



**GEORGIA**  
DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

# ROADS LESS TRAVELED

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

**Volume: 1**

**Issue: 3**

**Winter 2016**



Yellow -bellied Sapsucker -*Sphyrapicus varius*

# Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

Winter 2016

Volume 1, Issue 3

PRHS Interpretive  
Newsletter  
Personnel

Judd Smith  
Interpretive  
Specialist-  
Writer and Editor

Ellen Graham  
Chief Naturalist-  
Editor

Phil Delestrez  
Resource Manager-  
Cover Artist

## DID YOU KNOW?

From 2011-2015, PRHS participated in the commemoration of the Sesquicentennial of the American Civil War.

Through their interpretation of the human experience of the civilian population, the battles of the Atlanta Campaign and Sherman's March to the Sea, and so much more, PRHS interpreters and volunteers told the story of the most tragic four years in our nation's history.

To all who conducted programs, led tours, presented living history events, managed Junior Ranger camps and made history come alive for thousands of visitors, Thank You!



# ROADS LESS TRAVELED

## Interpretive News:

### 2015: A Year in Review

2015 was a tremendous year for Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, particularly in our programming and interpretive efforts. Throughout the year PRHS engaged in over 21,500 programs and connected more than 300,000 park visitors to unique state park and historic site resources. From state-wide initiatives like the *Read Across Georgia* program where PRHS rangers went into the schools with First Lady Sandra Deal to promote outdoor play and camping, to seizing new trends in recreation like stand up paddle boarding, PRHS interpreters made the year exciting for record numbers of park visitors. The AmeriCorps Ranger grant provided huge dividends both in natural resource management and programming. In the spring our interpreters gained valuable skills in play worker training designed to facilitate free play. The addition of two play parts trailers to our programming tool box furthered our ability to get children active and engaged with the world around them. Likewise interpretive training in social media gave our interpreters the ability to reach the millennial generation, a group that is highly under served, but is invaluable to our success as an agency. Here's to looking back at the success of 2015 and the promise of a great 2016.

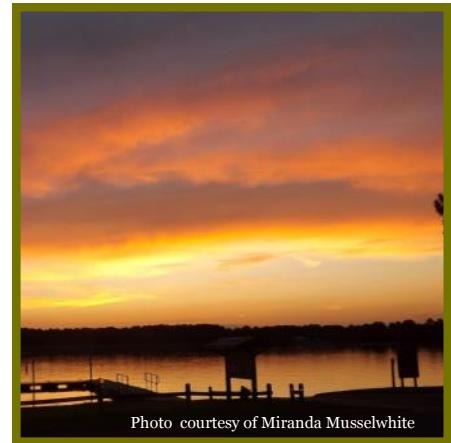


Photo courtesy of Miranda Musselwhite

### Park Spotlight:

Reed Bingham State Park, in Adel, Georgia, is named for Amos Reed Bingham. In the 1930s he had a vision of harnessing the water power of the Little River with a hydroelectric dam, but the water flow of the river was not sufficient enough to generate power. He then pushed to create a recreation area around what is now a 375 acre lake with camping and beautiful scenery. Opened in 1965, the park is known for its coastal plain ecosystem. The park staff interprets native species including bald eagles, gopher tortoises, rare plant life, and of course, alligators.

HAPPY NEW YEAR!!!

## Meet the Interpreter: Amy Waite



Amy Waite is the Interpretive Ranger at F.D. Roosevelt State Park, located in the heart of Harris County. With FDR being the largest state park in Georgia, Amy lives the ethos of interpretation by, "bridging the hopes of the past and preserving for the future."

Amy came to FDR with an extensive knowledge and background in history, programming, event planning, conservation, natural and cultural resources, and education. She received her BS in Biology and graduate work in Education from North Georgia College and State University. She is an active board member of EE Alliance of GA, a

facilitator for Project Wild/Aquatic Wild, Project Learning Tree, Monarchs Across Georgia, and Project WET. She is also certified in the Georgia Adopt A Stream, Roots and Shoots, and Waste In Place programs. Amy has been with FDR since 2012 and has revitalized their programming efforts.

She serves her community by volunteering, educating home schooled children, and is an integral part of the many successes at FDR State Park. She can answer almost any question thrown her way. If there is anything you'd like to know about FDR, or the area of Pine Mountain and the valley, Amy is your Interpretive Ranger!

## Leading the Way with First Day Hikes

2016 marks the fifth anniversary of the First Day Hike initiative. The program is sponsored by the National Association of State Park Directors and is a signature event for state parks. It was created to showcase "close to home" state parks and the goal is to connect people to nature, promote year-round recreation and foster healthy outdoor lifestyles.

In 2016, Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites conducted 56 hikes with 1,748 participants. YOU are the reasons for this success!

Beginning in 2017, we will be the National Coordinating Agency for this program and Chief Naturalist Ellen Graham will be the contact person for all fifty states. Georgia PRHS is leading the way!



### POINT OF INTEREST

In spite of adverse weather conditions across most of the state, PRHS staff and volunteers led hikes totaling over 93 miles on January 1, 2016. That is a cumulative total of over 4,723 miles by the 1,748 participants!

## Play Parts are Rolling!

As part of our commitment to bring kids into the outdoors and engage in free play, earlier this year PRHS invested in two sets of Play Parts. Essentially big blocks, tubes, and other shapes of foam, these Imagination Playground Play Parts can be added to event offerings as a means of encouraging unstructured play. Supervised by interpretive staff, the free play encourages

creativity, problem solving, cooperation, and communication among children.

Through the assistance of our Marketing Unit the Play Parts' trailers were given our logo and Scout the GoPher. Many thanks to Sally Winchester and her team!

If you want to book the play parts for your event sign up at:



## New Ideas: Capturing the Shoulder Season



Scout Camp at Reed Bingham State Park—2015

A recent interpretive article expounded the virtues of capturing those campers and other park guests during the shoulder seasons (those months where your visitation and occupancy decline from peak times). Consider hosting camps during fall breaks and short holiday weekends. For example the Crooked River AmeriCorps members hosted a one day camp during the Christmas break. Many times campers are looking for things to do and offering camps may be a good way to attract families in otherwise slower periods. Themed camps focusing on a certain segment can also be a way to generate programs in the shoulder season. Adventure camps, bug camps,

eco-camps, home school camps, teen camps are all possibilities. Mistletoe State Park hosted a camp that targeted both a toddler age group as well as older kids.

Think about themed weekends. One private park took every weekend in October and did a Halloween theme. One weekend they offered a "haunted" hayride, another they sponsored a decorate your campsite program and on Halloween led a trick or treat walk through the campground. Be creative and have fun!

Lastly, check with your local school systems to get holiday schedules in order to plan ahead for the shoulder seasons.

## It's Our 85th Anniversary!

Help celebrate the history of our Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division as 2016 marks our 85th Anniversary. In 1931, state officials created the State Parks Division, then under the Department of Forestry. Billy Townsend, former Parks Historian, wrote, "The Georgia State Parks System began in 1931, with the reorganization of the

State Board of Forestry... Under this department, the Forestry Board established two parks; Indian Springs and Vogel which were called, "Forest Parks." This began a system which soon grew to five parks with the addition of Santo Domingo (now Boys Estate near Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation), Alexander H. Stephens, Chehaw (currently a

local park) and Pine Mountain (now F.D. Roosevelt)... Although reorganized on several occasions, this Division is the direct ancestor of the current State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division."

Coupled with the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service, 2016 is a special year for

parks. Take the time to build relationships with your local NPS parks and take the opportunity to share information about your park's/site's role in shaping our division over the last 85 years with our visitors.

For more about our history:  
[gastateparks.org/item/67991#History](http://gastateparks.org/item/67991#History)

### DID YOU KNOW?

Indian Springs State Park is the oldest state park in Georgia, created in 1927. It also holds credit for being the oldest state owned recreation land in the nation. Once the site of several large resort hotels, Indian Springs also had a working mill and was the site of a CCC camp in the 1930s.

Happy Anniversary PRHS!



# Georgia State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites

2500 Hwy 155 SW  
Suite C  
Stockbridge, GA 30281

## gastateparks.org

*A Great Time, Every Time!*

Overlook at Fort Mountain State Park, October 2015

### 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.



## Parting Thoughts and Takeaways:

### POINT OF INTEREST

A nice online resource that has some great articles, photos, and other handy resource material is [www.nationalparkstraveler.com](http://www.nationalparkstraveler.com).

The site is dedicated to promoting the national park service, but has a good amount of material that would assist interpreters at any park or site.

Take a look and see if there are any ideas that you can use in your programming activities. Some of the information used in this month's parting thoughts was taken from a great article on that website.

As a park ranger you share a long and storied history with all those "rangers" who came before you, dating back through the centuries to medieval England when the King's wardens protected royal forests.

Even the uniform we wear in the execution of our duties is steeped in rich tradition, and none more so than the ubiquitous hat that everyone recognizes as the symbol of park rangers.

Some call it a campaign hat, to others it is a Smokey Bear hat, some even call it a "lemon squeezer" due to its pinched crown. It has a "Montana" peak and has been an official symbol of the park ranger for decades.

In the late 1800s the United States Cavalry patrolled our park lands and wore their campaign hats with a

Montana peak to allow water to better run off the brim as opposed to the more traditional fore and aft crease.

Once the NPS was established in 1916, the campaign hat with its distinctive peak quickly became a staple. For you, who continue the rich legacy and tradition of those rangers from an earlier era, always remember that the uniform and hat are your symbols of office. Wear them correctly and with the pride befitting your profession. They lend credibility to your programs and authority to your voice.

Until next time,

*Happy Programming!*

*Judd Smith*