



STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

News From the Georgia State Parks, Recreation

and Historic Sites Interpretive Unit

Summer 2018



Indigo Bunting *Passerina cyanea*

Summer 2018

Volume 4, Issue 1

**PRHS Interpretive
Newsletter
Personnel**

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

**Ellen Graham
Chief Naturalist-
Editor**

**Phil Delestrez
Resource Manager-
Cover Artist**

Support SPLASH

The state's water-safety initiative, SPLASH, aims to greatly reduce the number of water-related deaths and injuries.

SPLASH encourages citizens to follow these tips when enjoying beaches, pools, lakes, rivers and other bodies of water:

Supervision – Designate an adult to watch children at all times. Do not assume someone else is watching.

Prevention – Wear personal flotation devices (PFD or life jacket), install fencing around pools, and use drain covers in hot tubs and pools.

Life jackets save lives – Wear them and be sure your children do.

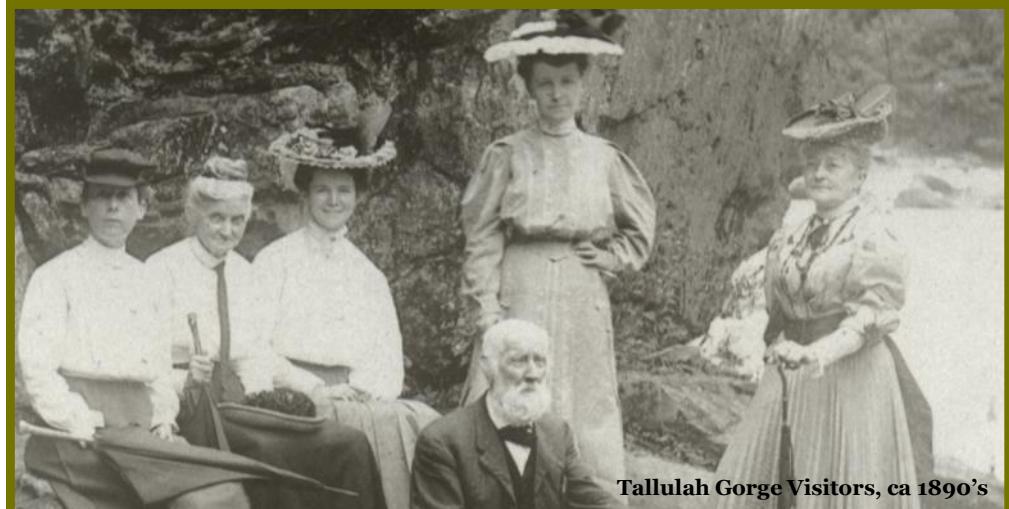
Arm's Length – Adults should be arm's length to children in water, and safety tools such as hooks should be nearby at all times.

Swim Lessons – Knowing how to swim greatly reduces the chance of drowning. Classes are often available through the Red Cross or YMCA.

Have a Water Safety Plan – Know what to do during a water emergency.

<https://gadnrl.org/wear-it>

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites



Tallulah Gorge Visitors, ca 1890's

ROADS LESS TRAVELED

Interpretive News:

The Interpretive Unit is pleased to announce the re-opening of the Dahlonega Gold Museum after being closed for three months to install new exhibits. Read the article in this edition for more information on this exciting project!

This issue also marks the beginning of the fourth year for the *Roads Less Traveled* Newsletter. In 2015, the Interpretive Unit felt that PRHS needed a way to communicate important trends in interpretation, provide thought provoking insights into programming, and highlight accomplishments related to interpretation and programming across the agency.

The comments from the field and headquarters have been overwhelmingly positive, and the Interpretive Unit thanks all who have taken the time to offer positive feedback and constructive criticism. Please continue to do so. We also want **YOU** to continue to assist in providing content for the newsletter. We are here for you and this is your newsletter.

Best wishes on a happy and safe Summer!



Park Spotlight: Red Top Mountain

Red Top Mountain State Park, covering more than 1700 acres, gets its name from the bright red ore found there. The area around Red Top was a major hub of the iron industry in the 1800s. Located a stone's throw off the I-75 corridor, between Atlanta and Chattanooga, Red Top is one of the most accessible jewels in the Georgia State Parks System. From fishing and skiing on Lake Allatoona to photographing our resident osprey, guests can have exciting adventures as they explore the 15 miles of trails throughout the property. Sunning on the sandy beach or playing one of the park system's original mini-golf courses, cottage goers and campers return year after year to enjoy this hidden gem that's miles apart — in their own backyard!

By: Kelly Howington, Manager RTM

Dahlonega Gold Museum Exhibits Completed!

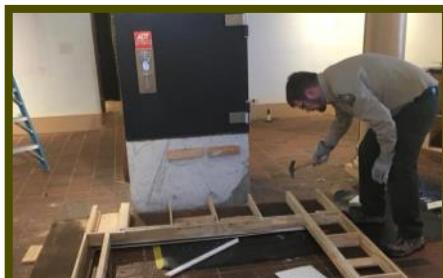
The Dahlonega Gold Museum has reopened. The occasion was marked with a ribbon cutting ceremony on June 18, 2018, featuring Deputy DNR Commissioner Terry West, PRHS Director Becky Kelley, State Senator Steve Gooch, and Dahlonega Mayor Sam Norton, along with many other prominent local and state representatives.



Ribbon cutting ceremony

As Ellen Graham, Chief Naturalist writes, "This project was a great accomplishment for PRHS as it is the first museum renovation the division has seen since 2004. Thanks to Judd Smith who has steered this project - from reviewing the design plans three years ago, to writing the theme statement that is now prominently featured in the Gold Museum entrance, and through every phase in between. PRHS also thanks the Historic Preservation Division (HPD) staff for being integral in this project. Together with HPD, the site staff and other staff from Region 1, the entire team worked many long days moving out old exhibits and carefully storing artifacts to prep for the new exhibits. Over the past few months Site Manager, Sam McDuffie has gone above and beyond to ensure that the site was ready for the reopening. While it may be as Josh Headlee, of HPD stated, 'just part of the job,' I thank all involved in this collaborative effort."

The major focus of the renovation was to highlight the site's interpretive theme statement — *The Dahlonega Gold Museum, one of Georgia's oldest standing courthouse buildings, is a sentinel reminder of the spirit of America's first major gold rush, a guardian of the region's rich cultural legacy and is a symbolic heart for a historic community.*"



Removing old exhibits and casework



The exhibits were developed by Signature Design and built and installed by Building Four Fabrication. They showcase three main elements: the Georgia gold rush, the Dahlonega Branch Mint, and the building's long use as a courthouse. Visitors will have the opportunity to have an interactive experience pushing a dynamite plunger, utilizing an LED map showing historical and geological information about the region and viewing courthouse rooms laid out as they would have appeared in the 1940's.

The building, which has been a state historic site since 1967, is the old Lumpkin County Courthouse. The exhibits focus on creating a quality immersive interpretive experience - taking visitors on a journey through North Georgia history. The museum starts the journey with the story of the first gold discovery and leads into the effects of that discovery on the area and its impacts on the Cherokee people living there. It then continues through the early years of the gold rush and into the establishment of the town, courthouse,

and why the branch mint was built there. A focal point is the gold itself, with a full set of the Dahlonega coins and other gold items on display.

Upstairs, visitors continue their journey through the mining industry and the history of the courthouse itself.



Old versus new — a BIG difference!



A retail area redesigned by Penny Dunn and her staff, pays tribute to the old "General Store" concept with fixtures and products that harken back to the days of Dahlonega's past. With all this, in addition to two new exterior interpretive panels, the Dahlonega Gold Museum is ready to tell the Gold Rush and Courthouse history to visitors for years to come.

By: Judd Smith, Parks Historian

Meet the Interpreter: Erica Bettross, Panola Mountain State Park



Erica Bettross was born and raised in Georgia. While she has only worked with PRHS for nine months, she has been around parks her whole life. Erica graduated from Georgia College and State University with a BA in Museum Management. She then went on to get her Masters from Middle Tennessee State University in Public History.

Erica has worked in informal education and the museum sector for over ten years. She has worked in museums in Georgia, Tennessee, and Colorado. Prior to moving back to Georgia, Erica worked as the Director of Education while the Pike's Peak Children's Museum was in the process of being built. Erica did a short internship at Elijah Clark State Park before being promoted to Interpretive Ranger at Panola

Mountain State Park in September of 2017.

Erica currently conducts school programs, guided mountain hikes, parents and tots programs, homeschool programs and assists with archery classes and tree climbing. She has also started a Sweaty Saturday program the first Saturday of every month and a Movies in the Park series the last Saturday of the month.

Her hobbies include kayaking, hiking, reading crime novels, and watching movies. When she is not guiding guests up Panola Mountain, you can typically find her paddling down the Yellow River, walking her dog, Bella, or renovating her historic home.

*By: Jamie Madden,
Park Manager PMT*

Junior Ranger Books Coming Soon!

The current state-wide Junior Ranger (JR) program has been in place since 2002 and the Programming Advisory Committee (PAC) agreed that it was time to update the books. Since 2014, the project has spanned three different PACs with input from around 20 PRHS staff members who provided initial ideas, wrote content, and reviewed and edited over 150 pages.

The goal is to have all the books printed this fall and have the books and reward items shipped to each site before January 2019. The PAC also recommended that the Annual Program Theme for 2019 be “Junior Ranger” to offer extra promotions and programs as we launch the new books. More information about the 2019 JR Annual Program Theme will be sent, but begin thinking of new ways to offer JR programs on school holidays or seasonal breaks, as outreach programs in your communities, and

explore ideas for new camp themes.



What's New? A park ranger will still need to do the pledge with each JR prior to issuing the badge and you will still need to sign off in each book. Note that the new pledge will have

a “fill in the blank” area that the JR will complete for you to read aloud. Another change is that you will no longer send a copy to Ellen in Headquarters. We will offer a reward that will be a plastic badge in the shape of Georgia with a different name drop for each site. There will also be a section in the book for the JR to use similar to a “passport” program that allows the JR to continue to explore the outdoors. Five different sticker/iron on patches for the various categories listed on the tear out card will be inside each book. They are issued after the JR completes 5 in each category for: Camp Out (camping), Wet Zone (water related activities) Kids Care! (volunteering in a park) Blaze a Trail! (trail use) Outdoor Fun (outside play).

The Interpretive Unit would

like to thank all staff members who helped to make this project come to fruition. One of the key inspirations for this new program was Angie Johnson, which is why she became the ranger on the cover of the new book. Special appreciation also goes out to Holly Holdsworth, former Manager at Skidaway Island and Valarie Ikhwan, Manager at Fort King George who have worked tirelessly on this project.

Work continues on designing reward items, recommending retail items, printing books and getting them shipped to each site. For now, continue using the old Junior Ranger books and patches until January 2019, and stay tuned for more details.

*By: Ellen Graham,
Chief Naturalist*

Seasonal Naturalist Training 2018

The Interpretive Unit is proud to announce that 21 very gifted interpreters attended the sixteen hour training course, held May 14–16, 2018, at historic Indian Springs State Park.

Based on comments received from previous trainings, this year the Interpretive Unit made significant changes to the way the course was presented. Changes included much more audience participation, group problem solving, and teamwork among the class members.

The participants worked in groups to develop a program theme and title based on a randomly drawn item. This helped them to be able incorporate the ideas of thematic interpretation into programs, which is key to developing quality connections between our visitors and our resources.

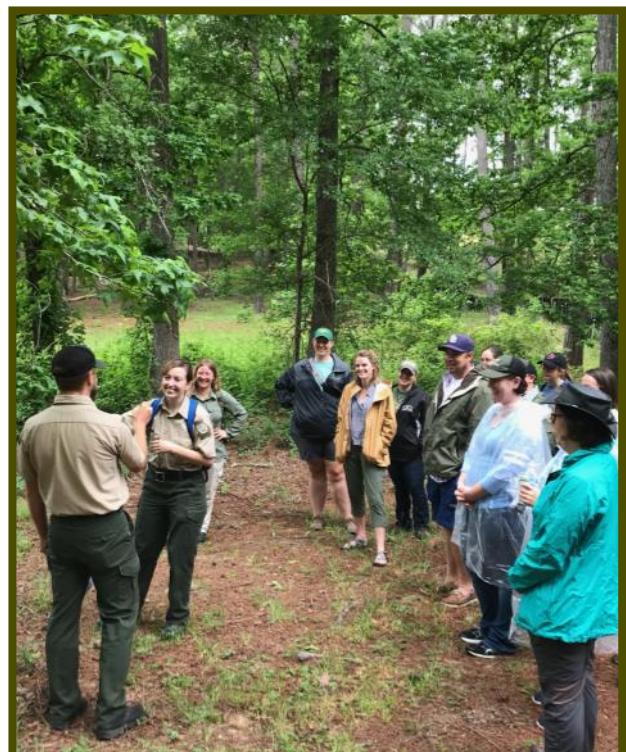
Our Program Action Committee (PAC) members helped conduct

the training by offering a “scenario” based hike that incorporated elements that could come up during a program, and allowed the students to see how veteran interpreters handle the unexpected. Our thanks to Christina Orr, Josh Snead, Breanna Walker, Sarah Kelehear and Valarie Ikhwan for their perspective.

Another highlight of the training was having WRD Interpreter Pete Griffin on hand to demonstrate proper care and handling of live reptiles and the do's and don'ts of live animal presentations.

Planning and executing a nature hike, living history programming, ADA programming, leading structured and unstructured play, astronomy basics, and several other interpretive topics were also covered in the session.

Kudos to all involved with this great training.



Josh Snead and Sarah Kelehear role play a scenario

A.H. Stephens CCC Tower Exhibits Installed



A CCC tool display and history panel inside the tower

In April, 2018, the finishing touches on the renovated Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) Tower at A.H. Stephens State Park (AHS) were completed.

The 1930's tower is one of several structures at AHS that were constructed by the CCC and was used as a water tower and fire lookout tower for several years.

The renovation project began over a year ago with repairs to the tower's infrastructure including a new roof, rotten wood repair, building a stairway to allow visitors access to the cupola, and several other important tasks.

While the building was being repaired and the new roof and windows put in place to prevent leaks, the Interpretive Unit contracted with a vendor to

develop several interpretive panels to tell the story of CCC Company 478 which built the tower. Additionally, Parks Historian Judd Smith worked with Josh Headlee of the Historic Preservation Division to develop a themed exhibit to showcase tools and equipment used the men of the CCC.

Park Manager Andre McLendon and his terrific staff at the park helped install the panels and other items needed for the exhibits.

This was a total DNR team effort with Engineering and Construction Division overseeing the construction process, Historic Preservation Division committing their knowledge and expertise, and our own PRHS personnel contributing their time and resources.

Take a trip to AHS and see it!

Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

2500 Hwy 155 SW
Stockbridge, GA 30281

gastateparks.org

A Great Time, Every Time!

Power House Ruins at High Falls State Park, 2016



Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

Freeman Tilden writes in *Interpreting Our Heritage*, that for all Benjamin Franklin's accomplishments, at the end of his life, he began his last will and testament with, “‘Benjamin Franklin, Printer. . .’ Printing was his craft; in other fields he considered himself as a happy amateur.”

To a modern reader, the word “amateur” tends to denote something that is not professional, or an inferior product, but the word’s original meaning provides a clue why Franklin considered himself an amateur in so many pursuits.

The word comes from the Latin root “amare” - meaning “to love.” Thus amateur means to do something for the love of it without an expectation of payment or benefit. Tilden writes that as interpreters, our goal should be to, “connect visitor’s own lives with something.” At the end of a program

the best result an interpreter can hope for is to have a visitor think, “This is something I believe I could be interested in.”

Use your programs to turn people into “happy amateurs.” They may never earn a degree in ornithology, but you can influence someone to become a life long advocate for birding with a bird list containing hundreds of birds from around the world. You can’t make someone an expert on the American Revolution in one tour, but you can inspire them to become that happy amateur that promotes battlefield protection around the country. There is no telling how many future Benjamin Franklin’s that may be influenced by a park program.

You can’t do it by reciting facts, handing out packets of brochures, or pointing out landmarks on a hike, however. Instead your interpretation

has to be, as Tilden writes, “. . . a thing of the spirit. . . it must be directed in spirit and in truth.”

Even Tilden knew this was a lofty goal, but as he writes, “We, cannot at best do quite that for everybody. I say the ideal is good, though.”

As it was true for interpreters in Freeman Tilden’s era, it is also true for us as well. Challenge yourselves to make happy amateurs of your visitors, your interpretation will be better for it.

Until Next Time,

**Happy Programming,
Judd Smith**