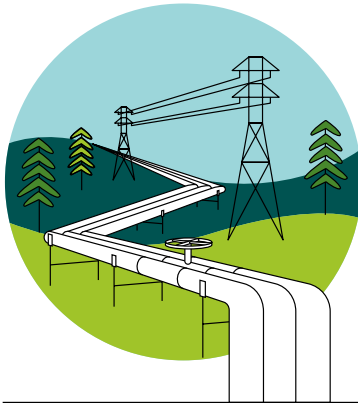




Mitigation Hierarchy Fact Sheet

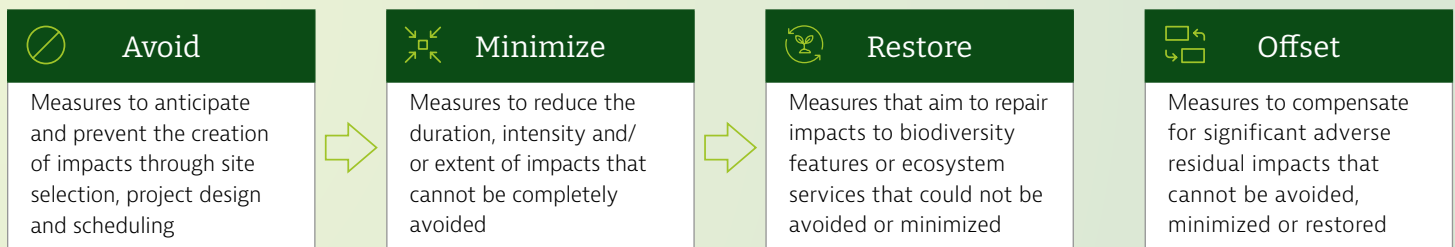
Southern Company¹ and its subsidiaries are proud to support the communities we serve and are committed to protecting and conserving our environment. We recognize the importance of utilizing natural resources wisely to meet our customers' needs and protecting those resources for future generations.



Mitigation Hierarchy Framework

We support nine million customers nationwide with electric utilities in three states and natural gas distribution utilities in four, and provide wholesale energy, customized distributed energy solutions and fiber optics and wireless communications across the country. Our business operations require land for generation, transmission and distribution, and pipeline infrastructure. Our generating facilities also require water, which creates business needs and dependencies for land and water.

We apply the mitigation hierarchy framework to minimize these impacts as part of our environmental compliance program, in addition to adhering to environmental laws and regulations. The steps in the mitigation hierarchy prioritize avoidance and minimization of impacts, followed by restoration and offset actions. In the planning phase of a new project, we identify environmental areas that may be most sensitive to impacts and which should be avoided. Once the location for a project is established, we take actions to minimize impacts on biodiversity through the lifespan of the project. Certain projects may require further action to restore biodiversity or offset impacts.



Every project is unique, requiring different actions across the phases of a project's lifespan. Below are several examples of how we employ the mitigation hierarchy.

Examples of Implementation Across Phases of a Project

Site Selection	→ Consideration of wetlands and gopher tortoise burrows in siting of transmission structures → Protection of bat maternity roosts in linear and facility siting
Project Design	→ Avoidance of rare plants on rights-of-way (ROW) → Conduct species surveys and wetland delineations to minimize our project footprint
Scheduling	→ Temporary avoidance of sensitive life-cycle seasons (e.g., avoiding tree clearing near protected bat maternity roosts during pup season; transmission ROW mowing and herbicide treatment at times to benefit protected plants; and avoiding activities during lek, eagle nesting, and fox denning seasons)
Physical Control	→ Implementation of bird-flight diverters and nesting deterrents on certain powerlines → Curtailment of generation at certain wind facilities to minimize impacts to eagles and bats → During construction, utilization of stormwater best management practices such as silt fencing, mulch berms, erosion control mats, and cover vegetation → When feasible, use of horizontal directional drilling to further avoid and minimize impacts



Mitigation Hierarchy Fact Sheet

Examples of Implementation Across Phases of a Project (continued)

Operational Controls	→ Avian protection plan (APP) training for employees → Signage to ROW Special Management Areas, as well as to avoid sensitive areas such as wetlands and maternity roosts
Abatement Controls	→ Light installation adjustments, including minimization, directing lights downward, or activation of lights using motion sensors at many facilities, including sea turtle-friendly beachfront lighting → During construction, utilization of best management practices such as dust control and spill prevention plans to help reduce pollutants
Restoration/Biodiversity Offsets	→ Development of wetland and species mitigation banks, as well as conservation easements, to restore and offset impacts for species like the Cherokee darter, Indiana bat, Joshua tree, and marbled murrelet → Contribution to the restoration of plants through reseeding and sometimes relocation

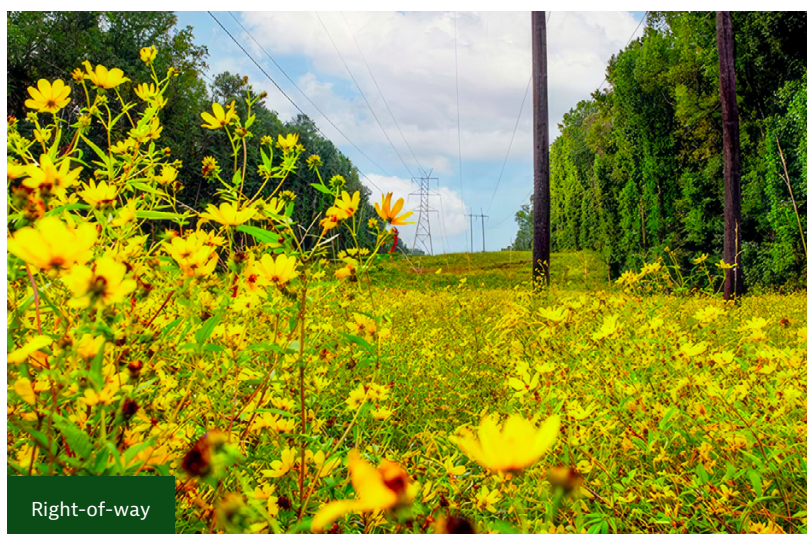
Mitigation Hierarchy Across the Service Territory

In addition to the steps taken above to implement the mitigation hierarchy, we also have broad-reaching plans, strategies and partnerships to minimize impacts on biodiversity.

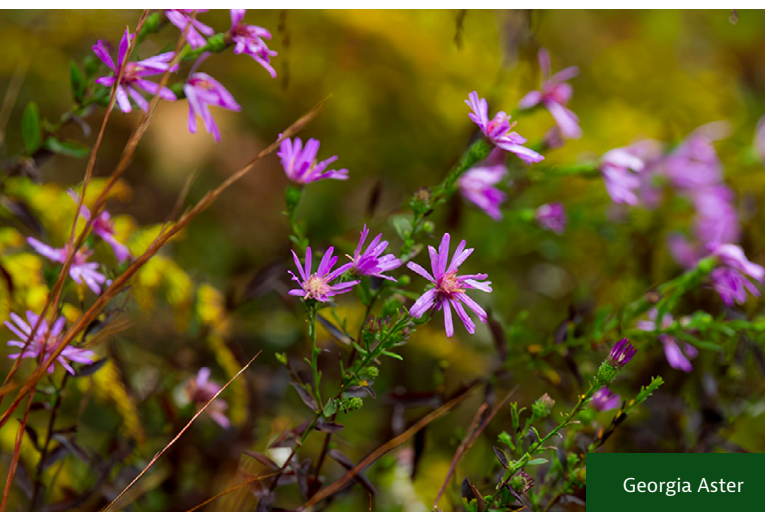
Management of Rights-of-Way

On our transmission ROW, our traditional electric operating companies practice integrated vegetation management, a process that balances the use of mowing, hand-cutting, and carefully targeted chemical treatments to establish and maintain a vegetative cover type that is compatible with safe and reliable power delivery. The approach encourages growth of low-growing native meadow species, which contributes to the surrounding ecosystem and reduces resources needed for management.

“We manage over 100,000 acres of ROW through programs to promote native vegetation, some of which use specially created seed mixes which provide more plants for pollinators.”



Right-of-way



Georgia Aster

In Georgia, for example, more than 50 ROW sites are designated as Special Management Areas to conserve about 30 rare plant species and natural communities. Georgia Power works closely with state, federal, and private partners through the framework of the Georgia Plant Conservation Alliance to develop vegetation management strategies to maintain and enhance these plant communities while still helping to ensure the safe and reliable delivery of electricity. Examples include federally listed species such as Coosa Barbara's Buttons (*Marshallia mohrii*), Hairy Rattleweed (*Baptisia arachnifera*), Smooth Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea laevigata*), Georgia Rockcress (*Arabis georgiana*), and Harperella (*Ptilimnium nodosum*). Additionally, a multi-partner Candidate Conservation Agreement for Georgia Aster (*Symphyotrichum georgianum*) has helped preclude the need to list this species.



Mitigation Hierarchy Fact Sheet



Osprey

Species Protection Plans

Several federally-listed, and many state-listed, threatened or endangered species inhabit the land in our territory, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, gopher tortoise and bald eagle. Our foresters and other environmental specialists follow federal and state laws and guidelines to protect these species and their habitats, and help states survey plant and animal species. Additionally, our subsidiaries maintain protection plans for wildlife such as birds and bats, and partnership agreements for additional species or geographic areas. These include Avian Protection Plans (APPs), Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy (BBCS) plans, and Conservation Benefit Agreements (CBAs).



Big Brown Bat

Avian Protection Plans

Each of our electric operating companies maintains an APP, a program to reduce risks resulting from avian interactions with electric utility facilities.

Bird and Bat Conservation Strategy

BBCS plans provide guidance throughout the life of a project, from planning through decommissioning, for the conservation of birds and bats. All owned wind facilities have either an APP or a BBCS to reduce wildlife risk.



Gopher Tortoise

Conservation Benefit Agreement

CBAs create official, voluntary agreements to support conservation of species that are currently, or may become, listed under the Endangered Species Act. CBAs now combine Candidate Conservation Agreements (CCA) and Safe Harbor Agreements (SHA) to create new, streamlined agreements.

Alabama Power and Georgia Power are part of a CCA for the gopher tortoise, and have separate SHAs for the red-cockaded woodpecker. Additionally, we are part of a multi-species CCA for the Altamaha River Basin in Georgia and have applied to become part of the Monarch CCAA, a CCA with Assurances.

Research Partnerships

Southern Company is researching and developing technologies to better manage our resources while reducing the environmental impacts of our business. We partner with such organizations as the EPRI and the Renewable Energy Wildlife Institute (REWI). For example, Southern Power, a Southern Company subsidiary, is a founding partner of the Renewable Energy Wildlife Research Fund housed in REWI. The Fund is an avenue for wind industry and conservation partners to pool resources to develop solutions to wildlife challenges through cutting-edge research.

[Learn More](#)

Footnotes

¹ In this fact sheet, the terms "we", "us" and "our" all refer to Southern Company. Southern Company is a holding company that conducts its business through its subsidiaries. Accordingly, unless the context otherwise requires, references in this document to Southern Company's operations, such as mitigation hierarchy actions, integrated vegetation management, and species protection plans, refer to those operations conducted through its subsidiaries.

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