



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Combating Pollution with Bioswales**

Georgia DOT and The Ray install 10 acres of native grasses and pollinator plants; decrease pollution

**(Atlanta, GA - March 27, 2017)** -- Last week, The Ray and the Georgia Department of Transportation (GDOT) installed five to ten acres of native grasses and pollinator plant seeds in the median and northbound lane gore area of Exit 6 on I-85 near LaGrange. These areas, known as bioswales, are shallow drainage ditches filled with vegetation to slow water movements and capture particulate pollutants, heavy metals, rubber and oil during rainstorms.

The Ray's partnership with GDOT and their landscape engineers, along with local ecologists allowed for the precise determination of the optimal number, size and placement of bioswales needed on the 18-mile stretch of I-85 that is home to The Ray.

"Creating the highway of the future is going to require going back to nature," said Harriet Langford, President of The Ray, "not just high tech, but nature tech. The best solution is often one that nature has already provided."

Because there are different installation methods, The Ray and the University of Georgia will be monitoring the progress of this project to compare the results to other bioswale sites and inform future bioswale installations around the state.

Dr. Gary Hawkins, Water Resource Management and Policy Specialist and Assistant Professor at the University of Georgia explains, "Using the native grasses in the bioswales along with other riparian grasses with deep roots will over time increase infiltration in the medians, trap more pollutants, and reduce runoff. This increased infiltration along with reduced runoff will improve the quality of water entering the creeks, improve water quality in Lone Cane Creek and the Chattahoochee River as well."

Additionally, these bioswales have the added benefit of improving the driving experience by beautifying the roadway with plant species native to Georgia. "In the past, highway beautification has been strictly visual," said GDOT landscape architect Chris DeGrace, "This project on The Ray is a new aesthetic for highway beauty. Native grasses in a meadow and in a bioswales have beauty and they also have an important function."

### **About The Ray**

The Ray is a proving ground for the evolving ideas and technologies that will transform the transportation infrastructure of the future, beginning with the corridor of road that is named in memory of Ray C. Anderson (1934-2011), a Georgia native who became a captain of industry and was recognized as a leader in green business when he challenged his company, Interface, Inc., to pursue zero environmental

footprint. Chaired by Ray's daughter Harriet Langford, The Ray is an epiphany of the Ray C. Anderson Foundation. Learn more at [www.TheRay.org](http://www.TheRay.org).

**About the Georgia Department of Transportation (Georgia DOT)**

Georgia Department of Transportation plans, constructs and maintains Georgia's state and federal highways. We're involved in bridge, waterway, public transit, rail, general aviation, bike and pedestrian programs. And we help local governments maintain their roads. Our transportation network connects our interstates, state highways, county roads and city streets. Georgia DOT is committed to providing a safe, seamless and sustainable transportation system that supports Georgia's economy and is sensitive to its citizens and its environment. Learn more at [www.dot.ga.gov](http://www.dot.ga.gov).

**About the University of Georgia Department of Crop and Soil Sciences**

The Department of Crop and Soil Sciences is a multifunctional, multidisciplinary department committed to excelling as an authority in the crop, soil and environmental sciences. The department supports research, teaching and UGA Cooperative Extension programs at the Athens, Griffin and Tifton campuses. As a respected provider of both leading-edge technology and science-based knowledge, they serve a clientele that includes students, farmers, agribusinesses, consumers, nonprofits and governmental agencies.