continuing its fundraising efforts to fully fund this program and is including the Conservancy as a formal partner. In return for a fee for service, the Conservancy will assist the WFF in connecting Morgan County farmers and landowners to the WFF in an effort to protect farmland and provide affordable access to farmland for new farmers. As of December 2020, the Conservation Fund is in the process of purchasing its first farm and placing its first farmers on that farm. Although that farm is in Newton County,

the WFF has identified numerous Morgan County farms and farmers as high priority.

**Regular Programming:** During the strategic planning process, the Conservancy assessed its regular programming and decided it was robust, effective, and should continue.

- Educational/advocacy: Conservation Easement Workshop, Greenprint Ramble, Membership Supper, Protect & Prosper.
- Technical Assistance: Conservation Easements, Historic Preservation Consulting, National Register listing, and Centennial Farm listing.
- Land Use: Development Review, Greenprinting, TDR.
- Resource Protection: EPRF, CE and CUVA, WFF.
- Farm to Market Alliance: FARMeander, Farm to School.

## 2020 Survey Results

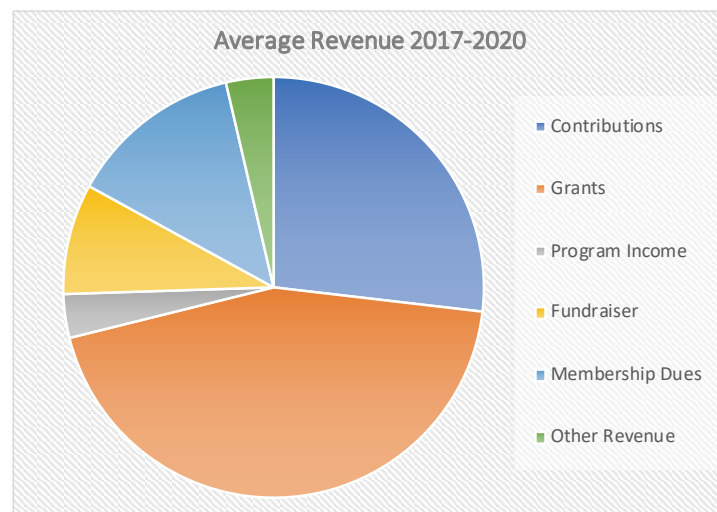
In 2020, 83 online surveys were collected from residents, landowners, and visitors, providing public opinion on the importance of Conservancy programming, quality of events, reasons for supporting the organization, and quality of life issues in Morgan County. The responses were instructional and were incorporated into the strategic direction for 2021-2025. The Conservancy strongly believes that surveys are a valuable tool in assessing public opinion and that public opinion should inform its strategic direction and will increase the likelihood of successfully accomplishing the organization’s mission.

## Board Self-Assessment

As a key step in the strategic planning process, the board of directors assessed themselves. The results of the board self-assessment illustrated the need for standing committees to be more active, for staff to conduct a more in-depth orientation for board members, for board member self-assessment to be conducted more often, and, most importantly, for the board to be more racially diverse.

## Budget History and Financial Projections

Like most non-profits, the Conservancy is funded mostly through donations from individuals, corporations, and foundations. Additional revenue comes from one annual fundraiser (Derby Day) and educational program registration fees. Organizational expenses include program, operational, and fundraising expenses expected of an organization this size. The pre-COVID 2020 budget was typical and projected \$363,950 in revenue and \$360,983 in expenses. The post-COVID annual budget projected a reduced \$127,750 in revenue and \$183,608 in expenses. The organization expects the post-COVID budget projections to continue through 2021 but assumes the organization will return to pre-COVID budget projections in 2022. The Conservancy built up an operating reserve of \$90,000 before the pandemic and projects it will have used a portion of that reserve by the end of 2021 to sustain the organization. The EPRF is fully funded and capital is being deployed on projects.



The Conservancy Executive Committee reviewed financials from 2017-2020 to assess trends. Change in revenues and expenses over five years was assessed to determine the potential to minimize costs and maximize revenues. Grant revenue was found to be variable from year to year, while membership revenue grew each year. Accounting, insurance, and personnel expenses were assessed separately to determine the appropriateness of their percentage of the budget. Since 2015, the Treasurer has worked with staff and a third-party accountant to formalize financial procedures, validate financial records, and assist in financial projections. The organization is financially healthy, on a tight budget, and looking for new sources of revenue.

## STRATEGIC DIRECTION & ANNUAL IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The Annual Implementation Plan (on the next page) maps out the implementation of the Conservancy’s strategic direction through 2025. The Plan includes an implementation schedule, responsible party, and designated committee for each action item of each strategy. Measurable goals are referenced in the action items, which are scheduled according to staff and funding capacity. Every year an annual implementation plan will be developed for use by the board and staff to guide the use of resources and to track progress.



GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	2021 STATUS	2021 PROGRESS NOTES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMMITTEE
GOAL 1: Provide residents, landowners, and leadership with education, advocacy, and technical assistance on conservation and sustainable development matters		Objective 1.A: Educate  Strategy 1.A.1: Disseminate information regarding conservation and sustainable development issues to landowners, local governments, the general public, and other appropriate groups						
			Host up to four educational forums each year, presenting timely information regarding conservation and/or sustainable development, reaching 350 attendees annually	2022-2025			Staff and Committee	Community Education Committee
			Communicate directly with landowners about land use tools (conservation easements, transferable development rights (TDR), Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA), zoning, etc.)	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
			Partner with corporations and other organizations on events and causes to raise awareness of issues related to the Conservancy's mission	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Community Education Committee
			Present information via print, digital, social media, partnerships, group presentations, events, and one-on-one conversations	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Board Members	
			Research history and design route for the 2021 Greenprint Ramble	2022			Staff and Committee	Greenprint Ramble Committee
			Increase the diversity of the Junior Conservancy and hire staff to manage the program; and participate in other programs in order to provide conservation information to Morgan County's youth.	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Junior Conservancy Committee
			Write CUVA letter annually to encourage retention of 60% of land in CUVA	Annually 2021-2025			Staff	
			Advocate for a TDR program in the County	2021			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
		Objective 1.B: Advocate  Strategy 1.B.1: Advocate for conservation, historic preservation, and sustainable development to local, state, and federal decision-makers	Act as a Land Trust Alliance (LTA) Advocacy Ambassador and participate in "Conservation Days" at the Capitol.	Annually 2021-2025			Staff	
			Host legislators annually in Morgan County at a conservation/preservation project	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Board Members	
		Objective 1.C: Provide Technical Assistance  Strategy 1.C.1: Assist landowners in meeting their individual conservation/preservation goals						

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION/ITEM	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	2021 STATUS	2021 PROGRESS NOTES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMMITTEE
			Assist Morgan County landowners in executing conservation easements and in listing their properties on the National Register of Historic Places and/or on the Centennial Farm Register	Annually 2021-2025			Staff	
			Provide guidance to landowners in their restoration of significant historic structures	Upon request, time permitting			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
		Strategy 1.C.2: Act as a resource to City and County planning departments and local governments						
			Assist in drafting ordinances, writing grants, and with other government projects related to conservation and sustainable development	Upon request, Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Development Review Committee
GOAL 2: Protect community assets.								
	Objective 2.A: Protect Natural, Agricultural, and Historic Resources							
		Strategy 2.A.1: Identify and evaluate resources worthy of protection						
			Update Conservancy's Conservation Easement Mapping and Prioritization (CEMAP)	2021			Staff and Board Members	
			Monitor conservation easement activity, CUVA renewals and total acreage. Greenprint resources, and number of 250+ acre parcels	Annually 2021-2025			Staff	
		Strategy 2.A.2: Solicit conservation easements from landowners of priority lands						
			Assist landowners with conservation easements in order to protect a total of 7,500 acres by 2025	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
		Strategy 2.A.3: Use the Endangered Properties Revolving Fund to protect historic structures and openspace.						
			Rehabilitate the Cottonseed House (137 S. First St), protect 165 acres of farm and forest near High Shoals with a conservation easement, protect 18 acres of greenspace along Horse Branch Trail through a IDR project	2021			Staff and Committee	Endangered Properties Revolving Fund Committee
			Protect 10 properties by 2025	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Endangered Properties Revolving Fund
Objective 2.B: Affect Land Use								
		Strategy 2.B.1: Assess proposed developments and render an opinion through the Development Review Committee						
			Review developments proposed to the City and County Planning Commissions to assess quality of design, consistency with the Greenprint and Comprehensive Plan, and appropriateness to the area, as they relate to the Conservancy mission; and report to the responsible planning commission and/or city council/board of commissioners	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Development Review Committee
		2.B.2: Assist the County in preparing ordinances and development regulations that promote conservation and sustainable development						



GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	2021 STATUS	2021 PROGRESS NOTES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMMITTEE
			Assist County with subdivision moratorium	2021			Staff and Committee	Development Review Committee
GOAL 3: Keep farmers farming by supporting local farmers								
		Objective 3.A: Keep Farmers Farming						
		Strategy 3.A.1: Keep farmer's farming by keeping working lands in working hands						
			Partner with the Conservation Fund on the Working Farms Fund to protect 3 farms and match 3 farmers by 2025	Annually 2021-2025				
		Strategy 3.A.2: innovate and support new ways farmers can connect directly to consumers						
			Support the local school system's farm to school program	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Working Farms Fund Committee
			Reimagine FARMeander	2023			Staff and Committee	Working Farms Fund Committee
		Strategy 3.A.3: Partner with Farm Bureau and Cattlemen's Association to promote permanent protection of prime farmland through donation or purchase of conservation easements						
			Attend Farm Bureau meeting to present information about conservation easements and other farm related conservation programs	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
GOAL 4: Grow organizational capacity								
		Objective 3.B: Fund conservation and preservation in the long term						
		Strategy 3.B.1: Encourage use of Special Purpose Local Option Sales Tax (SPLOST) funds (City and County) for conservation and preservation						
			Meet with County Manager and BOC to encourage inclusion of a line item of \$250,000 on the 2022 SPLOST for farmland preservation and/or historic preservation of important county resources	2021-2022			Staff and Qualified Board Members	
		Strategy 3.B.2: Explore General Obligation Bonds for conservation and preservation projects						
			Facilitate meeting between Trust for Public Land's Conservation Finance team and Morgan County's BOC and Manager	2023			Staff	
		Objective 3.B: Fund and Manage the Organization						
		Strategy 3.C.1: Solicit donations from individuals, foundations, and corporations to fund the mission						

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	STRATEGY	ACTION ITEM	IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE	2021 STATUS	2021 PROGRESS NOTES	RESPONSIBLE PARTY	COMMITTEE
			Grow membership base to 3-4% of the county population by the end of 2025	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Fundraising and Membership Committee
			Apply for grants from foundations and corporations to fund programs and operations	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Fundraising and Membership Committee
			Creatively market 25th Anniversary (January 13, 2025) to reach an expanded audience and grow membership	2024			Staff and Board Members and Volunteers	
		Strategy 3.C.2: Host Derby Day annually						
			Host Derby Day annually to raise \$30,000	2022-2025			Staff and Committee	Derby Day Committee
		Strategy 3.C.4: Generate revenue by providing services for a fee						
			Provide technical assistance for a fee to governments, individuals, and non-profit organizations	Annually 2021-2025			Staff	
		Strategy 3.C.5: Develop leadership through recruiting active board members, creating functioning committees, and hiring and retaining qualified staff and volunteers						
			Recruit an ethnically diverse group of board members with expertise in real estate, agriculture, forestry, historic preservation, event planning, organizational management, etc. for the four-year board terms rotating annually	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Board Development Committee
			Recruit and retain qualified staff and hire a second full-time employee by year end 2022	Annually 2021-2025			Staff and Committee	Executive Committee
			Recruit, train, and retain volunteers to assist with events and administrative duties	2022-2025			Staff and Committees	Event Committees
		Strategy 3.C.6: Continue Managing for Excellence.						
			Update Policies and procedures for 2021-2025	2021			Staff and Board Members	
			Renew adoption of Land Trust Alliance's Standards & Practices	2021			Board Members	



## COMMUNICATING THE PLAN

The Conservancy will communicate this plan to those inside and outside the organization through multiple formats appropriate for each audience – email/social media, public announcements, individual meetings, brief brochures, and detailed action plans.

## REVIEW AND AMENDMENT

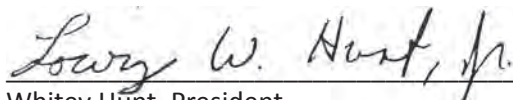
The Conservancy Board of Directors and Staff will review the Annual Implementation Plan quarterly at board meetings in the context of any changes in environment or trends. Once annually, the Conservancy may hold a day-long strategy session to familiarize new board members with the strategic direction and to include stakeholders in determining strategy. If needed, the Annual Work Plan and Strategic Plan may be amended. Any significant changes in strategic direction should be accompanied by a full strategic planning process.

## CONCLUSION

The Madison-Morgan Conservancy has experienced moderate, steady growth for over twenty years and has made significant contributions to the community. Its mission is valued by the public, which was illustrated in survey respondents' comments; one anonymous respondent noted: "the mission of the Conservancy is essential to the well-being of Morgan County." Another noted: "The Conservancy plays a unique role in protecting Morgan County and offers an innovative and progressive approach." The organization's crucial position in the community provides services that the local, state, and federal governments and private industry do not provide but that landowners still find valuable.

With a growing membership, increased development pressure, three new robust programs (EPRF, WFF, JC), a working board, and committed staff, the Conservancy is poised to move to the next level. In that next level, the organization will see more strategic land protection, a more vigorous growth in membership, and a more robust culture of conservation in the public. The Conservancy will continue its educational programs, advocacy, and technical assistance, because it believes education is the foundation of good land use decisions. Through secured public funding and a private revolving fund, it will protect resources and affect land use to further the sustainable development of Morgan County.

The Conservancy Board voted to adopt this 2021-2025 Strategic Plan on January 4, 2021.



Whitey Hunt, President

1/4/2021  
Date



### The Athenian Oath

*To transmit this place not only better,  
but more beautiful, than it was transmitted to us*

### Afterglow

By Rose Koralewsky

*The sun has set behind the hills,  
But limpid skies its radiance show;  
The heavens bloom like one vast rose -  
It is the afterglow.*

*Dear Lord, when my life's sun has set,  
And I am gone, as all must go,  
Grant that I too may leave behind A lovely afterglow.*



**MADISON-MORGAN  
CONSERVANCY**

PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, AND FRONT  
PORCHES FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

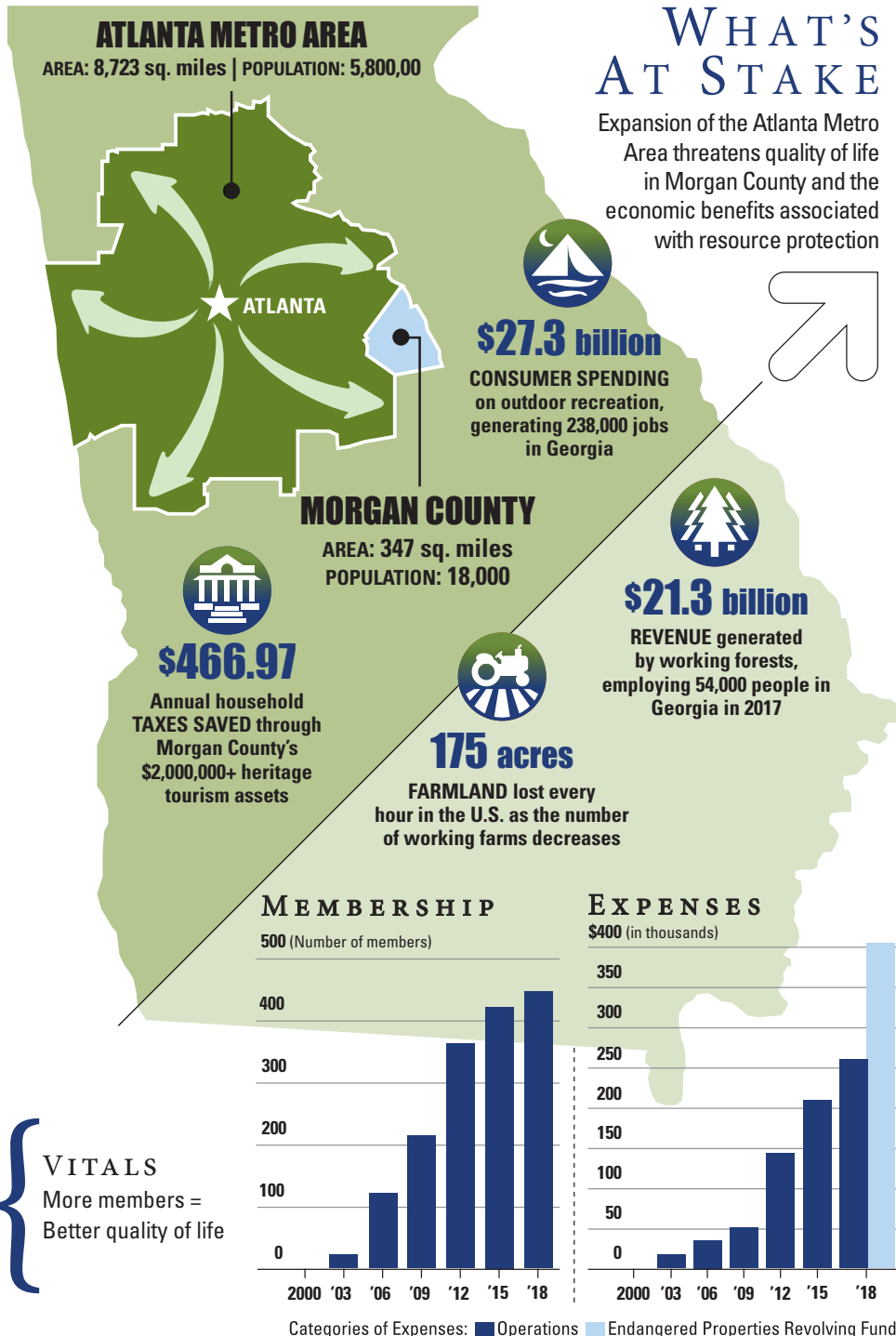


**MADISON-MORGAN  
CONSERVANCY**

Recipient of the  
2019 Governor's Award for the Arts & Humanities

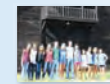
OUR FIRST TWENTY YEARS

## PROTECTING FARMS, FORESTS, and FRONT PORCHES for FUTURE GENERATIONS



### Impact since 2000

#### EDUCATION & ADVOCACY



**7,300 PEOPLE** reached through 66 educational forums

**450** Dues-paying MEMBERS

#### RESOURCE PROTECTION

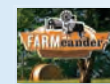


**4,500 ACRES** of wildlife habitat, farmland, and historic landscapes that are

forever protected by conservation easements donated by private landowners

**5 HISTORIC ASSETS** protected and/or rehabilitated, including the Foster-Thomason-Miller House (first Endangered Properties Revolving Fund project), Sugar Creek Church, and Wallace Grove School

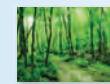
#### FARM TO MARKET ALLIANCE



**1st FARM TRAIL** in Georgia, FARMeander, developed and published for five years

**3,100 STUDENTS** in the Morgan County Charter School System have access to local food through the Farm-to-School Program

#### TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE



**33 ACRES OF GREENSPACE**

forever protected by transferring development rights from natural areas into developing areas through Madison's newly created TDR program

**4 HISTORIC PROPERTIES** listed on the National Register of Historic Places or on the Centennial Farm Register