

2026 FORESTS IN CITIES WORKSHOP PRELIMINARY AGENDA

Piedmont Park | Atlanta, Georgia

An agenda with final times and speakers confirmed will be published in early March.

Sunday, March 29th

Visitors arrive and check in at The Starling Atlanta Midtown (check in is 4 PM)

Afternoon: 12 PM - 5 PM

Paddling on the South River and hiking in Panola Mountain State Park.

Optional Field Experience: more details will be sent upon workshop registration.

Evening: 6 PM - 8 PM

Welcome Happy Hour

Food and drinks will be served in The Starling Atlanta Midtown.



Monday, March 30th

Breakfast and lunch will be provided. All sessions will take place at the Magnolia House in Piedmont Park.

Morning: 9 AM - 12 AM

Welcome and Land Acknowledgement

Leadership from the Natural Areas Conservancy and the City of Atlanta will provide remarks.

State of the Forests in Cities Network

This introductory session will provide context about urban forested natural areas and the Forests in Cities Network. Updates about network initiatives and research including the Urban Forested Natural Areas Roadmaps, the Mapping Urban Nature project and our accomplishments in 2025 will be provided.

City in a Forest: How the City of Atlanta is Protecting and Managing Forested Natural Areas

Staff from several government agencies will present the breadth of natural area management in Atlanta. Atlanta will discuss their national leadership on natural areas management, including their new natural resources program, protection strategy including policy and acquisition, and efforts to increase public access to forests.

Networking Activity: Gathering Feedback to Guide Future Research, Resources and Initiatives

This dynamic activity will allow attendees to network while also providing feedback that will be used to inform the work of the network.

Afternoon: 12 PM - 4:00 PM

Mapping Urban Forested Natural Areas

This interactive session will include an introduction to the methods of mapping urban forested natural areas. This will be followed by an activity to gather training data and feedback on preliminary maps for urban forested natural areas.

Setting Priorities: Creating Management Plans and Strategic Plans that Meet Your Goals for Natural Area Care

Natural area plans vary in terms of scale, goals, and audience. During this session, cities with a variety of planning strategies will highlight how they create plans to forward their management goals.

Walking in the Woods: Increasing Public Access and Awareness of Urban Forested Natural Areas

How do you determine if city residents have access, and how they use, forested natural areas? How do you include natural areas in data about parkland quality? This session will explore strategies that engage communities, reduce barriers to access and avoid conflicting uses of public space.

Innovations in Forest Management: New Technologies, Strategies, and Trends

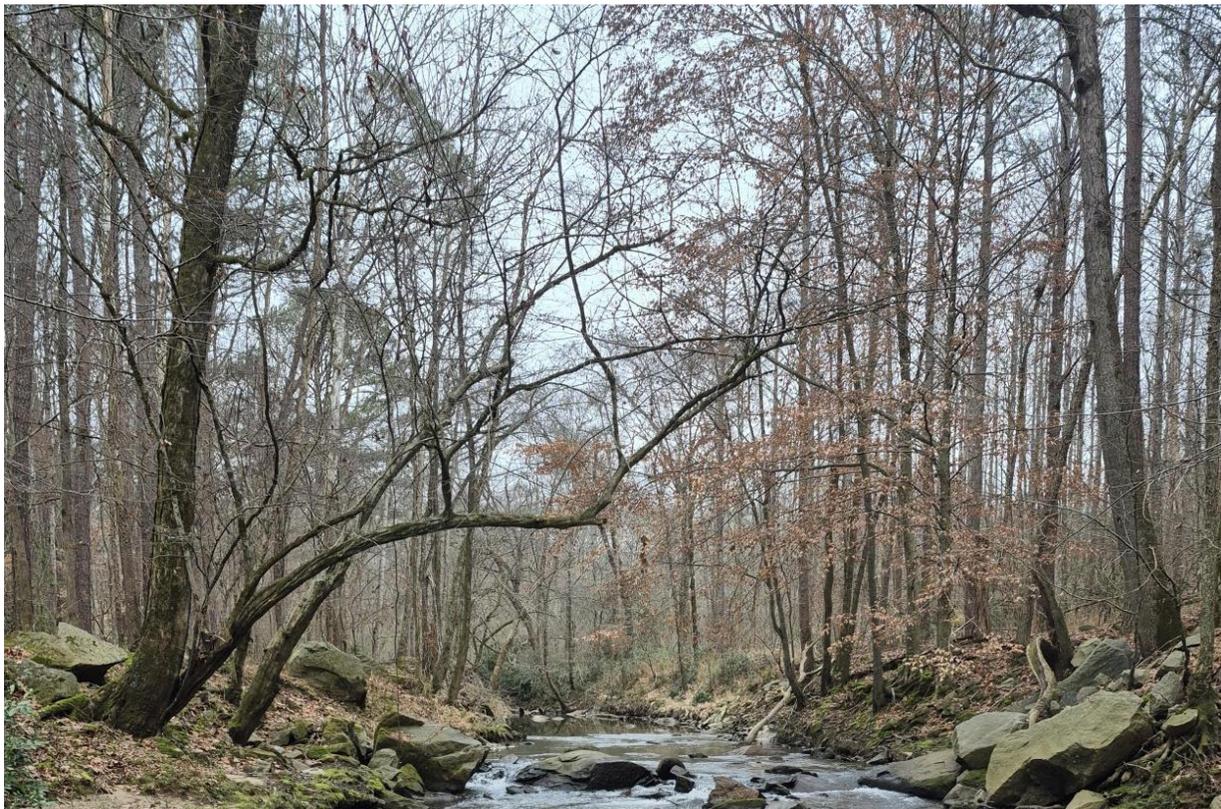
Through a series of lightning round presentations, this session will provide updates in the field and new ideas for upping your restoration game. Do you have a new project, tool or dataset to share? Participants will be invited to share their own innovations for others to learn from.

Evening: 4:30 PM - 7:00 PM

FORESTS IN CITIES RECEPTION

Greystone House, Piedmont Park (~5 minute walk from Magnolia House)

Food and drinks will be served.



Tuesday, March 31st

Breakfast and lunch will be provided. All sessions will take place at, and all field tours will leave from, the Magnolia House in Piedmont Park.

Morning: 9 AM - 12:30 PM

Field Tours

Option 1: Lake Charlotte Nature Preserve

Led by the Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, we will discuss land acquisition strategy and funding, development in natural areas, protecting archaeological sites, trail mapping and carbon credits.

Option 2: Herbert Greene Nature Preserve

Led by the Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation and the Atlanta Department of Watershed Management, we will explore this co-managed site where agencies collaborate on assessment, species monitoring and funding. This tour will discuss the potential restoration of pine-oak woodland, trail and public access issues, and types of deed restrictions.

Afternoon: 12:30 PM - 4 PM

New City Roundtable

This panel will allow practitioners from cities that joined the network in 2024 and 2025 a chance to introduce themselves and talk about their case studies. Learn about the breadth of natural area care in a variety of urban areas.

Promoting Forested Natural Areas: Using Data to Create National Awareness of Forested Natural Areas

During this interactive workshop, increasing awareness about forested natural areas on the national scale will be explored. As we gather more data about the location, extent and benefits of forested natural areas, how can we use this data with a unified approach? Participants will have the opportunity to contribute to conceptualizing a future national awareness campaign.

Wednesday, April 1st

Visitors check out of The Starling Atlanta Midtown (check out is 11 AM)

Early Morning: 6 AM - 10 AM

Sunrise Hike at Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area

Optional Field Experience: More details will be sent upon registration.

