

## House Resolution 299

By: Representatives Drenner of the 85<sup>th</sup> and Henson of the 86<sup>th</sup>

## A RESOLUTION

1 Commending Friendship Forest; and for other purposes.

2 WHEREAS, Friendship Forest was founded in 2003 by a group of volunteers calling  
3 themselves the Friends of Friendship Forest, and since that time the property has been  
4 transformed from a little-used park, with constant criminal activity, into a wildlife sanctuary  
5 that has been a major improvement for an area that is mostly flood plain; and

6 WHEREAS, Friendship Forest is a green space owned by the City of Clarkston and used to  
7 complement the recreational area Milam Park, and although these two properties have  
8 different purposes, Milam Park is purposed for active human recreational use, in contrast to  
9 Friendship Forest, which is designated for more passive human use and quiet enjoyment; and

10 WHEREAS, it is intended for the quiet enjoyment of nature and to allow people to learn  
11 about the many charms and important educational opportunities a natural habitat has to offer;  
12 and

13 WHEREAS, for its size, Friendship Forest is a very diverse ecosystem, incorporating both  
14 mixed hardwood and pine forest, a flood plain, as well as a riparian corridor formed by the  
15 South Fork of Peachtree Creek, offering citizens a wonderful sampling of nature; and

16 WHEREAS, since it became a wildlife sanctuary, more than 70 species of birds, including  
17 wild turkeys, have been sighted and documented in Friendship Forest, garnering official  
18 recognition as a wildlife sanctuary by the Audubon Society not long after its creation; and

19 WHEREAS, in addition to the various bird species in the forest, other wildlife including  
20 white-tailed deer, beavers, river otters, and one gray fox as well as other species have been  
21 sited on the property, and it is expected that the wildlife population will increase in both  
22 number and diversity as the forest matures and returns to its natural state; and

23 WHEREAS, the opportunity to have a quiet, serene space to relax and enjoy nature is  
24 especially important for people living in an urban area, and for these people there are fewer  
25 opportunities to observe nature and learn the value of a diverse ecosystem like Friendship  
26 Forest and its importance in the modern world; and

27 WHEREAS, the City of Clarkston recognizes that it is critical for such areas to be set aside,  
28 protected, and supported, and has received grants from the DeKalb County Community  
29 Development Office for assistance in removing hard surfaces and from the Georgia Soil and  
30 Water Commission for the purchase of native fruit and berry-producing trees; and

31 WHEREAS, groups like Friends of Friendship Forest, Vista, the Boy Scouts of America, and  
32 Rivers Alive have sponsored workdays in Friendship Forest, and their efforts have helped  
33 restore Friendship Forest to a healthier, more natural state, removing nonnative, invasive  
34 species of plants.

35 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES that  
36 the members of this body commend Friendship Forest for the amenities it provides to the  
37 community.

38 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Clerk of the House of Representatives is authorized  
39 and directed to make appropriate copies of this resolution available for distribution to the  
40 City of Clarkston and Friends of Friendship Forest.