



GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

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

Winter 2019



Red Fox *Vulpes vulpes*

Winter 2019

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**PRHS Interpretive
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Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites



Vann Tavern at New Echota State Historic Site

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Interpretive News:

Marketing Moment

While planning programs for 2019, remember that event descriptions can make a big difference in attendance. When creating Facebook posts, calendar listings and flyers, tell readers exactly what they will do and see. If you're leading a hike, think of questions first-time visitors might have: how long and difficult is the trail, what will they see, what ages are appropriate, and are dogs welcome? An eye-catching title helps your program stand out among others in a long calendar listing. For example, Make Pine Cone Owls is better than Nature Crafts. Always follow our division's instruction form for posting events to GaStateParks.org. This can be found under Staff Resources/Marketing Tools.



Happy New Year! The Interpretive Unit is excited for a great year of programming throughout our entire system. All Interpretive Annual Action Plans have been reviewed and returned with edits and comments. The Interpretive Unit appreciates the thorough job all sites did with their planning for 2019!

We are also pleased to announce that PRHS will be hosting this year's Southeastern State Parks Programming Seminar (SSPPS) December 9-12, 2019, in beautiful Savannah, Georgia. See the article later in this issue for the history of this groundbreaking seminar and stay tuned for more information. Georgia has had a fundamental role in shaping the SSPPS, and the Interpretive Unit asks you to be prepared to assist, if called upon, with making this conference a memorable one for its participants.

Other training opportunities in 2019 will include Black Powder Safety Officer training, as well as our annual Naturalist training and canoeing and archery certifications. The Interpretive Unit will also be heavily involved planning the first Rangers Conference to be held in a number of years. Exciting times!

Interpretive Tips

The division often answers requests related to the history of PRHS. Sometimes they are about individual sites, while some are about PRHS as a whole. When those requests come in we rely on documentation, and in many cases, the memory of current and retired PRHS Associates.

As an agency we are taught to keep records (administrative and financial) for a finite number of years. As people move, retire, or leave the system, sometimes questions related to site history, even from relatively recent times, are difficult to answer. Many times good historical records are destroyed with the others.

If your park is not doing so, start keeping a separate file that stores important things like events, noteworthy headlines, and major renovations to buildings and infrastructure. Keep blueprints, technical drawings for projects in a hard copy file. If you have site specific items keep them in a safe place. Scan older photographs into a digital file and back it up to a secondary drive for safe keeping. These will help to preserve the historic record of PRHS for years to come.

Meet the Interpreter: Bobby James, New Echota State Historic Site



Bobby James is the Interpretive Ranger at New Echota – Cherokee Capital State Historic Site. He has worked the last eight years as a park ranger at four different parks including his current position. Bobby has a Bachelor of Arts Degree in History from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga and a Master of Arts in Teaching Degree from Lee University. Bobby is originally from Cleveland, Tennessee and has worked in parks in Pennsylvania (Delaware Water Gap National Recreation Area), Alabama (Tuskegee National Historic Site), and South Carolina (Muscogee National Historic Site). He met his wife, Karmen, while working in Alabama and they have two children, a daughter named Payton and a son named Jesse. Bobby loves being a park ranger because it allows him to pursue

his love of learning and his love of history. He enjoys coming to work each day because every day brings a new adventure and a new opportunity to teach the public about Native American culture. In his spare time, Bobby enjoys spending time with his family and exploring new places. Make sure you come to New Echota to meet Ranger Bobby.



New Echota Courthouse

Cloudland Canyon Interpretive Center Renovations

Cloudland Canyon recently completed renovations in an old outdoor shelter turned indoor interpretive center in order to bring the teaching space up to modern standards. The project began two years ago when park staff and the Friends of Cloudland Canyon met together to brainstorm ideas to improve the look and function of the outdated center.

The prevailing idea was to utilize an existing wall to display a giant vinyl mural of Cloudland's iconic main overlook. The park wanted to give visitors a sense of the view for those that cannot hike to the picturesque spot. This space allowed the mounting of a flat panel monitor for picture/video display. It has become a great tool for the Naturalist to use during programs and school

groups to display a variety of media. The project also grew to include an updated knot station, a rock inspired bookcase to store supplies, and two rock themed fish tank cabinet coverings. The rocks were copied from rock found in local creek beds to give it a park specific feel.

Once our ideas were formulated, we shared the proposed concept with the Region Office, and Ellen Graham and Judd Smith in the Interpretive Unit for their comments, guidance, and approval. This helped keep the Interpretive Center project unique to Cloudland and yet meet the standards of PRHS.

The park and the Friends of Cloudland are very proud of the teamwork, guidance, and excellent communication that went into the finished product.

By: Brad Gibson, Manager CLC



The mural includes the park's Interpretive Theme Statement that also appears on the park's web page and Interpretive Plan.

Southeastern State Parks Programming Seminar (SSPPS)

In 1977, a group of like minded interpretive supervisors from the southeastern state park systems decided to create a seminar where each system would benefit from an annual exchange of information and ideas.

SSPPS's mission is "to improve the knowledge, skills and abilities which assist in delivering quality visitor services through interpretive and recreational skills programs."

Billy Townsend, long time PRHS Interpretive Supervisor, helped arrange the first seminar that was held at Unicoi State Park. Over the next forty years the SSPPS has rotated from state to state around the southeast.

Georgia has hosted, in addition to the first one in 1977, in 1985, 1995, 2003, and we will be hosting in Savannah in December 2019.

The Interpretive Unit works closely with the Region Offices to identify key interpretive personnel to attend the SSPPS at its various locations. Participation is often limited due to budgetary and travel restraints, but PRHS attempts to send a contingent every year.

The SSPPS was held in Rehoboth Beach, Delaware, December 3-6, 2018. The PRHS participants attended several seminar sessions ranging from effective use of social media to interpreting archaeological artifacts. They also were able to participate in several informative field trips and interpretive programs led by Delaware State Park Rangers at several of their parks.

The participants in the Delaware SSPPS will be instrumental in planning and setting the 2019 seminar in Savannah.

*By: Judd Smith,
Parks Historian*



A Golden Eagle flies off its nest on a World War II era observation tower at Cape Henlopen State Park, Delaware

First Day Hikes Program, January 1, 2019



First Day Hikers at Providence Canyon

Many people across the nation kicked off their New Year's resolutions for their health and happiness by joining an invigorating First Day Hike at a state park.

On January 1, 2019, all 50 states participated in the seventh annual national event that encourages everyone to celebrate the New Year in a state park by exploring the outdoors. Through the First Day Hikes national effort, park rangers, naturalists, and volunteers brought history to life and shared their insights on nature.

The program had its origins more than 25 years ago at a single park, the Blue Hills Reservation – a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. Our Chief Naturalist, Ellen Graham, has been the National Coordinator for the First Day Hike program since 2016. During her tenure, PRHS has

grown its involvement with the First Day Hike program, and in 2019 was among the states offering the most hikes. Many thanks to Ellen for leading this nation-wide effort.

In 2019, PRHS offered fifty seven guided hikes consisting of everything from strenuous mountain hikes, guided bird watching walks, swamp slogs, and history hikes. 1,688 hikers turned out in various weather conditions around the state to enjoy this annual activity, bringing the cumulative total to over 4,657 miles hiked.

Participants were encouraged to take photos and post them to social media — #FirstDayHikes. It is a truly great program and a big win for PRHS!

Details on every state's hikes are located at www.stateparks.org.

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

2500 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.



Great Blue Heron, *Ardea herodias*

Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

The ancient Greeks placed such an emphasis on the study of history that it had its own divine patrons in Mnemosyne, the Goddess of Memory, and her daughter Clio, the Muse of History. The fact that they are both represented as women leads into an area where PRHS is making history today.

When I started with PRHS in 1994, we had a handful of women park and site managers. Now, due to a variety of factors, that paradigm has changed. If you are curious, take a look through the PRHS directory and note the number of manager, assistant manager, and other key ranger positions that are held by women. It represents a fundamental shift from a few decades ago, and one that will be noted when future historians look back at our system. The women of PRHS today are contributing to the future legacy of our division, and we must continue to foster the opportunities for all kinds of diversity in our system.

Another way PRHS is making history, is in the area of training, and we should take note of that importance. Division level support is being provided for our interpreters to receive training in programming workshops that our

rangers would not have received even as close as a decade ago. We even have a dedicated training officer to ensure quality training is made available.

As a student of the past, I am trained to note the ebbs and flows of the currents that make up the long and winding river of humankind's history. I mention this because sometimes being focused looking backwards causes us to miss the history being made in the present – times that, when reflected upon in the years to come, will be as clear to future historians as past events are to us.

These are historic times for diversity, training experiences, and most importantly, a great time to be a park ranger. Make the most of them and maybe someone will be writing about you in the future!

As for Mnemosyne and Clio, wherever you are — Thanks for the memories!

Until Next Time,

Keep Making History,

Judd Smith



Clio - Muse of History statue,
Achillion Palace - Corfu, Greece

According to myth, the nine muses were the daughters of Zeus and Mnemosyne. Each had a sphere of influence related to the arts. They are remembered today whenever someone refers their "muse" inspiring them.