



STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

News From the Georgia State Parks, Recreation

and Historic Sites Interpretive Unit

Fall 2018



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Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites



Magnolia Springs State Park, ca. 1940's

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Interpretive News:

In our Seasonal Naturalist training we touch on some of the fundamentals of public speaking. As interpreters it is vital that we communicate using proper verbal skills, in addition to our need to present factual information.

One of the major barriers to effective communication is the use of "filler words." Beginning sentences with the word "so," or overusing words such as "like" and "you know" are examples of this common practice. In many cases it reflects being nervous, but people might assume that you are less than credible, or worse, you could lose your connection with the audience completely.

No one is immune to using filler words, but some ways to avoid overuse are to pause for a breath during a public talk whenever you catch yourself using filler words, have someone record your talk so you can hear yourself and what words or phrases you may overuse, and most importantly practice your talk ahead of time. This will allow you to get out jitters and discover areas where you might be tempted to "fill."

If you can notice and avoid the practice of using filler words, your programs will be stronger for it.

Summer was an exceptionally busy one around the state and the Interpretive Unit is proud of all the hard work put in on the sites to make the season a success. We are also proud to have been able to complete the first Leopold Education Project training for our interpreters in the last fifteen years—more on that training later in this issue.

The Interpretive Unit would also like to congratulate this year's Division-wide program award winners Dahlonega Gold Museum, for the Most Innovative Program, and Sweetwater Creek State Park, for Best Year Round Programming. A special thanks to them and all the other nominees for their hard work and dedication to programming.

Lastly, the Interpretive Unit would like to extend a warm welcome to our new Division Director Jeff Cown. Jeff is the former Chief of the Land Protection Branch of EPD. We welcome him to PRHS and we know he will be impressed with the high caliber of the natural, cultural, and recreational resource based programs that our interpreters conduct on a daily basis. Best wishes to you on your new position, Director Cown.



Park Spotlight:

Magnolia Springs State Park's beautiful scenery is matched only by its historic significance. Nestled in the heart of Jenkins County, the deep natural springs provided life giving waters long before the state park was ever developed. In the 1860's, the site was chosen for Camp Lawton, at the time the largest prisoner of war camp in the world. During the Great Depression the site hosted a company of the Civilian Conservation Corps who helped develop Magnolia Springs State Park. With its trails, cottages, camping, fishing, and sightseeing, the park offers visitors a variety of activities for recreation, reflection, and relaxation. The park staff invites everyone to visit this unique facility and engage in its many sights and sounds.

[https://gastateparks.org/
MagnoliaSprings](https://gastateparks.org/MagnoliaSprings)

Cherokee Homecoming at New Echota!

O si yo. Or as the Cherokee say, *hello.* Greetings from New Echota Cherokee Capital State Historic Site. On Saturday, July 14, 2018, the Cherokee language was out in full force. As Cherokee delegates and citizens from North Carolina, Oklahoma and elsewhere came together for a *Cherokee*

Homecoming at New Echota, one could imagine the historic Cherokee capital town of New Echota as it was 190 years ago in the first quarter of the 19th century.

Some of the delegates and visitors were fluent Cherokee language speakers, and some could speak only a limited amount. As a long-time staff member, I've always wished I could put visitors in a situation where English is the minority, second language, as it would have been during New Echota's time of the late 1820's.

Although our site name doesn't contain the subtitle "Cherokee Trail of Tears Memorial Park," New Echota is viewed in that manner by many visitors, and most all Cherokee people. When asked, I always tell our visitors the Trail of Tears started at each individual Cherokee's doorstep, but many view New Echota as the starting place. The Treaty of New Echota was signed on the historic grounds here in 1835.

With sponsorship by the Friends of New Echota, and support from Friends of Georgia PRHS, the DNR Foundation, the PRHS Division, and the local community, the site was honored to host tribal leaders, their family members and Cherokee citizens of four federally recognized tribal governments for a recent *Cherokee Homecoming*. Honored guests included Principal Chief Richard Sneed (Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians-North Carolina), Chief Bill John Baker (Cherokee Nation-Oklahoma), Chief Joe Bunch (United Keetoowah Band of Cherokee Indians-Oklahoma) and Chief James Floyd (Muscogee-Creek Nation-Oklahoma). Joining this group was DNR Deputy Commissioner Terry West, State Representative John Meadows, State Friends President Tom Johnson and Parks Director Becky Kelley, along with other DNR leadership, and local business community supporters.

This "nationally significant program" took lots of team work. The Friends of New Echota worked long hours



L-R: Chief Joe Bunch, Principal Chief Richard Sneed, Principal Chief Bill John Baker, Principal Chief Charles Floyd at the New Echota Council House

coordinating the schedules of various tribal representatives, state representatives, and Friends participants. Assistant Region Manager Matt Owens was instrumental in coordinating all the various interagency involvement also.

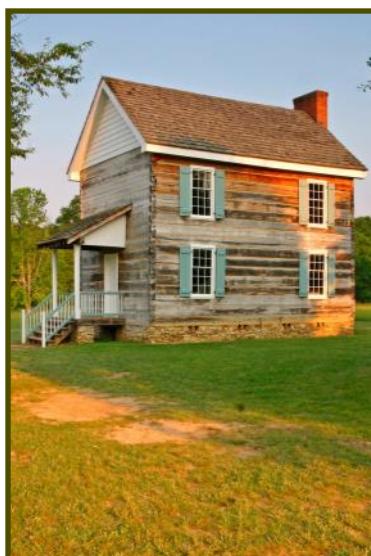
As with all our important historic sites, New Echota visitors often have very personal connections, and emotions can run strong as our guests tour our historic buildings and grounds. Such was the case with the *Cherokee Homecoming*. It was a time of remembering the tragic story of the Trail of Tears, but it was also a time of great joy for the Cherokee people who visited on this special day. To come together with representatives from all three federally recognized Cherokee tribes has happened only occasionally. This was a time of healing for the Cherokee and was also a special time for PRHS and DNR to make new and strong connections with tribal leaders. DNR and PRHS look forward to upcoming future events, programs, and consultation with the tribes as we move forward.

Their visit also speaks to the interpretation of all our resources. There are many perspectives to consider, and to present, as we share our resources with our guests. Our visitors come from many different parts of society, and many parts of the world. Through our programs, we greatly affect, and are witness to, the emotions our interpretation brings out in our guests. They can also be an especially important tool in leading visitors to moments of self reflection where they deeply consider the relevance of the story to themselves and others, just as this

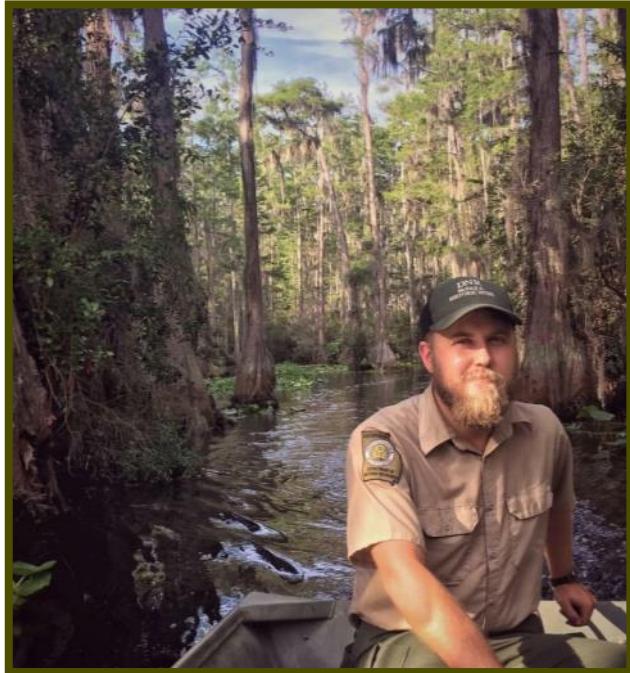
emotional *Homecoming* has done for us at New Echota.

Georgians today do not live in an area with Native American populations nearby as was the case 190 years ago, but we must remember that we should speak of the Cherokee people not as "the Cherokee *were*," but as "the Cherokee *are*," for they and other indigenous people are still a vital part of the United States, as this wonderful *Homecoming* so clearly demonstrates.

By: David Gomez, Manager NEE



Meet the Interpreter: Josh Snead, Stephen C. Foster State Park



Joshua Snead is the Interpretive Ranger at Stephen C. Foster State Park.

He started with PRHS in April 2016, as a Park Naturalist. Before his career with PRHS, he earned a Bachelor's Degree in History from the University of North Georgia in Dahlonega. While in college he worked in retail at a local mall. By the time he graduated he was ready for something completely new and maybe a little adventurous.

This led him into the heart of the Okefenokee Swamp where alligators, bears, snakes and many other wild things live in abundance. Stephen C. Foster State Park fulfilled his desire to do something new and has often been quite an adventure. The unique environment, park life, and relatively remote location have provided him a constant source of new experiences from

which to learn.

As the Interpretive Ranger, he now has the privilege of helping people discover the Okefenokee Swamp and have their own adventures. Josh leads paddles in the swamp, helps people experience the night sky through astronomy programs, and leads daily boat tours discussing the unique ecosystem that makes up the Okefenokee Swamp.

Outside of work Josh enjoys going on hikes and paddles, exploring the unique landscapes of south Georgia and north Florida, finding good barbecue joints to sample the cuisine, and traveling when time allows. Most of all though, he enjoys spending time with his wonderful mutt, Annie.

[https://gastateparks.org/
StephenCFoster](https://gastateparks.org/StephenCFoster)

Santo Domingo de Talaje Exhibit at Fort King George

Recently staff from the Interpretive Unit and HPD re-installed several key artifacts at Fort King George related to the Spanish Mission period along Georgia's coast.

Documentary and archaeological evidence support the location of Santo Domingo de Talaje on Darien Bluff at the mouth of the Altamaha River (Rio de Santa Isabel) on property protected by Fort King George Historic Site. A Spanish mission and Guale Indian town once stood there. Established in the Guale political center of Talaje, Santo Domingo was one of six primary mission towns. Up to the present time, at least eighteen structures have been archaeologically excavated that date to the seventeenth century or earlier. The mission period in Georgia extended from 1568 through 1684.

Over two years ago the artifacts were removed from display due to several issues with an existing exhibit case, which was dismantled. Earlier this year a plan was developed to move the artifacts into a more suitable location and better place them in their historical context. This will also aid the staff in interpreting the ongoing work to uncover more of the mission's history through further archaeological investigation.

With this in mind, the site staff worked closely with the Interpretive Unit and the HPD Preservation Lab to develop text for new artifact labels, decide on the layout, build the mounts, and acquire an updated security system for the exhibit.

In late August the exhibit was re-installed in time for the Labor Day holiday program at the site.

Many thanks to all involved in making this project a success.

By: Judd Smith, Parks Historian



The new exhibit case was placed into an existing display showing an artist's conceptual painting of Santo Domingo de Talaje.

Leopold Education Project Training—July 2018

This summer, the Program Advisory Committee (PAC) invited rangers from across the state to meet in Southwest Georgia for the Leopold Education Project, held July 10th at George T. Bagby State Park. The workshop was presented by Anita Salinas from Mobile, Alabama, and was the first Leopold Education Workshop to be held in Georgia in almost 15 years.

During the workshop twenty-eight participants learned about the life and work of Aldo Leopold, the father of game management, and his most famous writing, *A Sand County Almanac*.

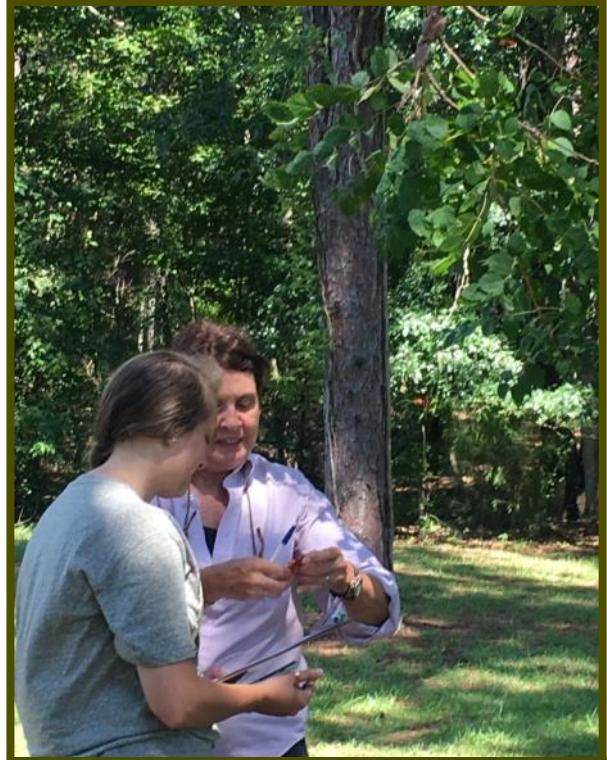
Each ranger took on the role of a student, and joined in on activities and lessons that taught topics such as birding, wildlife observation, and even

star gazing. The material taught during this workshop was geared toward middle and high school students, and we look forward to seeing how the lessons will be implemented in our parks.

Participants not only attended the workshop, but many went on pre and post workshop field trips to Kolomoki Mounds State Park, Providence Canyon State Outdoor Recreation Area, and Florence Marina State Park. This offered the southwestern parks a chance to showcase their area, and provided an opportunity for other rangers to explore more of what our state has to offer. Thanks to the rangers at those sites for providing quality interpretive experiences.

Based on the excellent feedback from the program evaluations, the PAC is recommending continuing this training on an annual basis.

*By: Breanna Walker,
Interpretive Ranger FLM*



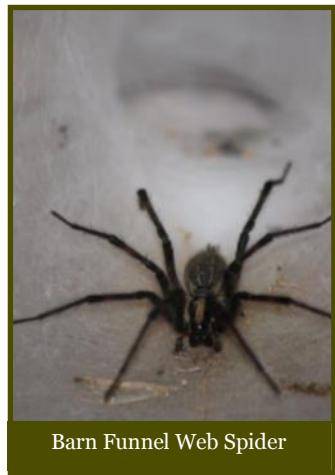
Hands on experiment during the Leopold Project Training

Can't See the Forest for the Trees

There are so many amazing changes in nature in the fall that often go unnoticed or are overlooked. Many leaf lookers search for the best viewing spots to find the peak of the leaf season, but few stop to notice all the other changes that happen in the forest. Some interpreters learned botany, biology, or a variety of “ologies” through college classes; however, for many park rangers, their college path did not prepare them for the 101 questions asked while leading a nature hike. When guests see our uniforms, they expect us to know the answers to everything about nature, and the reality is that no matter what your specialty or background, there is still so much to learn.

Autumn means abundant forgotten wildflowers blooming, spiders in webs that you never see any other time of the year, birds passing through one last time, and trees bursting into an amazing tapestry of colors. If

you take a closer look you notice the small things such as the Barn Funnel Weaver Spider in its funnel web.



Barn Funnel Web Spider

Stop to observe the natural food chain as they consume a yellow jacket or katydid. Recently I learned a new spider, the Giant Lichen Orb-Weaver that looks just like lichen on a tree.

My entire life has been spent in the outdoors and yet I continue to observe nature around me and learn from those observations. I began working as an Intern at Unicoi in the fall of 1996, so I always feel nostalgic this time of year. My eyes were opened to the numerous flowers that bloom in the fall that are often overlooked. There are still a few Cardinal Flowers, Black-eyed Susans, Joe-Pye-weed and Jewelweed hanging on from the summer months that overlap with newly blooming Ironweed, Closed Gentian, various Aster's, and the well-known Goldenrod. One of my personal favorites to see are the Hearts-a-bustin' berries. During each fall hike I hunt to find the Jack-in-the-pulpit red berries popping out from the understory.

The leaves changing are still a sight to see as the Tulip Poplars showcase their brilliant yellow leaves and the oaks will turn brown, orange or red. I always try to spot my favorite, the salmon

colored leaves on the various maple trees peeking out between the yellow and red. Looking out the window recently I saw the tiny whirling pine seed pod (gymnosperm) falling from the Eastern White Pine tree, which encouraged me to learn more about the pine tree life cycle.

Each season in Georgia brings such different wonders of nature that are worth stopping to investigate further. Now I say goodbye to the Red-eyed Vireos, along with many other migratory birds, until next spring. Recently I was inspired by attending the Leopold Education Project Training and each time I stop to observe the changes of autumn I am reminded that, “There are some who can live without wild things and some who cannot” (Aldo Leopold). I can not.

*By: Ellen Graham,
Chief Naturalist*

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

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gastateparks.org

A Great Time, Every Time!

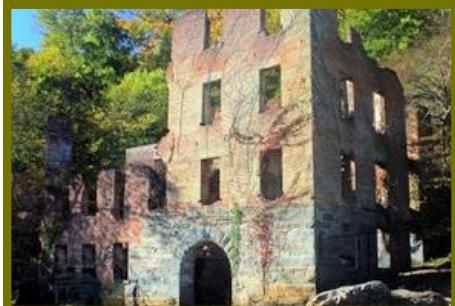
New Manchester Mill Ruins, Sweetwater Creek State Park

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:

How many times have you finished a program and looked out at a sea of blank faces and just knew that your program had failed? Or, how many times have you put work into a program only to have a sparse attendance? Did you decide then and there to scrap a program idea or concept?

Reggie Jackson, retired professional baseball player, holds a dubious record. In the course of his career he managed to strike out 2,597 times - more than any other player in the 150+ year history of the game.

At first glance, one might be tempted to see Jackson's strikeouts and assume that such a record indicates tremendous failure. Students of baseball history, however, know the rest of the story. Far from being defined by that record, Jackson's career saw him hit 563 home runs (14th all time), win five World Series titles, lead the league in home runs four times, and in addition to numerous other honors, he is also in

the Baseball Hall of Fame.

Jackson's example should be clear. Do not allow the possibility of failure stop you from taking your proverbial "swings at the plate." Just as Jackson swung and missed, we all will. What defines us as professional interpreters is how we take the next at bat. For us as interpreters we should do what a good batter does. Think about what caused us to strike out, evaluate our "swing," and approach the next "at bat" with confidence.

When you notice that sea of blank faces staring back at you, resist the urge to retreat from that program in the future. Practice, change tactics, approach the program from a different angle and try again. You may find this new approach relates to your audience much better.

If you struggle with attendance, evaluate the program and see if it is really connecting to the audience as you intended. Sometimes, it may be as simple as re-scheduling it to a better

time of day, or a different weekend. In any case, always give programs more than one chance of working. You may well hit the home run you have been trying for.

As the great Babe Ruth said, "Every strike brings me closer to the next home run."

Until Next Time,

Keep Swinging,

Judd Smith

