



STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

# ROADS LESS TRAVELED

*News From the Georgia State Parks, Recreation  
and Historic Sites Interpretive Unit*

*Summer 2019*



Northern flicker  
*Colaptes auratus auratus*



**Summer 2019**

**Volume 5, Issue 1**

**PRHS Interpretive  
Newsletter  
Personnel**

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## **Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites**



Divers at Tallulah Gorge, ca. 1930s

# ROADS LESS TRAVELED

## **Interpretive News:**

The Interpretive Unit hopes you enjoy this Summer issue of the *Roads Less Traveled*. In the upper left hand corner of this page you will note that this is Volume 5, Issue 1. Each year represents a volume, and we are entering our fifth volume with this issue. Since July 2015, we have sought to engage, inspire, provoke, and challenge our interpreters to continue to lead the strongest programming in the country. The Interpretive Unit is always available to assist the field in these efforts, and we hope you will continue to support the *Roads Less Traveled* with your readership and contributions going forward.

Many Junior Ranger Camps and Road Trip programs are scheduled for the summer and fall months. Be sure you are in proper uniform and take good pictures when you award badges to our new Junior Rangers. Get permission to use the photos on social media to promote the program. Good luck and be sure to show off your success!

## **Park Spotlight**



Hardman Farm State Historic Site

“Welcome to Hardman Farm!” is the greeting when you enter the Old Brick Store. It now serves as our historic site’s Visitor Center. The store was an agriculture shop turned Post Office. Come sit on the porch and enjoy an ice-cold bottled Coke after walking the mile long Helen to Hardman Heritage Trail -a Riverwalk with scenic overlooks and of course – history.

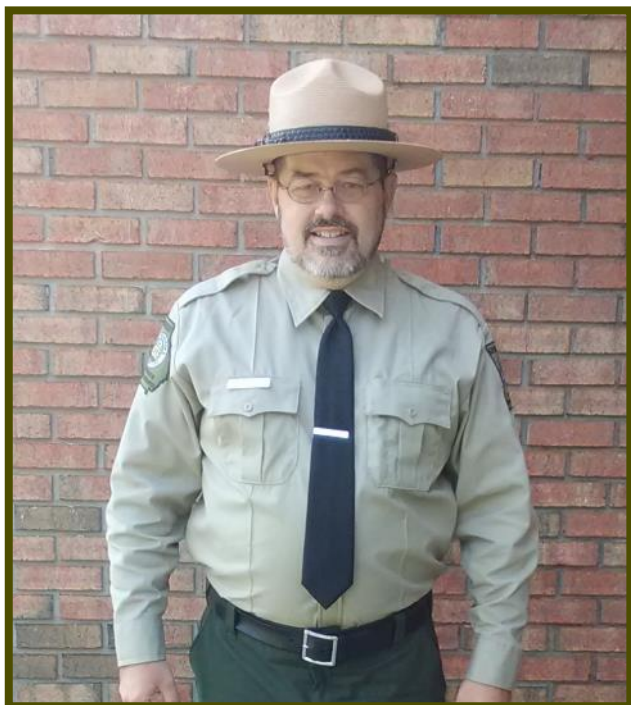
You can visit many times during the year and have a different experience each time. July is a big month for us. Whether you come for kids’ camps, Farm Animal Fun Day, or our signature event – the Hardman Farm to Table Dinner, there is something for everyone.

Come see us soon, so we can welcome YOU to Hardman Farm.

By: Clint Joiner,  
Asst. Manager HDM



## Meet the Interpreter: Keith Bailey, Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site

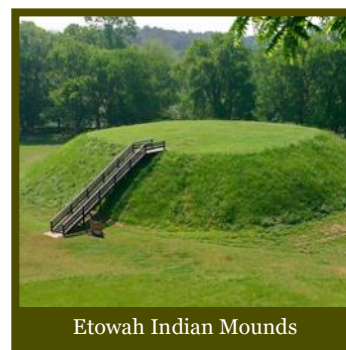


Keith D. Bailey has been the Interpretive Ranger at Etowah Indian Mounds State Historic Site for six years. He was born in Calhoun, Georgia, in 1972. As a youth, he spent much of his time outdoors with his family and participating in scouting programs. After graduating high school, he earned an Associates Degree in Fine Arts from Rienhardt College. He has worked in a dye-house, served as caretaker of his grandmother's farm, was self-employed, and spent time homeschooling his oldest child. He returned to college and graduated Magna Cum Laude from Georgia State University, with a B.A. in Anthropology in 2012.

He spent a number of years volunteering at RTM and several other state parks as a Friend of Georgia State Parks, and continues to serve as an adult leader in scouting activities.

All these experiences help him with his programming efforts at Etowah to ensure that the rich culture left behind by the Etowah Mound Builders continues to be interpreted to the thousands of visitors coming to the site each year.

Outside of work, his interests in nature, history, and tinkering have led him to explore a variety of hobbies, including blacksmithing and genealogy.



Etowah Indian Mounds

## 2019 Annual Interpretive Training



Parks Historian Judd Smith interprets the role of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the history of Georgia's State Park system

The Interpretive Unit is pleased to announce the completion of the 2019 Annual Interpretive Training. This year was the largest turnout yet, with 43 participants.

Attendees learned the fundamentals of crafting interpretive programs, interpretive policies and procedures, care and handling live animals, living history program ideas, and much more.

For the first time, the training was held at lovely Hard Labor Creek State Park, and the weather was perfect. All planned outdoor activities such as the nature walk, campfire program, astronomy session, and recreation stations were terrific. The staff at Hard Labor Creek are commended for their efforts - from cleanliness in the cottages to the coffee at the clubhouse. Kudos to you all.

The Program Advisory Committee was instrumental in making the training exceptional for our interpreters. Many thanks to Breanna Walker, Jamie Madden, Christina Weeks, Josh Snead, and

Valarie Ikhwan for making this important training a success.

The Interpretive Unit would also like to thank Director Jeff Cown, Assistant Director Eric Bentley, and Operations Manager Terry Trowbridge for attending portions of the training and seeing first hand the level of commitment our interpreters bring to PRHS. This training could not be carried out without their support.

We hope that all participants take back with them some seeds that they can grow in their interpretive programs during the coming season and the knowledge that the Interpretive Unit is here to support their programming efforts year round.

It was terrific to see everyone and to host such a great training. We look forward to coordinating it again in 2020.

*By: Judd Smith,  
Parks Historian*



## Interpreting Invasive Species on Your Sites

As summertime arrives, invasive species, both plant and animal, thrive in the warm weather on PRHS properties. Our Resource Management Unit (RMU) provides support to the sites and is ready to provide technical assistance and, when available, manpower and chemicals, in order to assist the sites in managing their invasive species.

As interpreters, our role is to support those resource management efforts by providing good, solid, factual information to our guests regarding the invasive species people encounter on your sites and the environmental concerns they pose to PRHS.

From a strictly environmental perspective, you can deliver powerful programs that discuss the spread of dangerous invasive pests like the hemlock woolly adelgid and the emerald ash borer. You can discuss how Chinese privet outcompetes the

native river cane along our streams and rivers. You can show how kudzu spreads—overtaking buildings, structures and other landscape features.

Another route you can take is to look at the cultural and natural resource interface and how these environmental hazards came to be here in the first place. Kudzu



Sean Crooks spraying privet

for instance, was widely planted in the southern United States in the 1930s and 40s to stop soil erosion. Providence Canyon is an example of this policy.

Invasive species were often planted by people for ornamental purposes. Plants like English ivy and Japanese wisteria while maintained by landowners remained in check, but once a house burned down or was abandoned, the ornamentals continued to grow unabated. There are many places on PRHS properties where old home sites are surrounded by wisteria and other types of ornamental invasive species.

As you plan your summer programs, it may be a good idea to highlight invasive species and the work being done to address these perennial problems to our parks and sites.

If you have questions about invasive species on your sites, please reach out to the RMU. Brian Nichols, Phil Delestrez, Larry Atkinson, and Sean Crooks are excellent resources for information on invasive species and the measures taken to control and eradicate them.

*By: Judd Smith,  
Parks Historian*



Hemlock woolly adelgid

## 2019 Birding Boot Camp. . .It's for the Birds!



A nesting Blue-headed Vireo *Vireo solitarius*

For 20 years Angie Johnson and I have competed to see who will hear the first Red-eyed Vireo of the Spring. Birding Bootcamp is a two-day field training workshop hosted by the Wildlife Resources Division (WRD) aimed at teaching and/or enhancing skills in [bird identification by sight/song/call](#). In the beginning we were amazed by the diversity found within the bird world. As years have passed we have expanded our knowledge beyond songs to habitat, feeding habits and

more. During BBC we have had skilled instructors who teach about different bird habitats when the [migratory birds](#) are found traveling through the regions of Georgia. The purpose of the training is to teach DNR staff to assist with surveys for certain species on WMAs, state parks, NWRs, national forests, or other lands. It also trains staff to assist with the Breeding Bird Survey, an international breeding bird monitoring effort.

In parks, our goal is for staff to be able to lead birding programs more confidently and to provide a better understanding of bird-habitat relationships and how land management activities affect them.

After my first year attending BBC, I had plans to host a birding weekend one month later and thought I would be fine to lead the walks after one time attending the training. I could not have been more wrong. I was in a panic, but luckily, I had assistance from WRD staff that

year and for several years after that until I was confident enough to begin leading them myself. Birding is not a skill that most can gain in one brief training, but rather it is a lifelong journey. As with many things that we do, if you don't continue to practice these skills you will lose them. Each spring I expand my skills by looking for birds, listening for their melodies and continuing to challenge myself. I hope when we offer this opportunity again in future years, that you will consider signing up to begin your own lifelong journey of learning the birds.

By attending BBC, Angie and I have been able to pass along our knowledge and we have inspired hundreds of park visitors to learn how to bird by ear. We even hosted a 4-day BirdFest Conference that was internationally attended by over 100 birders. You too can host birding programs that could inspire visitors and attract a new user group to your park. Birders are becoming a larger and

increasingly more significant interest group, and we could benefit by offering these programs in our sites.

*By: Ellen Graham,  
Chief Naturalist*



Angie Johnson and Ellen Graham at the 2019 Birding Bootcamp

## Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

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*Connecting people with our state's cultural and natural resources*

### 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.

Wolf Creek Falls, Vogel State Park, 2018



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## Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

The Nobel Prize winning poet and author Anatole France said,

*"Do not try to satisfy your vanity by teaching a great many things. Awaken people's curiosity. It is enough to open minds; do not overload them. Put there just a spark. If there is some good inflammable stuff, it will catch fire."*

Early in my career, a wise interpreter calmed my nerves about an impending program by saying, "On your worst day you know more about the subject you are interpreting than most of the audience will ever know on their best day." Those words have always stuck with me and I still take comfort in them to this day, but the knowledge that "you know more on your worst day" can be a double edged sword if you are not careful.

It can tempt you to over expound on a given subject, hammer an idea or concept until you have lost your audience, or worse, cause you to lose your own focus in the middle of a program. Think back, and most of us can recall a program or presentation where we went down the proverbial rabbit hole and left our audience behind.

We have to attempt to avoid those costly



interpretive errors if at all possible. We can accomplish that by carefully outlining our program beforehand. Start with a solid theme statement that references your main ideas and concepts. Stick to three or four main points that allow you to stay focused during the program. Conclude with a statement that restates

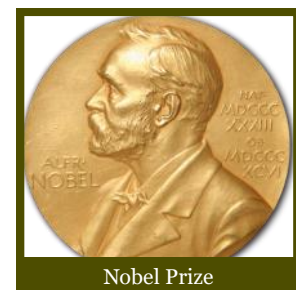
your theme. Following these steps will help "Awaken people's curiosity," but not overload the audience with dry, unnecessary, or irrelevant facts.

Use your programs to create a spark, fan the flames with good interpretation, and then let it catch fire in the audience. The best result from your interpretation is that you provoke someone to research a subject, volunteer at a park, or best yet - come back for your next program.

Until Next Time,

***Happy Programming,***

***Judd Smith***



Nobel Prize