



STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

News From the Georgia State Parks, Recreation

and Historic Sites Interpretive Unit

Spring 2018



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**PRHS Interpretive
Newsletter
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Marketing Moment

Social media is one of the best ways you can bring visitors to your programs. Sites are strongly encouraged to have a Facebook page and Instagram account. Some tips:

Always include a photo (good) or video (better), but not a flyer. Flyers are hard to read, especially on a Smartphone. Keep photo galleries to 10 or fewer images.

Create Facebook events for your best programs, and share them often before the event date. Don't simply "create it and forget it."

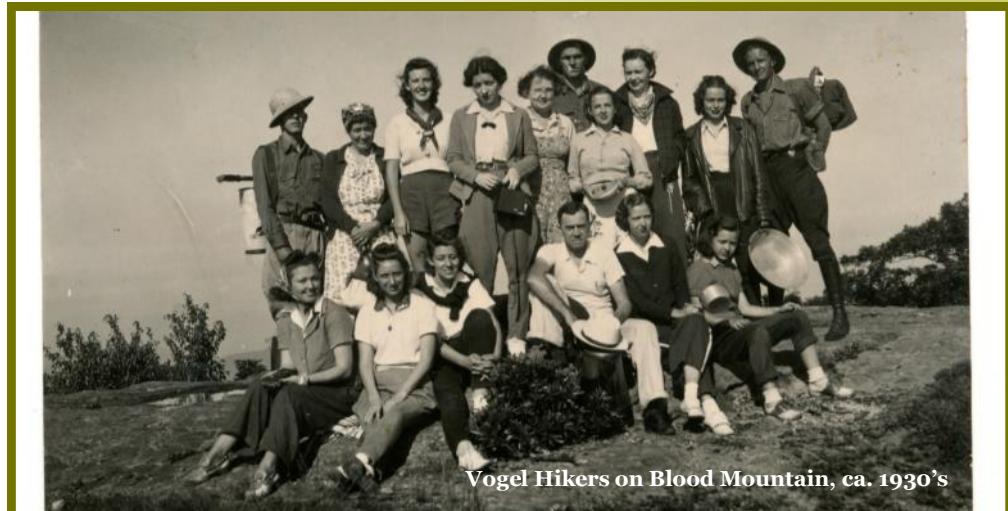
The best times to post are Thursday and Friday afternoons, when people are thinking ahead to the weekend. You can schedule posts in advance.

For all your programs, encourage guests to take photos and videos, and share them on their own accounts. Ask them to tag #GaStateParks and your site name.

Be consistent in tagging your site. Pick something the public can easily find. (Example: Use #RedTopMountainSP rather than #officialRTM.)

Always notify Kim Hatcher in the Marketing Unit of new accounts. Social media policy can be found on the Staff Resources page.

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites



Vogel Hikers on Blood Mountain, ca. 1930's

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Interpretive News:

Spring is in the air! Many sites are busy conducting programs related to the season and providing great customer service to our guests. Many are also using this time to hire their summer naturalists and take part in valuable training opportunities. See this issue for a recap of two of our winter trainings.

The Interpretive Unit is working with a vendor completing work on new interpretive panels and trail signs to replace older, worn out signs on trails and around visitor centers. The Interpretive Unit has also provided sites with \$50,000 worth of programming supplies to enhance programming at fifteen parks and historic sites.

The Dahlonega Gold Museum exhibit renovation is underway and is on track for a Memorial Day 2018 completion. This exciting project has been over two years in development.

As a reminder, as summer approaches, take time to clean your interpretive panels and trail markers to have them in good shape for the visitors that are sure to be arriving!



Park Spotlight: James H. "Sloppy" Floyd

Located near Summerville, Georgia, and originally known as Chattooga Lakes State Park, the park was renamed for the influential long term representative James "Sloppy" Floyd in 1974. The park features some of the most scenic fishing spots in the state on its two lakes and is known by birders for its bluebird population.

Highlights of the park include a trail to an old marble mine where hikers can see a 35 foot waterfall and natural springs that feed the park's lakes. More adventurous visitors can access a section of the 330 mile Pinhoti Trail from the park for a more strenuous hike.

The park staff invites all PRHS associates to come and enjoy this great park.

Meet the Interpreter: Breanna Walker, Florence Marina State Park

Breanna graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Ecology from the University of Georgia in May 2015. While there she worked in a research lab conducting field work in the longleaf pine forest in Southwest Georgia and Northwest Florida. She has a passion for environmental education fostered by her internship at Sandy Creek Nature Center in Athens, GA. While there her mentor pointed her towards a career with PRHS.

She joined the PRHS family in August 2016, as Interpretive Ranger at Florence Marina State Park and Providence Canyon State Outdoor Recreation Area. Since then she has been certified to guide kayak/canoe trips, to

administer first aid/CPR, to present programs and facilitate workshops in Project WET, Project WILD, and Project Learning Tree, and much more. Her favorite part about working for PRHS is not only getting to meet and talk to visitors from all over the world, but getting to build a community with other DNR employees throughout the state.

In her free time she generally curls up on the couch with her two dachshunds, Cookie and Peanut, and reads, writes, or crochets. She also enjoys hiking, camping, traveling, and experiencing new things.

She also looks forward to all of the new experiences she is sure to have with Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites.



Tune Out to Tune in: Really Listening to Nature

When is the last time you listened, **REALLY** listened to nature?

Each year when I look out the window to see the Eastern Phoebe's tail flipping up and down with nesting materials in his mouth I am reminded that spring is in the air. I am drawn to the woods and have been called many names in my park ranger time: tree hugger, nature girl, bird nerd, and more. All of them are true. I hugged a tree the other day in fact! I noticed the violets peeping out from the forest floor and popped one into my mouth to my son's surprise. I always search for Trailing-arbutus, one of the first wildflowers to bloom in the mountains. It's important to bend over and smell them. It's worth it, it's heavenly.

Recently I stepped further into the woods to share a glimpse of my childhood with my son. We laid down on the forest floor; and he set a goal that we had to stay there until we saw wildlife.

We were quiet and still. I felt the earth under me and was rejuvenated, reminding me of my youth and why I chose this career. It was mid-afternoon so not much was moving around in the forest, but we waited.

We could see the breeze rustling overhead as we looked up into the whorls of the Eastern White Pine trees, heard the drum of the Pileated Woodpecker in the distance, but still saw no wildlife. I looked next to me and pulled off tree bark looking for bugs in the pine bark and we also saw a bug fly by, but it was declared that insects didn't count. Then it happened. A bee buzzed in my ear, and then I knew I was right where I needed to be at that exact moment. When I used to hike on the A.T. leading young campers along the trail, I was often deep in thought hiking in silence up the mountain. It was always when I was "in my head" that the bees would buzz in my ear, as if to say that whatever I was thinking about was important and that I should pay attention. That day on the forest floor I

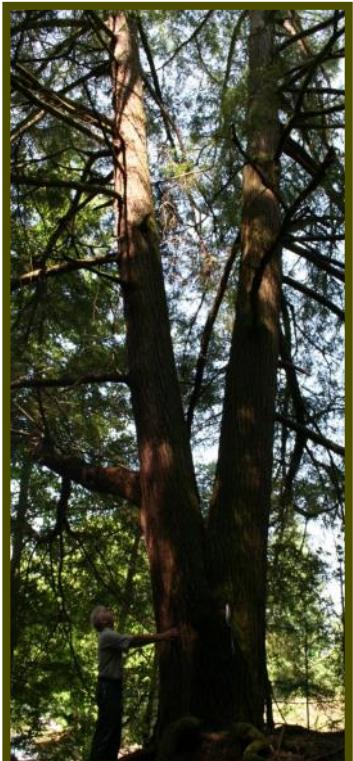
heard, smelled, tasted, breathed in and saw nature all around me. We got up and he dusted the leaves off my back and I off his. The best part was picking out the leaves later that evening that were entwined in my hair to remind me of the beautiful afternoon in the woods.

When is the last time you tuned out to tune in? If it has been a while for you, think about those visitors who only get to experience nature minimally, or not at all. How can you as interpreters get them to tune out the world's distractions and tune in to nature?

"I discovered new mountains in the horizon which I had never seen before, — so much more of the earth and the heavens."

Henry David Thoreau

*By: Ellen Graham
Chief Naturalist*



Hemlock at Hardman Farm

Pioneer Skills Workshop

The Pioneer Skills Workshop held March 26–28, 2018, at New Echota and Red Top was a resounding success! Thirty two rangers from twenty parks and historic sites received instruction and participated “hands on” using pioneer tools, sewing, spinning, candle making, open fire cooking, and papermaking, as well as learning techniques for using natural dyes, period dancing and games, and gardening. The rangers also participated in group discussions on topics about relating pioneer skills to modern audiences and proper living history interpretation techniques.

Highlights included eating a lunch prepared by the participants, taking home souvenir drawstring bags made in the sewing class, making their own toys, and learning to dance the Virginia Reel to “Turkey in the Straw.”

Most of these skills can be used in programming efforts at the participants’ home parks and sites. For example, period dancing can be used in junior ranger camps to get kids up and active, and open fire cooking skills provide interpreters a great way to attract campers to their programs, and so much more.

The Interpretive Unit would like to thank all the instructors who took time out of their busy schedules to make this great training happen. A special vote of thanks is also due to Valarie Ikhwan, Site Manager at Fort King George, for taking the lead role in keeping the course on track after it was delayed due to Hurricane Irma last fall.

The Interpretive Unit looks forward to providing more quality interpretive training opportunities like this in the future.



Valarie Ikhwan and Gretchen Greminger teaching participants proper use of the spinning wheel

Black Powder Safety Officer Training 2018



Black Powder Safety Officer Candidates firing flintlock muskets

From February 26-28, 2018, Fort McAllister State Park hosted the bi-annual Black Powder Safety Officer Training class. This year the PRHS Black Powder Instructors taught black powder basics, storage and handling techniques, range and crowd safety and many other skills needed for parks personnel to adequately supervise black powder programs during living history events and programs.

Participants were also given hands on instruction in proper period correct musket drills and artillery firing. Additionally, they learned how to inspect historic weapons that load and fire very differently than modern weaponry.

At the conclusion of the training 10 safety officers received certificates of completion. Their certification is good for four years. The PRHS Black Powder Safety Instructors thank all those who participated in this important training.

Eco-Boxes at Fort Morris State Historic Site

The Georgia Natural Resources Foundation is a charitable organization that supports the preservation of Georgia's natural and cultural resources through projects, activities and programs of the Georgia DNR. Every year the Foundation awards grants for projects across all Divisions of DNR.

In the Spring of 2017, the PRHS Interpretive Unit submitted a grant proposal for the Foundation to fund the creation of three Eco-boxes to be installed at Fort Morris State Historic Site in order to assist in the passive interpretation of the site.

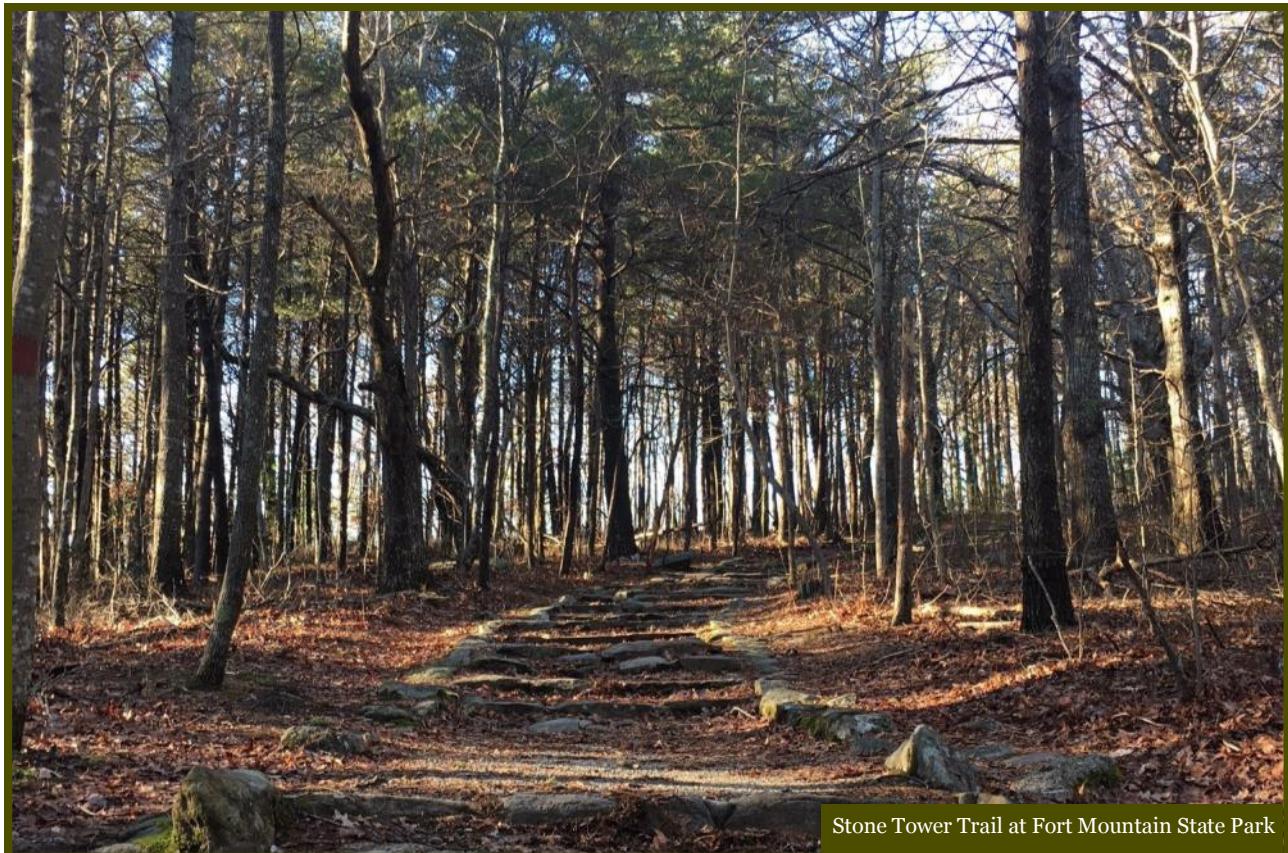
The project was chosen to be funded and the Interpretive Unit worked with a vendor last fall to develop content for the boxes and the site staff at Fort Morris and Fort McAllister installed the boxes during the winter of 2018.

The three eco-boxes installed at Fort Morris are weatherproof steel boxes that contain pre-recorded messages and operate by turning a crank mechanism, thus eliminating the need for electricity. The boxes each have four tracks that begin by pushing a button on the box. The messages are approximately one minute in length and tell parts of the history of Fort Morris and the old town of Sunbury.

Located at several points along the Interpretive trail that takes visitors into and around the fort, these boxes greatly enhance the story of this historic fort and town.

PRHS is grateful to the Georgia Natural Resources Foundation for providing funding for this valuable project.

By: Judd Smith, Parks Historian



Stone Tower Trail at Fort Mountain State Park

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

2500 Hwy 155 SW
Stockbridge, GA 30281

gastateparks.org

A Great Time, Every Time!

Mission

To protect our state's natural beauty and historic integrity while providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education.

Vision

Using our system's diversity and a commitment to excellence as our strengths, we will be a national model for quality service, resource protection, outdoor recreational opportunities, ecosystems management and interpretation of our heritage. We will provide an excellent work environment for our employees through effective leadership, proper training, challenging opportunities and a guarantee of fair treatment.



Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

When I started with PRHS in 1994, Fort McAllister was in preparation for the 130th anniversary of the capture of the fort by Sherman's troops in 1864. Back then we were wondering what the 150th would be like. Likewise, when I was at Fort Morris a few years later we contemplated what the Bicentennial of the War of 1812 might be like and how someone working at Fort Morris in 2012-15 would interpret that era.

Shakespeare wrote, "Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, creeps in this petty pace from day to day, to the last syllable of recorded time." Fast forward to 2018, and both the Civil War 150th and the War of 1812 Bicentennial are behind us by three years. Time's petty but immutable pace has caught up and passed those anniversaries.

Likewise, we have passed the 85th anniversary of our own state park system and are only eight years away from the Semiquincentenary (250 years) of the founding of the United States and only 15

away from the Tri-centenary (300 years) of the founding of Georgia.

I point all these out to show how quickly time's "creeping" catches up to us, but can also provide an astute interpreter a plethora of themes. Take 2018 for example, it is the 100th anniversary of the Migratory Bird Treaty Act and many entities are doing programs in recognition of this important milestone, including the Audubon Society and National Geographic. Maybe your park could do a program tied to it.

Research your parks' and sites' histories for events that took place there in previous years. Maybe there was a large festival that occurred 50 years ago. Perhaps the anniversary of the park's grand opening could be a springboard for a program idea. Check local newspaper archives, park files, and local historical societies and garden clubs for things that you could tie program efforts around.

With a larger anniversary, like the Civil

War 150th, it was interesting to see how vastly different the Centennial was marked as compared to the way it was interpreted in the 150th. The Centennial observation focused on battles, leaders, and the physical effects of the conflict. By the 150th, interpretation changed to ideas and concepts that were much more inclusive such as the African American experience and the roles of women in Civil War society.

When these national and state anniversaries I mentioned earlier come up, what will be their interpretative focus? How will interpretation have changed? How will those themes be presented? Many of our newer rangers reading this will be working then and those will be questions to ponder and answer.

Until next time,

Happy Programming,

Judd Smith