



GEORGIA
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

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

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Spring 2016



Toad Shade Trillium - *Trillium sessile*

Spring 2016

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**PRHS Interpretive
Newsletter
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Dahlonge Court House—Early 1900's

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Marketing Moment

The Marketing & Communications Unit helps promote your programs. Each month, I send calendars to magazines, newspapers and blogs across Georgia, using a sampling from www.GaStateParks.org/events. Sites are encouraged to send their monthly calendars to local media too, using formats found under Staff Resources.

I am always looking for good, high-resolution (large) photos of your events, amenities and scenery. These are shared with writers, bloggers and on social media. A great photo can make the difference between being included in an article or not.

When you use social media, tag #GaStateParks and let me know when you post something you'd like shared.
Facebook: Facebook/GeorgiaStateParks
Instagram: @GaStateParks
Twitter: #GaStateParks

*By: Kim Hatcher,
Public Affairs Coordinator*

Interpretive News:

Training Season

The National Association for Interpretation defines “interpretation” as “a mission based communication process that forges emotional and intellectual connections between the interests of the audience and the meanings inherent in the resource.”

Much like a blacksmith, we as interpreters must “work the forge” in order to make those connections. Training sessions and workshops provide us with the tools we need to work and shape our programs. This year over 50 of our rangers have taken advantage of training opportunities that included Black Powder Safety Officer Training in February and a workshop facilitated by the Historic Preservation Division that provided solid tools related to how their mission interfaces with PRHS.

The Programming Unit thanks all those that took time out of their busy schedules to come to these workshops. Our next scheduled training session is the Seasonal Naturalist training at Indian Springs May 17-19, 2016. More information on that to come soon. We look forward to other great training opportunities in the future as well.



Park Spotlight

Elijah Clark State Park honors General Elijah Clark(e), one of the leaders of the Patriot forces in Georgia in the American Revolution. He was known as “the Hero of the Hornet’s Nest.” Clark led militia forces into many battles in Georgia, South Carolina, and led operations in North Carolina and what is today Tennessee. His original homestead and burial place are now under Clark’s Hill Lake, but his remains were moved to Elijah Clark in the 1950’s. The park offers camping and cottages, boat ramps and fishing. It also features a reconstruction of Elijah Clark’s home that is available for tours.

By: Harry Hafer, Manager ECSP

SPRING IS HERE !

Meet the Interpreter: Jason Baker



Jason Baker is the Interpretive Ranger at Fort King George Historic Site. Jason joined the PRHS family in 1998 when he was hired as a seasonal worker at Fort Morris and soon after became an Interpretive Ranger. He transferred to Fort King George in 2007. In nearly 20 years of service he has been recognized for his excellence of work, including innovative programs, outstanding historic site operations, and Ranger of the Quarter. Jason is a black powder safety instructor, is Project Wild certified and is a certified canoe/kayak guide. At Fort King George, Jason

focuses on the site's relevance and ensures all of his programs reflect education standards. He has developed several excellent first-person living history programs. When he guides visitors into the fort walls, he transforms, assuming a British accent and using phrases common of days past. People young and old become entranced in his stories, jokes, and richness of interpretation.

Jason is a proud Savannah native, and spends most of his free time tinkering with cars or on the coastal waterways.

*By: Valarie Ikhwan
Manager FKGHS*

Dahlonega Gold Museum Turns Fifty!

On March 8th, 1966, the state of Georgia purchased the "Old County Courthouse" building from Lumpkin County for \$10. The 130 year old structure needed restoration work and the state invested over \$100,000 to make suitable repairs to the building. On July 1st, 1967, it officially opened as the Dahlonega Gold Museum Historic Site.

Over the first few months of 2016 the site staff and volunteers developed a temporary exhibit that helps visitors step back in time to see what it looked like when the state purchased the building. It follows the restoration process and how the transformation from working courthouse to historic site took place, ending with the grand

opening of the Gold Museum.

Happy Golden Anniversary to the Dahlonega Gold Museum State Historic Site!

*By: Lori Hamby
Interpretive Ranger DGMHS*



2016 Black Powder Training

Every 2 years the department conducts a 3 day workshop that certifies division personnel to serve as safety officers for the various black powder historical programs conducted on our parks and sites.

PRHS policy requires that a BP safety officer be present and conduct safety inspections of all arms used in that type of programming. Over the three days the students receive classroom instruction that covers the history of black powder, safety

regulations and programming information. They also get hands on training in loading and firing muskets, cannons and the period military and civilian drills for safely handling those weapons.

The 2016 class certified 16 safety officers and their certification will be good for four years.

The instructors are very proud of the commitment that these rangers have to our department and the furthering of our cultural resource related interpretation.



New Ideas: Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt

On February 14th 2016 nearly 100 people gathered together in the spirit of adventure and celebration as Skidaway Island State Park hosted its first ever "Hearts in the Park – Valentine's Day Scavenger Hunt." Forty-one teams comprised of local area couples and families challenged themselves to win the first ever "Heart of the Park" trophy by participating in this picture-based scavenger hunt featuring plants, animals and objects found within the park.

"This event was overwhelmingly popular in its first year. We had been getting calls about it all month and we were excited to be able to provide another opportunity for couples and families to enjoy the park

together," stated Kate Charron, Assistant Park Manager. "It was an afternoon scavenger hunt which meant that people had time to participate in this unique event and still be able to enjoy traditional Valentine's Day activities afterwards."

Second place winner Brandy Kennedy Koch said "We had such a wonderful day at the Valentine's Day Scavenger hunt. The staff did a great job and we can't wait till next year!" The event was coordinated in time for Valentine's Day with the idea that being outdoors together strengthens bonds between loved ones and helps park visitors develop an appreciation for all of the gifts our state parks have to offer.

By: Anne Robinson, SISP



Spring is Here! It's Birding Season

Every spring I take a moment to stop in my tracks each time I hear the song return of the Red-eyed Vireo "see me, here I am, up here," and each time I hear the raspy "chip burr" of the Scarlet Tanager I feel such excitement that spring is here.

In many of our training classes new interpreters say they want to

learn more about the birds, and so I wanted to share a few beginner tips. I was the "bird nerd" who rode around in my car listening to the bird songs on CD when I first began my life long challenge to "learn the birds."

You can start learning the birds by listening to the sounds, and today there are many apps to use for identification that make it so much easier. I prefer the "Merlin

ID" App by The Cornell Lab of Ornithology http://merlin.allaboutbirds.org/?gclid=CjwKEAjwq6m3BRCP7IfMq6Oo9gESJACRcobNXVX92Pe5O9mLmRc4HaW_q5uKdDtp2XnPEpdE78NgxoColbw_wcB. Another computer software program that has been helpful to beginners is the Thayer Birds of Georgia: <http://thayerbirding.com/Products/GeorgiaBirds/tabid/1144/>

[Default.aspx](#).

We hope to offer Birding Boot Camps to PRHS staff in the future in partnership with our WRD friends, so stay tuned. In the meantime, find a friend and get outside birding!

Happy Birding!

By: Ellen Graham
Chief Naturalist

DID YOU KNOW?

The Chestnut-sided Warbler is a bird commonly seen in the spring in Georgia. One of its songs sounds like, "pleased to MEETCHA" and an individual warbler will return to the same area year after year, joining back up with the same foraging flock it associated with the year before.



Chestnut-sided Warbler— *Setophaga pensylvanica*

Photo by: Darlene Moore

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

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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.

Fort Yargo State Park, Fall 2014



Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

Interpretive Inspirations

There is very little that we do as interpreters that is truly original. We build our bricks on the foundation laid before us.

At a recent conference I attended, a very well respected interpreter from another state park system said that we don't "steal" interpretive ideas from each other, rather we "honor" each others' programs by incorporating great ideas into our own interpretive themes and programs. That word, "honor," is the mortar of the rich tradition of public interpretation linking our bricks to our past and our collective future.

What will your brick be?

"The Name's the Thing:" Make a Great Title for your Program

At several training classes, I have asked, "Can you judge a book by its cover?" Most of the time people in the class answer "no" without much hesitation. I would argue that in the world we live in of sound bites, YouTube clips, and flashy media that, now more than ever, people ARE judging the proverbial "book" by its cover.

With so much competition for time, people only scan a website for a moment when searching for programs to attend. It is crucial that you as an interpreter are making the most of the approximately three seconds you are going to get as they scan the park's page for events. Some events that are REALLY good events are often hidden under a poor title. Step back and take a hard look at your events posted on the website. If they appear a

little dull to you, think how they look to a potential visitor.

Improve your titles by the use of descriptive, imaginative phrasing. Pull out the thesaurus and make your title really come alive. For example, instead of "Astronomy Night" you might use "A Cosmic Odyssey." Another good example came from a program at the Little White House Pools and Springs a few years ago when the staff came up with the title "A Dip into the Past."

Take a look at what your fellow interpreters are doing with their titles and remember that you have a precious little amount of time to capture your guests' attention and interest in your programs. So again I ask, CAN you judge a book by its cover?

Until next time,

Happy Programming,
Judd Smith