



**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 2017*

Northern Harrier - *Circus cyaneus*



**Winter 2017**

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**PRHS Interpretive  
Newsletter  
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Frozen waterfall at Cloudland Canyon State Park, 1958

# ROADS LESS TRAVELED

## Marketing Moment

### Writing Eye-Catching Event Descriptions

The 2017 calendar on GaStateParks.org makes me so proud of our organization. You all are offering fantastic programs. Each month, I send a calendar to publications using a sampling from [www.GaStateParks.org/events](http://www.GaStateParks.org/events).

Craft eye-catching titles and start the description with the most interesting things people will do or see. This increases our chances of being publicized by media.

Here's a good example:

*Paddle Under the Swamp's Stars  
Join a ranger-led paddle as the sun sets over the Okefenokee Swamp. Watch as day fades into night, leaving stars and the moon to guide our way. Look for alligator eyes glowing from your flashlight, take in the Milky Way and enjoy this relaxing 2 mile paddle.*

Find more tips on writing eye-catching event listings at

<http://gastateparks.org/Staff/Resources/EventInstructions.pdf>

By: Kim Hatcher, Marketing

## Interpretive News:

### Happy New Year 2017!

It is hard to believe that we are once again in a new year. We had so many successes last year to build on and our interpretive efforts continue to motivate, relate and connect people to our great resources. With this year's theme of "Soak It In," take every opportunity you can to highlight the need for conservation and protection of our water resources. If you have not done so already, don't hesitate to reach out to our DNR environmental education partners in Fisheries, Coastal Resources and Wildlife Resources and see if they can assist you with putting on programs that highlight important topics related to water. You will find them to be excellent and knowledgeable allies.

Here's to a wonderful start to 2017!



Indian Springs State Park



## Park Spotlight

Located on the western edge of Lookout Mountain, Cloudland Canyon is one of the most scenic parks in the state. Deep canyons, sandstone cliffs, caves, waterfalls, cascading creeks, dense woodland and abundant wildlife offer ample outdoor recreation opportunities. Hiking and mountain biking trails abound. The park also includes an 18-hole disc golf course, a fishing pond, trails for horseback riding, picnicking grounds and numerous interpretive programs. Guests seeking an overnight experience can choose from fully equipped and comfortable cottages, quirky yurts or several different types of camping and backpacking options. Come enjoy the great outdoors at Cloudland Canyon State Park.

By: Scott Einberger, Manager, CLC

## Meet the Interpreter: Julie House, Hard Labor Creek State Park



Julie House is the Interpretive Ranger at Hard Labor Creek State Park. She is originally from Orlando, Florida, and attended Augusta State University, where she studied Art History. Julie worked in the Hospitality/Resort industry, where she served as a Youth Program Manager prior to joining PRHS in June of 2015.

Julie served as the part-time interpreter at A.H. Stephens State Historic Park where she led nature walks, conducted historic site programming and led tours of Alexander Stephens home, Liberty Hall. While there she also helped develop the park's Interpretive-Recreation Plan. Following a successful year there, Julie was promoted to the Interpretive Ranger position at Hard Labor Creek.

At Hard Labor Creek State Park, Julie is responsible for providing a wide range of programs, including educational and recreation events for park guests. She leads nature hikes, kayak tours, beginner archery courses, hosts arts and crafts programs, and educates visitors to Hard Labor Creek on the history of the land. She has an avid interest in the park's Civilian Conservation Corps history. She is assisting the Park Manager and Assistant Manager in developing ways to further tell the unique history of the CCC and its role in developing the park.

Julie's hobbies include canoeing, kayaking, horseback riding, singing and playing the guitar.

## Program Trends, Ideas and Inspiration

Periodically, we attend conferences outside of PRHS and often hear new and innovative ideas. In 2016, I attended both the U.S. Play Coalition Conference in Clemson, S.C. and the Southeastern State Parks Program Seminar (SSPPS) in Marion, VA. Attending these conferences has allowed me to build new professional relationships and inspired me to see other perspectives from professionals who work in similar settings.

Here are some great ideas I heard at these conferences:

**“Beneath the Surface:”** A program to study living things under water at night. This park put an LED light underwater to offer nighttime programs and learn about things in the lake: <http://www.dcr.virginia.gov/state-parks/blog/lets-go-on-an-adventure-holiday-lake-state-park> and <https://www.flickr.com/photos/vastateparksstaff/27803009716/in/dateposted/>  
**Bird or Butterfly Migration Activities:** Can you create your own activity? There are

many ideas online:

**Flying Wild:** <http://www.flyingwild.org/documents/167-170.pdf>

**International Bird Day resources:** <http://www.birdday.org/birdday/free-materials>

**Lesson Plans:** [https://migration.pwnet.org/stopovers/santa\\_maria\\_lessons.php](https://migration.pwnet.org/stopovers/santa_maria_lessons.php)

**Monarch Butterfly Migration:** <http://www.learner.org/jnorth/tm/monarch/Resources.html>

**Bug Programs lead to future rangers:** “The Bug Is the Thing.” Teach kids about bugs and they will be more likely to want to be outdoors. Our goal should be to nurture future generations of ecological stewards, since studies show that teens “were more likely to prefer indoor social recreation activities and express significantly less interest in future careers working in outdoor environments.”

<http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/abs/10.1177/001391659702900401>

**Combining two ideas** to create one new bigger and better idea:

“Canorkling” – canoe trips on the river combined with snorkeling

“Interpretnighting” – interpretation at night – rent the fire tower at night; night at the museum

“Interpretising” – interpretation combined with merchandising – retail shown in a canoe

“History Gone Wild”: Consider combining both history and nature. These can attract new audiences and open new partnerships. Can you create a history and nature walk combination?

**Fitness:** Think about adding a fitness component to your Junior Ranger Camps, and creating programs for fitness that correlate to the Georgia Performance Standards.

<http://www.playcore.com/playon.html>

**Nature Play:** Interested to see how other countries foster nature play in their children? <https://youtu.be/RIKhp6CFp9Q>

Remember to always present yourself well as a public speaker. The public notices 55% body language & appearance, 7% content and 38% tone of voice.

Finally, I want to share my great takeaway from this year's SSPPS from the Virginia State Parks Director Craig Seaver who said, **“A park ranger is not hired; they are called. . .”** I encourage you to think about what made you choose this profession and consider ways to share that passion with our guests through your interpretive programs.

*By: Ellen Graham,  
Chief Naturalist*



## Col. Joseph McAllister Items Donated to His Namesake, Fort McAllister State Park



In the 1860's the McAllister family owned a sprawling plantation called Strathy Hall. Located near the Ogeechee River, the McAllister property included a high point of land near a strategic bend in the river known as Genesis Point. When the Civil War broke out it became a suitable location for a battery of artillery and later a fort designed to protect the river approaches to Savannah and its important railroads.

The fort was named after Joseph L. McAllister, the landowner, who went on to serve as an officer in the 5th Georgia Cavalry. Posted to Virginia with his unit, Lt. Colonel McAllister was killed in action at the battle of Trevilian Station in 1864. Now, 150

years later, several of Colonel McAllister's possessions have found their way back to the park named for him.

The items were generously donated to Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites by Carolyn Swiggart in memory of naval officer Lt. James Habersham Swiggart, a McAllister descendent who gave his life in service to his country.

These military and personal effects of Colonel McAllister provide historians a glimpse into the life of a Confederate officer - a small window which we can peek through to see the past.

The collection includes a period photograph of Colonel McAllister, a gray wool vest with military buttons, a set of spurs, a model 1860 cavalry saber with a leather sword knot, an English made gentleman's shaving kit, and a set of gold bullion colonel's rank stars sewn on a patch of uniform cloth.

The next step in the process will be conservation, particularly the clothing items. Once that process is complete, the items will be put on permanent display in the Fort McAllister museum to engage visitors with this cultural resource.

*By: Judd Smith,  
Interpretive Specialist*

## Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

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**gastateparks.org**

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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.



Victoria Bryant State Park, Royston, Georgia

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## Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

The noted French author Marguerite Yourcenar wrote, “Keep one’s shadow out of the picture; leave the mirror clean of one’s own breath.” She was writing about the dangers of viewing the past through the lens of present day morals and ideals. For natural and cultural interpreters we can take this statement as a warning that we must maintain a degree of objectivity in our interpretation while inspiring people to think about or engage with a subject. It is a true difficulty with the interpreter’s craft— building meaningful relationships while holding the mirror a breath’s distance away.

As interpreters, we seek to provoke thoughts and actions with our programs. We do that most effectively by “putting a piece of ourselves” into our programs. This

helps to make the subject more relatable to the audience and provides a personal connection to the resource being interpreted. It is altogether fitting that we do this, but it also brings in an inherent bias, or subjectivity, towards our subject matter. What we must attempt to avoid however, is allowing too much bias to creep into our programs. We must be passionate about our subject but we must also maintain the perspective that many topics have two or more sides, and it is a distinct possibility you may be programming for individuals or groups that possess those differing viewpoints.

You can balance subjectivity and objectivity by thoroughly researching your topic. Anticipate questions that will come from different points of view and be prepared to share why

you conduct the program the way you do. Many people will question your facts. Be prepared to share your sources with them.

If you sense a disagreement that could potentially de-rail your program, offer to discuss the viewpoint with your guest after the program. Above all, continue with your program and don’t let a different viewpoint or comments from a participant throw you off from your interpretive message.

Remember, it is your program, make the most of it.

Until next time,

*Happy Programming!*  
**Judd Smith**