

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE



Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites Launches “Get Outdoors Georgia” with Free Day in the Parks

New Focus Encourages Georgians to “Get Out. Get Dirty. Get Fit” in the Great Outdoors

Get Out. Get Dirty. Get Fit.

ATLANTA, June 5, 2008 – Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites is launching Get Outdoors Georgia (GO Georgia) a new multi-year initiative to help every Georgian rediscover the great outdoors. GO Georgia kicks off next weekend with a Free Day in the Parks on Saturday, June 14. Admission to all of Georgia’s 63 state parks and historic sites will be free for every visitor. The new initiative invites visitors, especially families and children, to take part in family-friendly, nature-based outdoor recreation in the beautiful surroundings of Georgia’s state parks and historic sites.

“It’s time to reintroduce people to the great outdoors and Father’s Day Weekend is the perfect weekend to kick things off,” said Sally Winchester, marketing and communications manager of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites. “The beginning of summer is a natural time to get outside with friends and family to explore the amazing and diverse treasures within our state parks and historic sites.” The Free Day in the Parks will include special activities at most parks and is made possible by support from The Coca-Cola Company.

The GO Georgia launch coincides with National Great Outdoors Month. Recognizing the opportunity, Governor Sonny Perdue announced the GO Georgia program on Monday at Skidaway Island State Park in Savannah, and declared by proclamation that June is “Georgia Great Outdoors Month.” Noting that almost every Georgia resident lives within 50 miles—or less than an hour’s drive—from at least one of the state’s 63 state parks and historic sites, it’s easier than ever for Georgians to find local activities, events and vacations close by.

GO Georgia is the tangible result of the state’s five-year research and planning effort, the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. The new initiative, which is supported by the Friends of Georgia State Parks and a full marketing campaign, includes several elements: special events and activities throughout the state park system; a new Web site, www.GetOutdoorsGeorgia.org; the introduction of a Library Loan ParkPass Program to make admission to state parks and historic sites accessible through every local public library; and the introduction of the Get Outdoors Georgia Gopher, an easily identifiable mascot.

To help fund and support the initiative and create a healthier state, Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites is working with Friends groups around the state and with corporate sponsors. Recently, Google Inc. signed on as a founding sponsor and will provide key support for additional elements of the program including a YouTube channel dedicated to Get Outdoors Georgia, an interactive Web site program with the Gopher, Google Map applications, and an educational resource bank for educators and parents.

A division of the Department of Natural Resources, Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites preserves and protects the state’s diverse environment and rich history. This past fall, Georgia’s state park system was honored as one of the top three state park systems in the country by the National Recreation and Park Association. “Every element of the park system, whether it’s park management, conservation education, event programming, camping, lodges, or even our golf courses, is designed to create an amazing and memorable outdoor experience,” said Winchester. “Our park rangers manage more than 84,000 acres of public land and one of the most ecologically diverse state park systems in the country.”

The 63 sites include 45 state parks, three state historic parks and 15 historic sites, stretching from the Blue Ridge Mountains to the Colonial Coast. Together, the parks and sites offer an exceptional variety of geography and history, including mountains, canyons, forests,

fields, marshes, waterfalls, lakes, swamps, rivers, battlefields, historic homes and Native American settlements.

More information can be found online at www.GetOutdoorsGeorgia.org or by calling 1 (800) 864-7275.

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Editor's Notes

Key Web Addresses:

www.GeorgiaStateParks.org

www.GetOutdoorsGeorgia.org

NOTE: Free Day in the Parks is not valid at Stone Mountain, Lake Lanier Islands, Jekyll Island or Chattahoochee River NRA because these are not state parks operated by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources.

Images Available:

High-resolution photos of State Parks and Historic Sites are available by request.

High-resolution logos of Get Outdoors Georgia and Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites are available by request.

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