



**Public Relations/Media Inquiries:**

Robbie Rokovitz  
[Robbie.Rokovitz@chatthillsga.us](mailto:Robbie.Rokovitz@chatthillsga.us)  
6505 Rico Rd.  
Chattahoochee Hills, GA 30268

6505 Rico Road, Chattahoochee Hills, Georgia 30268

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

MAYOR

Tom Reed

CITY COUNCIL

James Stephens

Richard Schmidt

Claire Williams

Alan Merrill

Don Hayes

CITY MANAGER

Robert T. Rokovitz

[www.chatthillsga.us](http://www.chatthillsga.us)

(770) 463-8881

Fax (770) 463-8550

**Chattahoochee Hills Attends Statewide Course on Balancing Nature and Commerce in Rural Communities and Landscapes**

*Representatives develop action plan to improve small-town economic competitiveness by capitalizing on the state's natural and cultural assets*

**Chattahoochee Hills, GA (November 7, 2018)** – A team from Chattahoochee Hills participated in a three-day course designed especially for Georgia's small communities seeking to differentiate their communities based upon their natural and cultural assets. Working with national and regional experts on sustainable tourism, economic development, natural and cultural resources, transportation and branding, the 8-person team crafted a new vision that focuses on the unique assets that make Chattahoochee Hills a more appealing place to live, work and recreate. This vision will be revealed to the City Council on Thursday, November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018.

This first statewide course in Georgia was hosted by the City of Porterdale, Georgia at its historic Mill at Yellow River. The Conservation Fund designed and delivered the program, attracting teams from across Georgia. Nine communities were selected to participate in the program. Each formed a diverse team that included business and tourism representatives, elected officials, civic leaders, public land managers and engaged citizens, and crafted an action plan to implement within their community. Those representing Chattahoochee Hills were Parks Commission Chair Diana Wilson, Councilmembers Claire Williams and Alan Merrill, Planning Commission members Patrick Johnson and Jett Hattaway, Allison Duncan (Atlanta Regional Commission), City Planner Mike Morton, and City Manager Robbie Rokovitz.

The city of Porterdale provided the vision for holding the course, inspired by the city's participation in the 2017 national Balancing Nature and Commerce workshop. In partnership with The Conservation Fund, the program was funded through the generosity of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta with additional contributions from Carter and Sloope, Inc., and the support of state partners, including the Georgia Department of Community Affairs, Georgia Department of Economic Development and Georgia Municipal Association.

“The partnership with Chattahoochee Hills was an ideal candidate for this program due to their strong ties throughout the community and their passion for protecting and enhancing the area's natural and cultural resources,” said Katie Allen, Director of The Conservation Fund's Conservation Leadership Network. “It's our goal to help communities foster valuable partnerships, reinforce development plans that balance environmental and economic goals and provide technical assistance to enable places like Chattahoochee Hills to thrive.”

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