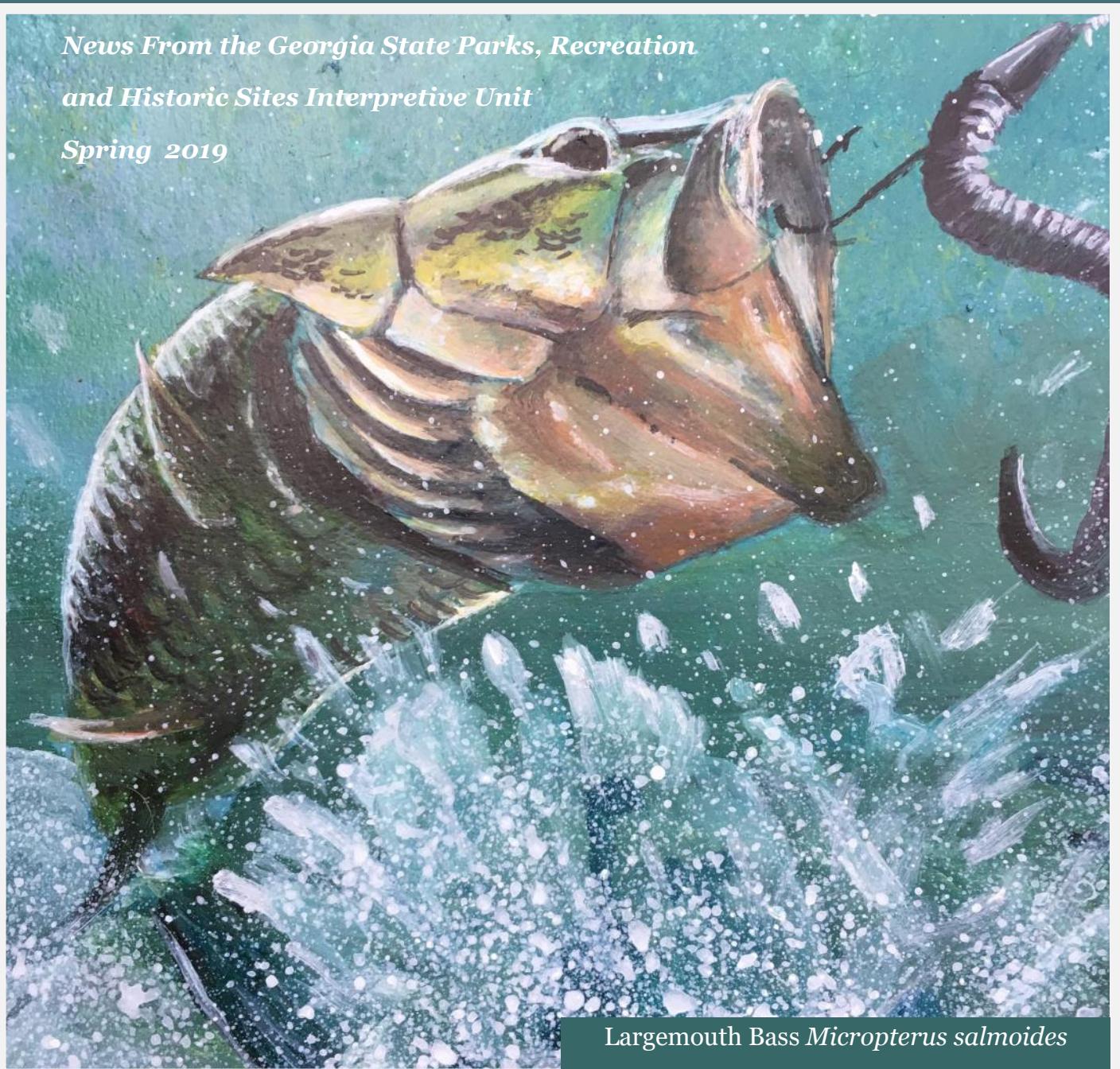




STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

*News From the Georgia State Parks, Recreation
and Historic Sites Interpretive Unit
Spring 2019*



Largemouth Bass *Micropterus salmoides*

Spring 2019

Volume 4, Issue 4

**PRHS Interpretive
Newsletter
Personnel**

**Judd Smith
Parks Historian-
Writer and Editor**

**Ellen Graham
Chief Naturalist-
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Cover Artist**

Marketing Moment

Creating an event on Facebook is one of the easiest and most effective ways to increase participation in programs. Not only can you reach people who already “like” your page, you can also reach their friends when they share your event. Follow these tips:

Pick a short, clear event name. Creative is good, but don't be so clever that the activity isn't obvious.

Avoid ALL CAPS because it's harder to read.

Don't use a flyer for your event photo. These are difficult to read on small screens.

Pick a horizontal photo that you have rights to use. You could also create a simple graphic with park name, event title and date.

Include all information, including fees, phone, website, age group, trail length and what visitors will do. Never say “ParkPass required” because it's vague. Say “\$5 parking” instead.

Avoid posting separate events for activities that occur on the same day. The more there is to do, the more likely people will visit.

Check spelling and grammar. Facebook should be fun and casual, but still professional. You always represent the Georgia Department of Natural Resources.

Share the event a few times as you get closer to the date.

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites



Mr. Charles Cobb, Park Manager at Tugaloo State Park, ca. 1967

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Interpretive News:

Welcome to the Spring Issue of the *Roads Less Traveled*. The Interpretive Unit hopes you are having a great Spring season and that your programs are off and running.

The Junior Ranger program is well underway. All books are in production and sites should receive them starting in the next few weeks. Retail merchandise related to the program is also in development. The Interpretive Unit's goal is that the Junior Ranger books will be staples in your interpretive tool kits for years to come. Read more on the Junior Ranger program later in this issue.

The Interpretive Unit is also pleased to be hosting a Birding Basics Workshop at Hard Labor Creek State Park April 29-May 1, 2019. Participants will pick up some much needed skills in leading bird hikes, identifying bird species, and much more. For more details contact Ellen Graham, Chief Naturalist.

Our Annual Interpretive Training, which is mandatory for all Seasonal Naturalists and new full time Interpretive Rangers will be held at a new venue this year— historic Hard Labor Creek State Park, May 13-15, 2019. Stay tuned for more information that will be coming in the next few weeks on this training opportunity.

Training Unit News

The PRHS Training Unit has been hard at work on a new training software for all associates. Going forward all training, including interpretive training workshops, will be tracked in the DNR Learning Management System (LMS).

The DNR LMS is a learning platform, made by Moodle and customized by eThink for the Department. WRD and PRHS are currently the only two Divisions using the program.

All upcoming training, such as the Birding Basics Workshop and Annual Interpretive Training, will be populated into the DNR LMS calendar. Full time PRHS associates with an Outlook account have been given access to the system via a password and log-in information through their state e-mails. Non-Outlook users, including part-time staff, will be set up soon as well.

Associates have a dashboard where they will be able to register for classes, track their training courses, and upload and store their training certificates.

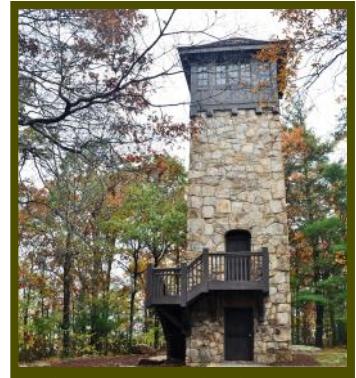
More information is forthcoming as the software continues to be rolled out. If you have questions please contact Robyn Carter at robyn.carter@dnr.ga.gov.

Meet the Interpreter: Heather Iverson, Fort Mountain State Park



Heather Iverson is the Interpretive Ranger at Fort Mountain State Park. She travels between Fort Mountain State Park, Vann House State Historic Site, and New Echota State Historic Site as the sites' roving ranger. She has worked the last two years as a park ranger. Heather has a Bachelor of Science in Management of Natural Resources Recreation and Tourism, and a Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Biology from the University of Georgia. Heather is originally from Sugar Hill, Georgia, and grew up on Lake Lanier—camping, boating and enjoying the outdoors with her family. Before coming to PRHS, Heather worked as the Environmental Educator at Sandy Creek Nature Center in Athens, Georgia. As an environmental educator, one highlight of her duties included taking care of exhibit animals, like her two favorites, a gopher tortoise and

loggerhead sea turtle. She met her husband, Tyler in middle school. They have three children, Canyon (14), Kyleigh (12), and Ellie (1). Heather enjoys being a park ranger because it combines her love of the outdoors and education. She loves that every day is different and there is always something to learn, and new to see.



The Fort Mountain Fire Tower

2019 Rangers Conference: A Great Morale Booster!

The 2019 Rangers Conference at Unicoi State Park March 3-6, 2019, was the first Rangers Conference held in over a decade. Hopes were high for an outstanding conference and the participants were not disappointed. Rangers of all classifications attended and had fellowship with other attendees from different parks and regions.

The theme for the conference was, "What is YOUR chapter in the Park Ranger story?" - a theme that we interpreters examine everyday as we prepare for programs and public contact. It is refreshing to have that perspective shared by our PRHS leadership. It proves that our interpreters are influencing the division as a whole.

While at the conference, the rangers engaged in team building exercises, shot air guns, bows, and shotguns, and participated in a fun fishing experience. Many of these activities were led by our partners in other DNR Divisions and were terrific.

Our rangers were also introduced to several topics in break out sessions that included search and rescue, administrative issues, natural resource management, and much more.

For the Interpretive Rangers, they received a review on event preparation, social media tips and flyer production, as well as a great session led by HPD related to dealing with culturally sensitive topics. They capped off the session with a fantastic tour of Hardman Farm State Historic Site, PRHS' newest historic site.

The awards banquet on Thursday showcased inspirational testimonies by two of our best rangers: Andre McLendon and Jessica James-Weems, in addition to awarding plaques to several deserving parks and individuals. The Interpretive Unit would like to recognize the Little White House Historic Site and Skidaway Island State Park for their award winning programs and say thanks to all the other winners and nominees.



Rangers Conference attendees gathered on the steps of the Nichols – Hardman House during their tour of the historic site.

This conference was much needed and very beneficial to its participants. We hope to continue to build on the excitement from this year's conference and that it will lead to a great spring and summer season.

Kudos to conference planners Angie Johnson and Ellen Graham.

*By: Judd Smith,
Parks Historian*

The New Junior Ranger Program is Here!

On behalf of the Junior Ranger Subcommittee of the Program Advisory Committee, I am excited to share details about the NEW Junior Ranger Program. Some elements you will see with the new program include: every single park has a unique book, and every single book has 1-4 pages that feature something unique and special about YOUR site. Thanks to all who helped with page development, feedback, and editing to help with achieving the final product.

In addition to new books, the PAC has developed a new method of rewards for the program. As the Junior Ranger completes their book at your location, they do the pledge with a ranger, and are awarded a beautiful wooden badge (with a pin back). These badges are also site specific. This does mean the retirement of the Gopher, Fox, Owl, and Deer Badges. Junior

Rangers now can earn up to 59 new badges which feature deer, alligators, cannons, frogs, mountains, flowers and even a giant ground sloth! The best part is, we are able to offer this badge free of charge to all who



complete each site's book. Something that was very important to the program was to have a continuation of the story. It doesn't just end with a pledge and a badge. That is why we developed the "GO DO" patches. These patches can be earned by junior rangers completing different activities, like

volunteering, catching a fish, or playing putt-putt. As your junior rangers complete these tasks they can earn patches that don't look like much on their own, but as you put them together they form the State of Georgia. These sticker-patches are also free to those who complete the tasks. The next element we wanted to have was to feature products that our junior rangers could purchase to enhance their experience. You will start to see some of those products making their way into your giftshops, including vests, hats, t-shirts, key chains, backpacks, and ranger plush toys.

Finally, we have put some pages online on our Junior Ranger website. Teachers and larger groups can still get stickers for completing some of those pages with their

class or organization. Check out the [Junior Ranger website](#) and if you have some great pictures of rangers leading junior rangers, make sure you share them with Ellen Graham.

In celebration of the NEW Junior Ranger program, the Program Advisory Committee has selected 2019 annual theme to be Junior Rangers. Marketing is once again sharing in the efforts to promote this as well. We are so excited for this new program, and hope you are as proud of the finished product as we are. Once again, thank you to all that helped take this dream and make it a reality that so many future junior rangers can enjoy.

By: Valarie Ikhwan, FKG Site Manager and PAC Chairperson 2016-2018

Providence Canyon: Blending Retail and Interpretation



Providence Canyon's new retail area showing the color scheme, graphics and the observation beehive.

Over the past several months Providence Canyon State Outdoor Recreation Area's visitor center was closed as it underwent a major renovation project. Penny Dunn, with the help of designer, Brittany Garrett, worked tirelessly to plan the interior remodel, which has turned out beautifully.

Through the renovation, small details were added to incorporate interpretation into the design. To spotlight the changing colors of the canyon, the interior was painted a bright orange, which fades to yellow. Across the back wall, the pictures of the park reflect how the colors of the canyon walls vary from sunrise to sunset. Furthermore, sands from the canyon were integrated into the new 'Make Your Own Sand Bottle' sign which hangs directly above the sand table.

Other aspects of the new layout also merge retail with interpretation. In the back corner sits a newly renovated observation beehive, surrounded by bee merchandise. Near the door, items depicting John Wayne, who once visited the park, are available for purchase.

Lastly, the media room adjacent to the retail area will serve as the center for programming at Providence Canyon - with room to host school groups and movie nights, a black ceiling to provide planetarium-like programs, and it will also include interpretive panels about the canyon along the walls.

All this, coupled with a new trailhead panel outside, will improve the visitor experience at PCSORA in a major way.

By: Breanna Walker, Interpretive Ranger, FMSP and PCSORA

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

2600 Hwy 155 SW
Stockbridge, GA 30281

gastateparks.org

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.



Reynolds Mansion, Sapelo Island

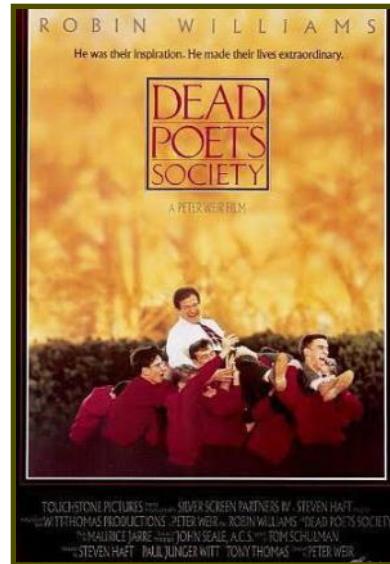
Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

Throughout the course of our lives, inspiration comes to us in a myriad number of ways. Family, friends, co-workers can all provide us with that spark that energizes us, revitalizes us, and makes us better. Once in a great while, something as seemingly innocuous as a trip the movie theater can become a transcendent experience.

2019 marks the thirtieth anniversary of one of my favorite films, *Dead Poets Society*. Starring the late Robin Williams, The story takes place in a boys' boarding school in the 1950's and features Williams portraying a literature teacher who influences his class of coming of age teenagers. If you are in the interpretive profession, it should be required viewing.

For those who may not familiar with the film, I will not spoil the experience, but will only say, watch how Williams' character uses all of Freeman Tilden's principles; such as relating the subject matter, revealing information, using age appropriateness and artistry - all the while provoking thoughts and ideas in the students.

For me, I left the theater, realizing for the first time, the true power of words. I, of course, had literature and humanities



classes in college, and had read much of the subject matter shown in the movie, but the way the screenwriters brought out the powerful emotion of words, things like: love, loss, regret, anger, grief, joy, respect, and understanding was amazing to me.

As I reflect on the movie thirty years later, I realize that it might have been then that I was inspired to be an interpreter. After that I wanted words to be my ally when connecting people to resources, provoking others to action, leading teammates, educating others, and so much more.

What is your inspiration for being an interpreter? What motivates you to continue to offer the best programs in the nation to our guests. Is it family, friends, or maybe, just maybe, a 30 year old classic film?

As the great poet Alfred, Lord Tennyson, wrote, "I am a part of all that I have met; Yet all experience is an arch wherethro' Gleams that untravell'd world whose margin fades Forever and forever when I move."

We are all a part of all we have met. Let your journey's experience inspire you as well.

Until Next Time,

Happy Programming,
Judd Smith