An Evaluation of Georgia's Conservation Use Valuation Assessment Program

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Abstract: The 10th anniversary of implementation of the Conservation Use Valuation Assessment (CUVA) in Georgia occurred in 2002. This milestone prompted us to initiate an evaluation of the program through a user response survey. The program has been extremely well-received by landowners with more than 60,000 covenants representing greater than 5 million acres enrolled in the program. This level of interest notwithstanding, there has never been an assessment of users’ satisfaction with the program. Our study’s primary aim was to determine covenant holders’ overall satisfaction with the CUVA, including future expectations, and land management decisions initiated since their enrollment. Covenant holder information was obtained from 26 county tax assessor’s offices and a total of 1320 surveys were mailed to a stratified random sample of covenant holders throughout the state. A response rate of 61% was attained with a usable response rate of 54%. From this data, the clearest finding is that covenant holders are generally quite happy to receive this tax-reduction and that it is a program they like. Respondents did list a number of concerns about the program’s administration but most focused on difficulties in entering the program, rather than its usefulness.

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