



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ossabaw Island's Historic Torrey West House to be Rehabilitated State of Georgia to begin project in FY 2024-2025

The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) is pleased to announce that **the State of Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) 2024-2025 budget includes full funding for the rehabilitation of the Torrey West House, the Little Torrey House, and the Garage/Studio**, located on the Torrey West Estate on Ossabaw Island in Chatham County, Georgia on the Atlantic coast.

"The Ossabaw Island Foundation is over the moon that the rehabilitation of the Torrey West House, the Little Torrey House and the Torrey Garage is funded in the next state budget," said Elizabeth DuBose, Executive Director. "We're grateful to Governor Kemp for his inclusion of this project in his proposed budget that was approved by the General Assembly during the 2024 session."

The three buildings on the 23-acre Torrey West Estate, circa 1926 and 1950, were included in the sale of Ossabaw Island by the Torrey-West family to the State of Georgia in 1978. The Torrey West Estate was managed by Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West in a life estate tenancy until her death in 2021, when management of the Torrey West Estate reverted to the State of Georgia and the Ossabaw Island Foundation. The iconic Spanish Revival 20,000 square foot Torrey West House and its two outbuildings are contributing structures in the Ossabaw Island Historic District listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The DNR Engineering and Construction Division will lead the project. On-island work will begin in late fall 2024 and is projected to take at least two years. TOIF's Elizabeth DuBose is an advisor on this state "construction" project and has worked closely with DNR since last year in the planning of this hoped-for outcome.

TOIF will remove and store all of the furniture and household objects acquired over the years from the Torrey-West family. Furnishing the rehabilitated buildings will be TOIF's responsibility, and will include the original Torrey-West family items.

After the rehabilitation is complete, TOIF will manage the access and use of these buildings in accordance with the TOIF and State of Georgia Use Agreement that outlines TOIF's roles and responsibilities on Ossabaw Island.

TOIF will use the rehabilitated buildings to provide expanded housing options, meeting space, and workspace for groups who travel to Ossabaw for natural, scientific, and cultural study, research, and education, and environmentally sound preservation, conservation, and management of the Island's ecosystem. These required uses are specified in the Heritage Preserve designation for Ossabaw Island; they were implemented at the insistence of Eleanor "Sandy" Torrey West and her family as conditions of the sale of Ossabaw Island to the state in 1978.

Serendipitously, it was 100 years ago (in 1924) that the Torrey family purchased Ossabaw Island and began construction of the Torrey-West House.

"This is an exciting time for Ossabaw Island and for the foundation as we launch into this important partnership with the Department of Natural Resources," said Leigh Goff, Chair of the Ossabaw Island Foundation Board of Trustees. "How fitting that this new chapter begins 100 years after the Torrey family purchased Ossabaw."

ABOUT OSSABAW ISLAND: Ossabaw Island is a 26,000-acre undeveloped barrier island on the Atlantic Ocean, owned by the State of Georgia and located in Chatham County. Georgia's first Heritage Preserve, accessible only by boat, is undeveloped and set aside by an Executive Order for natural, scientific and cultural study, research and education; and for environmentally sound preservation, conservation and management of the island's ecosystem.

ABOUT THE OSSABAW ISLAND FOUNDATION: The Ossabaw Island Foundation (TOIF) is a non-profit 501 (c)3. Through a partnership with the State of Georgia, TOIF inspires, promotes, and manages exceptional educational, cultural, and scientific programs that are designed to maximize the experience of Ossabaw Island, while minimizing the impact on the island's resources. For more information visit ossabawisland.org.

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