

History of the Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites Division

The formal development of state parks in the United States began in the early 20th Century and grew out of the National Parks movement. Yellowstone became the first national park in 1872, and the National Park System was established 1916. The concept of natural and scenic public recreation areas became immensely popular and Yosemite, Glacier and the Grand Canyon were soon developed. In 1921, six states met to discuss the concept of state parks at the call of then National Park Service Director Stephen Mather. The first National Conference of State Parks decided that the immediate objectives were to provide conservation of natural and scenic resources and to provide recreational outlets and alleviate excessive pressure on the first national parks. The automobile had opened new opportunities for touring Americans and outstanding natural areas and quiet contemplative spots were suddenly accessible. Auto touring rapidly increased and people sought places to visit, recreate and camp.

State forest lands became an immediate target for this type activity and in 1927, Georgia Senate Resolution #21 stated that, "...the Indian Springs Reserve in the County of Butts ... containing ten (10) acres of land with the spring and improvements thereon, is hereby placed under the jurisdiction and control of the State Board of Forestry, the same to be converted and used for a State Park." Georgia, and the U.S. government, view their forests as agricultural areas where trees are crops to be harvested and renewed. The concept of permanent aesthetic natural areas did not fit into this scheme and Georgia soon established a parks system separate from the Georgia Forestry Division.

The Georgia State Parks System began in 1931, with the reorganization of the State Board of Forestry. The reorganization act created a Commission to administer the Department of Forestry and Geological Development. 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). In the reorganization of 1937, a Department of Natural Resources was established with four divisions. They were the Division of Forestry, Division of Wild Life, Division of Mines, Mining and Geology and the Division of State Parks, Historic Sites and Monuments. Although reorganized on several occasions, this Division is the direct ancestor of the current State Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division.

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A.H. Stephens State Park



Taliaferro County

Previous Site Name: Alexander H. Stephens State Memorial Park

Date Established: 1933

Original Acreage: 1,162

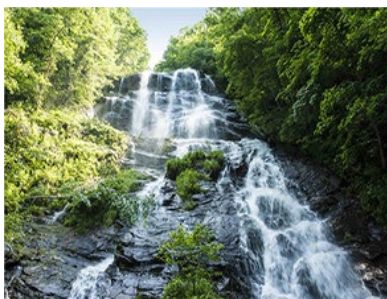
Current Acreage: 1,177

A.H. Stephens State Park originated from property once owned by Alexander Hamilton Stephens, the Vice President of the Confederacy. After his death the property came under the control of the Stephens Monument Commission, a group chartered to protect Liberty Hall, Stephens' home, and its surroundings. In 1933 it was deeded to the state to create Georgia's third oldest state park. Soon after, several hundred acres of land were purchased adjacent to the property by the federal government. This property was later deeded to the state as well to complete most of the park's modern boundary.

Work done in the 1930s and '40s by Ms. Horace Holden, A.H. Stephens' niece, and the United Daughters of the Confederacy led directly to the creation of the park's museum in the 1950s. The Civilian Conservation Corps and Works Progress Administration built the infrastructure of the park in the 1930s. In 2001 the state took over 15 owned by the Taliaferro County Board of Education, which brought the park to its current acreage.

The park's history is linked with the legacy of Alexander H. Stephens. His home, Liberty Hall, is the focal point of the state's acquisition of the park. Furthermore, the activities of the Depression-era programs such as the CCC and WPA enhanced the property's value as not only a historic site, but as a destination for recreation-minded individuals as well. These work groups were responsible for building the park's group shelter, group camp and two lakes, and they laid the infrastructure for the campground and other facilities.

Amicalola Falls State Park



Dawson County

Date Established: 1940

Original Acreage: 407 Acres

Current Acreage: 829 Acres

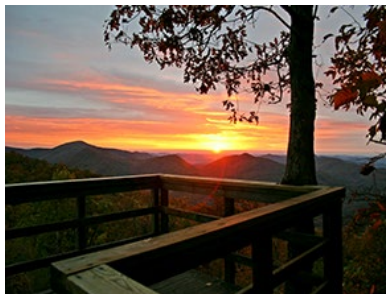
In 1852, a gentleman named Bartley Crane settled near the base of what was known as "Um Ma Calo La" Falls, which is Cherokee for "tumbling waters". At one time, Crane owned several hundred acres in the area, including the falls. He ran a corn and flour mill on the creek near what is now the Visitor Center. Some of this property was lost after he used the land for collateral on a loan. As other settlers moved into the area, Amicalola Campground was established near the bottom of Amicalola Falls and was often used for religious revival services. During the Civil War, the campground was used as a mustering ground for both Union and

Confederate troops. When Bartley Crane died, his property passed to John Hunter Crane, who was Bartley's son. John Crane eventually bought back some of the property that his father had lost and operated a store and barber shop, and rented cabins near the base of the falls. In 1940, he sold the property to the state of Georgia for the establishment of Amicalola Falls State Park.

Since its establishment as a park, Amicalola Falls has seen many changes. At the park's founding in 1940, the 2000+-mile Appalachian Trail passed through its borders until 1958, when the southern terminus was moved to Springer Mountain. Visitors frequented Amicalola Lake until it was drained in 1977 because of concern about the earthen dam. In 1991, the Lodge at Amicalola Falls added 57 guest rooms, a conference center, and restaurant to the park's facilities. In 2001, steps were added connecting the base of the falls to the top of the falls in order to make the area more safely accessible. Today, Georgia's 12th state park continues to be home to Amicalola Falls, which at 729 feet is the highest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi River.

In 1997, a contract was awarded to AMFAC Corporation to operate the lodge, cottages, and campground, while the DNR retained operation of the park. In March 2001, the contract with AMFAC was terminated and the DNR assumed operation of Amicalola Falls Lodge, cottages, and campground again. Since 2013 Coral Hospitality has been contracted to manage the lodge facilities as well as the entire park.

Black Rock Mountain State Park



Rabun County

Date Established: 1952

Original Acreage: Under 1,000

Current Acreage: 1,743

By most accounts, the idea of a park on Black Rock Mountain's summit was first conceived by Rabun County native John V. Arrendale (1878–1972) sometime in the mid 1930s. Arrendale began efforts to purchase land from a variety of landowners one parcel at a time, and the first 70-acre tract was acquired in 1938. Many early parcels were first deeded to Rabun County, then transferred from the county to the state in a single transaction. Land acquisition efforts continued from the late '30s through the 1940s, and Black Rock Mountain State Park was officially established in 1952.

The most recent large purchase was finalized in 1995 under Governor Zell Miller's Preservation 2000 program when two parcels totaling 301 acres were added to the park. This purchase served to protect the mountain's scenic south-slope immediately below the summit visitor center, along with a significant portion of Taylor Cove on the mountain's north side. Straddling the Eastern Continental Divide and reaching altitudes of 3,640 feet, Black Rock Mountain contains the highest land inside the Georgia State Park system. In addition to Black Rock, the park's highest, four other knobs exceed 3,000 feet. The park, with yearly precipitation

approaching 80 inches, protects exceedingly lush Appalachian forests and contains especially rich environments and diverse eco-systems.

Black bears are sighted in the park on a regular basis. Other wildlife includes bobcat, fox, groundhog, raccoon, opossum, rabbit, squirrel, chipmunk, red-tailed hawks, wild turkey, ruffed grouse, and a variety of songbirds. A northern hardwood forest covers much of the park and dense thickets of laurel and rhododendron line cascading streams. Deep mountain coves protect stands of white pine and Eastern hemlock, and numerous species of wildflowers and ferns carpet the forest floor. Some of the park's most popular features are its scenic overlooks, with Blue Ridge and Great Smoky mountain vistas exceeding 80 miles in four states.

Chattahoochee Bend State Park



Date Established: 2011

Acreage: 2,910

Named for its location on a peninsula formed by a natural bend in the Chattahoochee River, the park was once owned by timber companies that planted hundreds of acres of pines on the property. In the late 1990's, a concerted effort by local Coweta County residents and their elected officials provided funds for the acquisition and development the acreage of what is now Chattahoochee Bend State Park. Following several years of development, the park opened on July 1, 2011, and is a haven for paddlers, campers, hikers and anglers.

Chief Vann House Historic Site



Murray County

Date Established: 1952

Original Acreage: 3

Current Acreage: 99

By the 1940s the once elegant Chief Vann mansion, the first brick home in the Cherokee Nation, had fallen into disrepair. Concerned local citizens raised \$5,000 and purchased the house in 1952. It was donated to the state of Georgia and a six-year restoration began, which included repainting the mansion according to its original color scheme of blue, red, green, and yellow. Since 1958 the Chief Vann House has been open to the public as a state historic site operated by the Georgia Historical Commission and later by the State Parks and Historic Sites Division of the Department of Natural Resources.

In 2002 the Springplace Moravian Cemetery next to the Vann House was donated to the state and became part of the historic site. A new interpretive center also opened that same year. Eighty-five additional acres of the former Vann Plantation became state property in 2005 after

a successful fundraising campaign, which raised \$1.5 million to preserve an historic tract next to the mansion that was threatened with commercial and residential development.

In the 1790s James Vann became a Cherokee Indian political leader and wealthy businessman. He established the largest and most prosperous plantation in the Cherokee Nation that once covered 1,000 acres of what is now Murray County. In 1804 he completed construction of a beautiful two-and-a-half story brick home that was the most elegant and expensive in the Cherokee Nation.

Chief Vann was murdered in 1809 and his son Joseph inherited the brick mansion and plantation. Joseph was also a political leader in the Cherokee Nation and became even more wealthy than his father. In the 1830s almost the entire Cherokee Nation was forced west by state and federal troops on the Trail of Tears. The Vann family lost its elegant home and plantation and had to rebuild near the Arkansas River in Oklahoma. Today the Vann House survives as Georgia's most original and best-preserved historic Cherokee Indian home.

Cloudland Canyon State Park



Dade County

Date Established: 1938

Original Acreage: 1,924

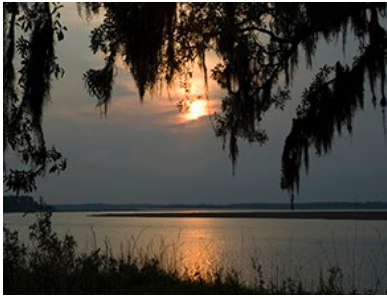
Current Acreage: 3,485

Valued for its rugged beauty and unique geological formations, Cloudland Canyon was designated a state park in 1938 when the state began acquiring land from private owners. Two of these were the Mathews and McCaig families who still live in the area today. Land acquisitions continue sporadically as new property becomes available.

The landscape was shaped by erosion of sandstone over many millions of years to form the canyons of Bear and Daniels creeks. Because of the difficulty of accessing much of the terrain, sections of the park avoided the ravages of industrialization, and old-growth Yellow Poplar, Hemlock, Mountain Laurel, and Catawba Rhododendron can still be found in certain areas.

Currently, Cloudland Canyon offers a variety of trails snaking through some of the most pristine and beautiful wilderness in the state; among these are a Waterfall, Backcountry and Rim trails. The gorgeous geology of the canyons and the variety of rare flora within them render Cloudland Canyon a special and unique wilderness resource.

Crooked River State Park



Camden County
Previous Site Name: Elliot's Plantation
Date Established: March 7, 1939
Original Acreage: 504 Acres
Current Acreage: 504 Acres

The earliest residents of Crooked River State Park were the Gule and the Timucua Indians who were pushed out and moved southward in the 1700s. Once a Royal Land Grant, Crooked River State Park was confiscated at the end of the revolution and owned by Robert Montfort.

In 1792 Alexander Elliot purchased the area of the park known today as Elliott's Bluff. Records indicate in 1824 John H. McIntosh owned Mush Bluff, south of the park and Elliott's Bluff. Evidence of this plantation era and earlier times remain on the park's grounds. Old bottles, planted pines and oyster shell middens are found along the marsh edge on the east side of the park. The unofficial opening day of the park was March 27, 1947.

Crooked River State Park has many rare Georgia plant species and habitats. A salt marsh rim surrounds the waterway. Long Leaf Pine, Bay, mixed hardwood, and Maritime Forests are scattered throughout park. The Crooked River and unique forest environments are home to many protected birds, reptiles, and mammals. This valuable aquatic resource and our southern geography allow animal residents and park visitors access year-round. Today the most noticeable difference to the park is the loss of land due to swift tidal currents of the river. Lost to this erosion were the first swimming pool, fishing pier, and grassy field area. Relocating five cottages to a back portion of the park was necessary to avoid the same demise. Natural forces will continue to shape Crooked River State Park as its history transitions through future generations.

Dahlonega Gold Museum Historic Site



Lumpkin County
Previous Site Name: Lumpkin County Courthouse 1836–1966
Date Established: March 1966
Original Acreage: .264 acre
Current Acreage: .264 acre

Lumpkin County gave the courthouse building to the state of Georgia in March 1966 after a new judicial building was constructed in 1965. The restoration of the building by the Georgia Historical Commission and Preservation records of Georgia's gold rush era assure the future conservation of the gold story. The museum was placed on the Historic America Building Survey (HABS) and on the national Register of Historic Places in 1966.

The Dahlonega Gold Museum houses the story of the nation's first notable gold rush. The brick courthouse, built in 1836, is Georgia's second oldest courthouse building still in existence and is also a part of the gold story. The bricks molded from clay on Cane Creek (one mile from Dahlonega) and the mud mortar between them have revealed traces of gold. The museum and Dahlonega's rich history are a significant contribution to tourism in north Georgia.

Don Carter State Park



Date Established: 2013

Acreage: 1,316

Don Carter State Park is Georgia's newest state park opening in 2013. It is the only state park situated on Lake Lanier. The park is named in honor of real-estate executive Don Carter who served on the Georgia Department of Natural Resources board for 29 years and worked diligently for many years to establish a park on

Lake Lanier. Boat ramps provide quick access to the lake and the park offers camping, fishing, swimming and hiking.

Elijah Clark State Park



Lincoln County

Previous name: Elijah Clarke Memorial State Park

Date Established: 1953

Original Acreage: 222

Current Acreage: 477

In 1953 the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leased to the state of Georgia this property for the purpose of creating a state park.

The Corps obtained the property from local landowner J. F. Fortson who became the park's first superintendent. The park is a memorial to a Georgia Revolutionary War Hero and statesman General Elijah Clark. He, his wife Hannah and several of their children are buried on the park. In 1958 a memorial museum was built to honor the men and women who pioneered Georgia and fought for independence.

The park provides a variety of recreational activities on J. Strom Thurmond Lake. The lake covers 72,000 acres and is the largest U.S. Army Corps of Engineers project east of the Mississippi River.

Etowah Indian Mounds State Park



Bartow County

Previous Name: Tumlin Mounds in the 1800s and early 1900s

Date Established: 1953

Original Acreage: 54

Current Acreage: 68

In 1838 Colonel Lewis Tumlin purchased the site after the sixth Georgia land lottery, which removed the property from the Indians. Colonel Tumlin and his descendants served as caretakers of the mounds for almost 120 years. Henry Tumlin sold the mounds and the surrounding property that comprised the ancient Indian city of Etowah to the state of Georgia in 1953. Tumlin, who also became the site's first superintendent, later donated adjoining property to the state. In 1973 Etowah Mounds and 18 other state historic sites and monuments were turned over from the Georgia Historic Commission to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources Parks and Historic Sites Division.

The story of the first Georgians spans thousands of years. As the Mississippian Indian culture came to an end, one of its last great cities lay near the juncture of the Etowah River and Pumpkinvine Creek. Ancestors of the current day Muskogee Creek, the mound builders, arrived at Etowah some time about 900 A.D. The Etowah chiefdom featured advanced agricultural techniques, a government based on lineage, religion, commerce and highly developed ceremonial art. The two 125-pound marble effigies found by archaeologists in the 1950s represent some of the finest Indian art in the country. Artwork on Etowah pottery show incredible attention to detail with patterns becoming more elaborate with time. Typical of most Mississippian towns, the Etowah people erected huge mounds topped with temples for the chief and his family. Mound A at Etowah is believed to be the second highest mound in the country. A burial mound was also constructed as the final resting place of the ruling class. Spanish explorer Hernando de Soto visited the town in August of 1540. Not long after this date the introduction of European diseases decimated most of the population.

Florence Marina State Park



Stewart County

Date Established: 1985

Original Acreage: 72.4

Current Acreage: 173

In 1986, with 72.4 acres of land donated by the shipping business W. C. Bradley Company, the Department of Natural Resources opened Florence Marina State Park located on Lake Walter F. George. The remaining land for the park is leased from the Army Corp of Engineers, which manages the lake, bringing total acreage to 173. In October 1989 the Kirbo Interpretive

Center was donated by the Kirbo family in honor of T. M. and Irene B. Kirbo, one of the founders of the city of Florence.

The park provides access to Lake Walter F. George, a 45,000-acre lake used for fishing, skiing, birding and other activities. The park also provides education on Native American history, early American history of Stewart County, and native wildlife.

Fort King George Historic Site



McIntosh County

Previous Site Name: Fort King George State Park

Date Established: 1940 as Fort King George State Park

1961 as Fort King George Historic Site

Original Acreage: 12

Current Acreage: 22

In the 1930s historian Bessie Lewis pinpointed the exact location of Fort King George using old maps uncovered from the South Carolina State Archives. The fort, built along the Altamaha River in modern-day Georgia, was in use from 1720 to 1727. It was the southernmost fortification of the British Empire in North America. By 1940 Lewis and her local civic group, the Fort King George Association, had convinced the state to purchase the land to preserve it as a historic site and park. In 1961 the site was deeded to the Georgia Historical Commission and began to attract more interest. Locals from McIntosh County began a campaign to restore the fort and use it as an educational facility. By 1970 a museum was built and dedicated on site and was staffed with a superintendent and interpretive resources.

Over the ensuing 35 years, under the direction of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, the fort was slowly reconstructed. By 2004, it was 100 percent authentically reconstructed to its original splendor. In 2002, a ten-acre tract adjacent to the fort site was acquired through help of local fundraising and grants provided from the Georgia Trust for Public Lands. The land was acquired to inhibit encroachment and development adjacent to the site.

Today, Fort King George provides an excellent educational plan and museum that is devoted to helping the public appreciate the history of our state, both before and after its establishment. Various themes of the site's educational offerings include pre-historic Gule Indian culture, the Spanish Missions of the coast in the 16th century, the 18th century struggle for empire in the Southeast, Scottish Highlanders of Colonial Georgia, crafts and trades in the colonies, man's use of the natural environment, and timber milling during the 19th century Industrial Age. The site features living history programs, interpretive resources, exhibits, and a nature trail.

Fort McAllister State Park

Bryan County

Previous Name(s): Richmond Hill State Park, Fort McAllister Historic Site, Fort McAllister Historic Park

Date Established: Fort McAllister Site 1968

Richmond Hill State Park 1970

Fort McAllister Historic Park 1980

Original Acreage: 101

Current Acreage: 1,700

The Fort was abandoned in 1865 once the Union Army dismantled it. In 1925 Henry Ford bought the property, and by the late 1930s had restored the Fort to its Civil War appearance. Ford died in 1945, and International Paper Company purchased the property in 1947. The Fort property was donated to the state of Georgia in the late 1950s and was opened to the public in 1964. The Richmond Hill State Park property was donated in 1970 and combined with Fort McAllister and 1,000 acres of Game Management land to become Fort McAllister Historic Park in 1980. Today the 1,700-acre park offers a museum, historic fort, camping, fishing, hiking trails, boat ramps and rental cottages.

Fort Morris Historic Site



Liberty County

Previous Site Name: Sunbury Historic Site

Date Established: 1968

Original Acreage: 66

Current Acreage: 66

Fort Morris was acquired as the Revolutionary War Fort Morris site. Research revealed the site was more significant than originally believed. The original land to establish Fort Morris Historic Site was purchased on June 14, 1968 from the Liberty County Commissioners. The surrounding area was being subdivided for development, creating a need for preservation of the site. With the help of local citizens, land purchases and acquisitions continued into the 1980s ending with a total of 66 acres. Governor Zell Miller designated 56 of the acres as a Heritage Preserve on November 6, 1998. The manager's residence was built in 1975 and the museum/visitor's center and maintenance barn were built in 1976.

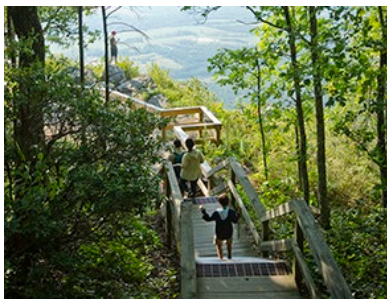


The site is representative of the coastal defense of Georgia as far back as the 1750s, the American Revolution, the War of 1812 and the War Between the States. In 1756 a battery was erected at Sunbury. From this time to the American Revolution, defenses were prepared to protect the site whether it was against the Native Americans, privateers, the British or the Union Army. During the American Revolution defenses were

known as Sunbury Fort or the Fort at Sunbury. There were three expeditions against the British-held Florida that were all based out of Sunbury, with the fort being attacked at least twice: once by Lieutenant Colonel L. V. Fuser in November 1778 who, when requested to surrender the fort, gave the laconic reply, "...come and take it," and once by Colonel John McIntosh. It was during this event that the fort became known as Fort Morris. In January 1779, British General Augustine Prevost captured the rebel fort and renamed it Fort George in honor of the king. Fort Morris was the last patriot post in Georgia to fall to the British and thus the whole state was brought back under Royal Rule.

Visitors are made aware of these historically significant events through a film, the museum, exhibits, special events and programs. The walking tour allows the public to be within the fragile earthwork remains of the fortifications from times past. The magnificent vistas of the saltwater marsh, Medway River, coastal wildlife and St. Catherine's Sound are also a fragile bonus. The heritage and nature of this site are truly priceless and in need of preservation, interpretation and promotion.

Fort Mountain State Park



Murray County

Date Established: 1938

Original Acreage: 1,930

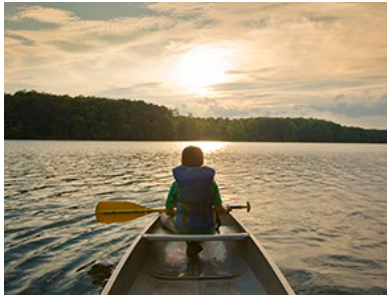
Current Acreage: 3,712

Fort Mountain State Park was established in 1938 after Ivan Allen donated the initial acreage to the state, ensuring the unique cultural and natural resources atop Fort Mountain would be protected for future generations. The original property included campgrounds, a 17-acre lake, day-use area, trails, and later, rental cottages.

In the late 1990s, through federal and state funding, the park expanded its boundaries to include 3,712 acres. This expansion has helped protect the park from the booming mountain realty developments and provided more recreational opportunities. The park has a premier trail system that is second to none in Georgia, including hiking, mountain biking, and horseback riding trails. In 2014 the horse trails were closed due to no one maintaining and operating the stables.

Fort Mountain has many unique resources, including the old fort wall that is estimated to be between 500 and 2,000 years old; its origins are an unsolved mystery even to this day. The CCC constructed many facilities in the park, including the stone fire tower, trails, the lake, and some park buildings. Fort Mountain is home to rare or unusual species such as the Tennessee Leafcup, Yellow and Pink Lady slippers, Rafinesque's Big-eared Bat, and the Eastern Small-footed Bat.

Fort Yargo State Park



Barrow County
Date Established: 1954
Original Acreage: 1,497
Current Acreage: 1,814

Fort Yargo State Park lies in the area that was the border between the Creek and Cherokee nations in the 1700s. The state of Georgia contracted with the Humphrey brothers to build a string of four forts across north Georgia to protect white settlers from Indians. In 1792, Fort Yargo was constructed and remains today.

In the 1950s, C.O. Maddox of the People's Bank of Winder asked five men from the Kiwanis Club and five men from the Lion's Club to assist him in establishing a state park to encompass Fort Yargo. With assistance from Senator Richard B. Russell, 1,497 acres were donated to the state in 1954. Other lands were then acquired to bring the acreage total to 1,814. In the early 1960s, a 260-acre lake was added, along with many recreational facilities.

In 1971, the Will-A-Way Recreation Area was opened to provide a 250-bed group camping facility focused on special needs populations. The facility still serves to meet the needs for a variety of groups ranging from Special Olympics to mental and physical disabilities. Today, Fort Yargo State Park provides recreational opportunities to 400,000 visitors each year. With a lake and rolling pine/hardwood forest, it has become a valued greenspace in a sea of development around metro Atlanta.

Franklin D. Roosevelt State Park



Harris County
Previous Site Name: Pine Mountain State Park
Date Established: 1938
Original Acreage: Unknown
Current Acreage: 9,049

In 1924 Franklin Delano Roosevelt first visited the nearby warm springs searching for relief from polio. In the warm mineral waters of the health spa that had been built in the mid-1800s, he found some relief. He built his home away from home, The Little White House, and often traveled in a car modified with hand controls to Dowdell's Knob. Here the president would have picnics and think about the troubles of the nation that he was to guide through the Depression and World War II. As president, FDR had the task of helping thousands of jobless, hungry people. His solution included various work programs: The Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA), Work Progress Agency (WPA), and the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC).

In 1935, CCC Camp Kimbrough in Chipley, Ga. (now known as Pine Mountain, Ga.) built F.D. Roosevelt State Park and the WPA built Highway 190. Lake Delano (in the campground) and Lake Franklin were dug by hand. Picks, shovels, wheelbarrows, mules, and human muscle made these lakes, as well as the swimming pool, cabins, inn, fish hatchery ponds, roads, hiking trails, and boathouse. At almost 10,000 acres, this is the largest state park in Georgia.

The park preserves the legacy of FDR and his CCC program, as well as providing many recreational activities on 40 miles of the Pine Mountain Trail. Amenities include the 500,000-gallon Liberty Bell swimming pool, 28 miles of horseback riding trails, 2 lakes for boating and fishing, 140 tent/trailer/RV campsites, 22 cottages, 2 picnic shelters, a group shelter, 2 group camps, 4 pioneer campgrounds, and interpretive educational and recreational programs.

Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park



Crisp County

Date Established: 1946

Original Acreage: 1,200

Current Acreage: 1,308

The idea for Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park came from Nelson Shipp, head of the Georgia Department of Commerce in 1946. He took his idea to long-time friend Crisp County Representative Palmer H. Greene who brought representatives and senators from all over the state to look at different sites and to sell the idea to the Department of State Parks Director Charlie Morgan.

The main property considered consisted of 900 acres of land and 300 acres of water in the county next to Lake Blackshear that was part of the Daphne Plantation. The land was owned by Dr. Russell Thomas of Americus and his brother John Frank Thomas, Jr., of Palm Beach, Florida. Daphne Plantation had once been a popular resort, with a store and mill, picnic areas, and round, wooden, open-sided pavilion near the old flowing well. The Seaboard Railroad ran excursion trains on weekends and holidays. The location was widely known as an ideal spot for outdoor recreation.

The Crisp County Commissioners of Road and Revenues, with Dr. Loron E. Williams, Chairman, and members J. Homer Dorough and Claude L. McMillan, agreed to purchase the property for \$35,000 and deed it to the state. Deeds were executed to transfer the land from the Thomas brothers to Crisp County, who then deeded it to the state. The deed was accepted by Secretary of State Ben Fortson for Governor Ellis Arnall, for use and improvement as a perpetual memorial to the heroic service and sacrifice of Georgia veterans. With the theme "Serve the Living – Honor Our Heroic Dead," this shared vision of Nelson Shipp and Palmer Greene became Georgia Veterans Memorial State Park.

The park is shielded and almost surrounded by Lake Blackshear, an 8,700-acre lake 15 miles long, with a drainage area of 3,750 square miles. The lake was formed by the backwaters of the

Crisp County Hydroelectric Power Dam, the first county-owned, constructed, and operated hydroelectric power project in the United States. Construction of the dam started in 1928 and operations began in August 1930. The lake is named for General David Blackshear, who constructed Fort Early near present day Warwick, the Blackshear Trail from Macon to Ft. Early, and the Blackshear Road from Hawkinsville to Darien on the coast.

Since 2013 Coral Hospitality has been contracted to manage the lodge facilities as well as the entire park.

General Coffee State Park



Coffee County
Date Established: 1970
Original Acreage: Unknown
Current Acreage: 1,511

In the late 1960s, the citizens of Coffee County had the vision for a state park. Coffee County donated the park to the state in 1970, and it was named after General John Coffee, a planter, U.S. Congressman and military leader. During the late 1960s and early 1970s the park had only a small campground and day-use area. A four-acre lake, swimming pool (now closed), and campground expansion were added in the 1980s. The 1990s brought about great change and growth for the park. The State Parks and Historic Sites Division acquired the Burnham Cottage and Hawks Nest Cottage from private ownership in the early 1990s. Later, a 32-person group lodge and four two-bedroom cottages were built. The park continues to prosper in the 21st century.

The park is home to Heritage Farm which interprets farm life and history in old rural Georgia. Another unique feature is the park's habitat which is situated on both river-swamp and sand-ridge communities. These communities are home to several threatened and endangered plants and animals such as the Pitcher Plant, Gopher Tortoise, and Indigo Snake.

George L. Smith State Park



Emanuel & Candler Counties
Previous name: Parrish Pond Recreation Area
Date Established: 1975
Original Acreage: 1,355
Current Acreage: 1,634

The land was originally purchased through the Heritage Fund as a historic area and was named Parrish Pond Recreation Area. The name came from the original owner and developer of the land, James Parrish. In 1980, the area became a state park and was named after the local politician, George L. Smith, who was instrumental in purchasing the land for the state. In 1988, 13 additional acres were purchased

as a buffer zone from development and to build a house for use as staff residence. In 1997, 266 acres were purchased to expand the park with a boat ramp and parking area, pioneer camping area, three-mile trail, and four additional cottages.

The park interprets Georgia history through the 1880s covered bridge and gristmill. Water recreation is available with boating and fishing in the 400-acre lake. Natural recreation is available on the sand ridge trails with the opportunity to see the gopher tortoise.

George T. Bagby State Park and Lodge



Clay County

Date Established: 1972

Original Acreage: 365

Current Acreage: 444 (700 with golf course)

In 1972 the park was created and situated at Pataula Creek, outside Fort Gaines and ten miles north of its present location. It was named for State Parks Director George T. Bagby. Some 17 years later it was moved to a location on Lake Walter F. George at the request of local enthusiasts. In March 1989 the park expanded with a 30-room lodge, conference center and restaurant. In 2013 Coral Hospitality was contracted to manage the lodge facilities as well as the entire park. In 2022 the entire operation was resumed by DNR. The marina opened in late 1989 and nature trails were cleared in 1990. On November 21, 1995 a groundbreaking ceremony took place to recognize the upcoming addition of Meadowlinks Golf Course, which opened in spring of 1997. In 2002 the park added 30 more lodge rooms and built a new restaurant. The former restaurant dining room was converted to become additional conference space.

The park's location was chosen in part because of its unique location in southwest Georgia on the shores of Lake Walter F. George with its major tributary being the Chattahoochee River. This 48,000-acre natural resource, known for the great opportunity it provides for fishing and water-sports was leased to the Department of Natural Resources for the development of a park that would provide a natural resource where there is a unique mix of artifacts, landmarks, history, legends and wildlife to attract history buffs and naturalists alike. The park is situated along the Chattahoochee Trace, which includes an educational experience trekking three states. George T. Bagby is one of 30 sites included in the Southern Rivers Birding Trail, which provides wildlife enthusiasts with a spectrum of viewing experiences to include a kaleidoscope of birds, butterflies, wildflowers and other admired species that are indigenous to the park and area.

Gordonia-Alatamaha State Park



Tattnall County

Previous Site Name: Reidsville State Park

Date Established: 1956

Original Acreage: 206

Current Acreage: 462 with Golf Course

In 1956 the General Assembly allocated funds for six state parks which included Gordonia. At the time the park was called Reidsville State Park. It was renamed Gordonia-Alatamaha in 1960 for a plant that has only been found in the state of Georgia. The local Lions Club and citizens were instrumental in getting the park started. On March 22, 1956 the Kennedy and McLeod families donated land for the park.

The political and social climate of the late 1950s contributed to the establishment of Gordonia-Alatamaha State Park. Local citizens wanted the park and worked very hard to get it. The swimming pool, 12-acre lake and picnic facilities were the early recreational resources. Also, having the park located in the City of Reidsville makes it very accessible to the community.

Hamburg State Park



Washington County

Date Established: July 24, 1968

Original Acreage: 741

Current Acreage: 741

Richard Warthen, a native of South Carolina, acquired the property in 1850 and built the first mill in Washington County just 100 feet upstream from the present mill and dam. T.B. Rachels and his brothers purchased the property around 1895. The property was later acquired by Oscar Harrison and then sold to the Gilmore brothers who farmed much of the surrounding area. In the early 1920s the Gilmore Brothers constructed the present dam, mill, and cotton gin. Construction took one to two years, and the mill was capable of grinding both wheat flour and cornmeal. The mill and adjacent store were centers for both work and community activities. The brothers sold the property to the Hall family, who then sold it to Hugh M. Tarbutton and William Rawlings. In 1968 Tarbutton and Rawlings deeded the 740 acres and all historical buildings to the state of Georgia.

Hamburg provides cultural, historical, and recreational opportunities for the public. The park continues to maintain and operate the gristmill on a regular schedule, and visitors may purchase cornmeal in the old country store. The Gin House at Hamburg processed cotton in the mid 1900s and now serves as the park's museum with displays of equipment and artifacts used by rural farmers in the early 1900s. The 225-acre impoundment of Hamburg Lake provides recreational opportunities for boaters and fishermen.

Hard Labor Creek State Park



Morgan County

Previous Site Name: Hard Labor Creek Recreation

Demonstration Area

Date Established: 1946

Original Acreage: 5,805

Current Acreage: 5,805

Hard Labor Creek State Park came into being during the Depression at a time when public works projects were used to bolster the nation's weak economy. Developed by the National Park Service to demonstrate that marginal cropland could be reclaimed and developed for recreation use this area was designated a Recreation Demonstration Area. Forty-four individual parcels of land varying in size from 10 to 1,042 acres were joined together to provide 5,805 for recreational purposes.

In 1934, the young men of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) and the Work Progress Administration (WPA) developed Hard Labor Creek Recreation Demonstration Area. They cleared the beds of Lake Brantley and Lake Rutledge and built their dams. They also built numerous facilities for picnicking and group camping. With the onset of war and lack of building material and labor, development slowed in 1942. In 1946 the Recreation Demonstration Area was given to the state of Georgia.

Characterized by broad sweeping hills and river bottom lowlands, the new Recreation Demonstration Area possessed the potential for scenic beauty as well as for leisure-time recreation. The park provides swimming, boating, and fishing on Lake Brantley and Lake Rutledge along with golfing, picnicking, nature trail hiking, camping, cottages, group shelters, and two group camps. It also provides 22-miles of horse trails along with stables and 12 campsites with water and electrical hook ups.

The park derived its unusual name from the farmland stream that passes through the park. Some say Hard Labor Creek got its name from slaves who tilled the cotton fields that once dominated this area. Still others say the Indians who once inhabited this area gave the stream the name after finding it hard to cross during frequent floods.

Hardman Farm Historic Site



Date Established: 2014

Acreage: 173

Dr. Lamartine Hardman was the 65th governor of Georgia between 1927 and 1931. He owned the property now known as "Hardman Farm" since 1903 and established a dairy operation on the site circa 1910. The property was owned by Dr. Hardman's descendants through 1999 when 173 acres were

donated to the state of Georgia. The gift included an unusually intact farm with an Italianate style house, 19 outbuildings, an old roadbed that was a part of the Unicoi Turnpike, and an earthen burial mound known as the “Nacoochee Indian Mound.”

After an initial fundraising effort by the Hardman Farm at Nacoochee Valley Fund, repairs and renovations were completed in stages on the house, dairy barn, general store, horse barn and carriage house. In October 2014 the site was opened to the public.

The property is on the west end of the Nacoochee Valley Historic District. For thousands of years the Nacoochee Valley was used by native people. The Nacoochee Indian Mound was built by mound builders in the late Mississippian period around 1,000 years ago. The Nacoochee Mound is one of many that existed in the Nacoochee and Sautee Valleys. It is, however, the only remaining mound making it particularly significant.

This important corner of the Nacoochee Historic District is the entrance into a treasure trove of history in the Nacoochee and Sautee Valleys. The site’s Visitor Center is in the building that once held the old general store and post office. A small gift shop and classroom offer reminders of life in the 19th and early 20th centuries.

Hart Outdoor Recreation Area



Hart County
Date Established: 1968
Original Acreage: 147
Current Acreage: 147

In 1963, the Army Corps of Engineers built the Hartwell Reservoir by constructing Hartwell Dam at the confluence of the Savannah, Tugaloo, and Seneca rivers. In 1968 the Corps of Engineers leased the land now known as Hart Outdoor Recreation Area to the state of Georgia. Although the park is located only two miles from downtown Hartwell, it was still in use as farmland until the lake filled up.

Fish abounding in the lake, gentle summer breezes to encourage sailing enthusiasts, spectacular sunsets to draw campers to enjoy a quiet evening at their campsites, and gently sloping open woodlands that provide excellent hiking/walking trails led directly to the establishment of the park. This 10th reservoir park in the Georgia State Park system now provides a variety of recreational activities, including boating, fishing, swimming, and wildlife viewing on the 55,590-acre lake, which is maintained by the Corps of Engineers.

High Falls State Park



Monroe, Lamar and Butts Counties

Date Established: 1966

Original Acreage: 726

Current Acreage: 1,050

On July 19, 1961, the Hiawassee Timber Company/Bowater's Southern Paper Corporation donated the lake and adjoining lands to the Georgia Fish and Game Commission. This property was turned over to the State Parks Department in 1966 for the purpose of creating High Falls State Park. Subsequent acreage was added in 1962, 1965, 1968, 1975, 1979 and 1980 through five property owners, bringing the current acreage to 1,050. All of these acquisitions have served to provide protection and preservation of the area associated with the High Falls State Park.

The park provides a unique combination of natural, cultural and recreational resources. Its location on the Towaliga River in Georgia's Piedmont lends itself to several outstanding natural features to include the series of waterfalls from which the park gets its name. Cultural resources remain from when the area was an important power generating and commercial location, such the old powerhouse, the dam that forms the lake constructed with bedrock from the river itself, remains of the old gristmill and a raceway used for water diverting. Recreation abounds in and around the 650-acre lake formed by a combination of the Towaliga River, Buck Creek and Brushy Creek.

Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Historic Site



Glynn County

Date Established: 1974

Original Acreage: Unknown

Current Acreage: 1,268

On September 5, 1973, Ophelia Dent, the last surviving heir to Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation passed away peacefully in the Ladies Parlor of her beloved plantation home. Through good times and bad times, the Brailsford, Troup and Dent families from 1806 until September 5, 1973 had owned this plantation. With her death the family ownership that had spanned five generations ended.

Her Last Will and Testament conveyed the plantation to the Georgia Historical Commission, which had been disbanded by Governor Jimmy Carter, so the deed was given to the Nature Conservancy. On October 23, 1974, Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation were turned over to the Georgia Department of Natural Resources, Parks and Historic Sites Division to honor Miss Ophelia Dent's last request. The plantation consisted of 1,268 acres, seven original

outbuildings, and the 1851 antebellum plantation house left completely furnished with family heirlooms.

On November 20, 1974 the formal delivery of the deed for the plantation was accepted by Governor Jimmy Carter in the governor's office in Atlanta. Dignitaries present included Department of Natural Resources Commissioner Joe D. Tanner, Albert Fendig, Miss Ophelia's longtime friend and attorney, and Jane Yarn of the Nature Conservancy who accepted the deed on behalf of the state of Georgia.

The plantation first opened to the public in June 1979. This fulfilled Miss Ophelia's life-long dream to honor her forefathers for their determination to hold on to the land and the hard work of hundreds of slaves who had worked this rice plantation.

Visitors can learn about the plantation's historical significance while mingling with the majestic live oaks along the coast of Georgia. Visitors can also visit the family home, look out over approximately 700 acres of old rice fields and visit the remnants of the Hofwyl Dairy Farm. Today Hofwyl-Broadfield Plantation Historic Site holds true to the ideals that Miss Ophelia Dent dreamed of so many years ago. Within the beautiful tapestry of tradition and beauty that defines Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites, the plantation provides exclusive opportunities for viewing the unique beauty of the Georgia coast and experiencing its richness in historical significance.

Indian Springs State Park



Butts County

Previous name: Indian Springs Reserve

Date Established: 1825 treaty signed

Original Acreage: 10

Current Acreage: 528

For centuries, Native Americans and White settlers visited these natural mineral springs to drink and bathe in the well-known water. In 1825, Creek Chief McIntosh signed the illegal Treaty of Indian Springs deeding the land to the Georgia government. He was soon assassinated by his people for his treason. A valid treaty was later signed, and in 1828 "Indian Springs Reserve" was sold at public auction. Indian Springs became a State Forest Park in 1927, under administration by the Georgia Board of Forestry.

As government officials began to appreciate the value of forests left in their natural state rather than being used only for timber, the forestry board was reorganized and a state park division was created. In 1931, Indian Springs and Vogel became the first state parks in Georgia, with many structures being built by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression. At Indian Springs State Park, mineral baths cost \$2 and ping-pong tables rented for 25 cents per hour.

During its 1800s heyday, the area around the springs attracted visitors to ten hotels that offered dancing, card playing, libraries, bowling and other games. Few of these hotels remain; however, the first – Indian Spring Hotel – has been renovated and will open as a museum in spring of 2006. Interestingly, Indian Spring Hotel was built in 1823 by none other than Chief McIntosh and his cousin Joel Bailey.

Today, the spring feeds 105-acre lake McIntosh, which provides a boat ramp, swimming beach and fishing. Other recreational opportunities include picnicking, camping and mini-golf. Park visitors still line up to collect the famous mineral water that now flows from a spigot in the historic CCC Spring House.

James H. “Sloppy” Floyd State Park



Chattooga County

Previous Name(s): Chattooga Lakes State Park

Chattooga Lakes Public Fishing Area

Date Established: 1973

Original Acreage: 169

Current Acreage: 561

Prior to 1973, the site was operated as a public fishing area under Georgia Wildlife Resources Division. The site became Chattooga Lakes State Park in July 1973. After the death of local state representative James H. “Sloppy” Floyd in 1974, the park was dedicated to him in honor of his accomplishments. In 1996, 276 additional acres were purchased from Georgia Marble through the governor’s Preservation 2000 program, expanding the park’s border to the USFS Chattahoochee National Forest.

The park provides numerous recreational opportunities to the people of northwest Georgia. Two beautiful lakes offer excellent fishing and boating opportunities, and trails offer mild to moderate hiking in a peaceful and tranquil setting. Campsites and cottages provide overnight accommodations for those traveling to the area.

Jarrell Plantation Historic Site



Jones County

Date Established: 1974

Original Acreage: 7.5

Current Acreage: 236

Fourteen members of the Jarrell family deeded 7.5 acres of land to the state of Georgia to provide their ancestral home site as an educational facility for the public, especially children. In 1990 the state increased the landmass to 50 acres, and in 2006 it acquired the 186-acre Dombey Tract, bringing the total acreage to 236. For the first time in many decades, Jarrell Plantation again stretched to the Ocmulgee River.

Jarrell Plantation provides a view into a way of life that is quickly disappearing ~~ the family farm. The site's history spans an antebellum cotton plantation, through the Civil War and Reconstruction, and into the early Industrial Revolution. The monumental cultural and technological changes experienced by one rural family are vividly illustrated by their possessions, structures and lifestyle. The Jarrell family labors continue today with demonstrations and instructional classes of traditional skills and crafts.

Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site



Irwin County

Previous Site Name: Jefferson Davis Park

Date Established: 1997

Original Acreage: 4

Current Acreage: 12.7

Reuben W. Clements purchased the land in 1865. In 1915, his son, Honorable J.B. Clements, and the Georgia Division of the United Daughters of the Confederacy introduced a resolution tendering four acres of land to the state of Georgia for the purpose of creating a state park. The resolution passed, and in July 1920, the original four acres were officially deeded to the state. On July 3, 1933, Mutual Benefit Life Insurance Company deeded to the Governor of Georgia an additional four acres for Jefferson Davis Park, bringing the size to eight acres. On March 8, 1938, the United States of America deeded to the state of Georgia an adjacent tract of land containing 3.66 acres. In 1952, Jack Eli and Doris R. Vickers donated 1.008 acres as a gift to the park, bringing it up to today's total of 12.668 acres.

On May 10, 1865, Union Troops ended the four-year War Between the States by capturing Jefferson Davis, President of the Confederate States. The capture marked a new page in America History by ending a war the cost this country more than 600,000 lives. Jefferson Davis was heading west into Texas to meet another Confederate army which might have made the Civil War last another two years with even more dead Americans. Many people believe that the Civil War ended when Robert E. Lee surrendered in Virginia, but the official ending of the war happen here in Irwinville, Georgia, which is now called Jefferson Davis Memorial Historic Site.

In 1939, on Jefferson Davis's birthday, a monument was erected to mark the exact spot where he and his party were captured. In 1939, a museum was built by the Works Progress Administration (WPA), which was started by President Franklin D. Roosevelt. The site offers a nature trail for teaching about Georgia wildlife and shows the original highway in which Jefferson Davis and his party traveled. It also provides a group shelter for family reunions and other gatherings, a picnic area to enjoy Georgia's beautiful weather, and a playground for children.

Kolomoki Mounds State Park



Early County
Date Established: 1938
Original Acreage: 1,293
Current Acreage: 1,293

In 1938, a group of local citizens and civic clubs of Blakely and Early County acquired land ownership from Dr. C. C. Harrold, President of the Archaeological Society, and gave the area of Kolomoki Mounds to the state of Georgia for the purpose of creating a state park. Their purpose was to protect and preserve the ancient earthen mounds, while adding recreational value to the area.

Around 1,700 years ago, the area was a religious center for the Kolomoki Indians, who built earthen mounds here. In later years, the Weeden Island and Lamar Indians also inhabited the area. The land had various owners, and was distributed to several residents during the State Land Lottery in 1820. A plantation, gristmill, and other businesses were operated on this site. With the encouragement of The Society for Georgia Archaeology, these local businessmen wanted to protect the archaeological area from any further destruction. Archaeological excavations by Dr. William Sears took place over the five-year span of 1948-1952, with additional research in later years by others.

In 1940 the Civilian Conservation Corps established a camp at the park and began construction of a dam and an 80-acre lake for fishing and swimming, boat docks, a beach, and picnic areas. Campsites were added, along with buildings for the group camp, group shelters, and picnic shelters. A museum was built to house the artifacts and serve as an Interpretive Center. Swimming pools and miniature golf, along with hiking trails, were added attractions. The park now provides the intended protection and preservation of the archaeological area, as well as providing educational and recreational opportunities for visitors to the area.

Lapham-Patterson House Historic Site



Thomas County
Date Established: December 23, 1971, under the Georgia Historical Commission
Original Acreage: 1
Current Acreage: 1

Alice Patterson expressed her willingness to sell her house after it was entered on the National Register of Historic Places by the Department of the Interior in 1970. Negotiations between Thomasville Landmarks and the Georgia Historical Commission culminated in the 1971 transfer of the property to the state of Georgia. Restoration of the house began in 1972, and by November, the house was open to the public five days a week. In 1975, Marguerite Neel Williams, who had been instrumental in

saving the house, accepted the bronze plaque designating the Lapham-Patterson House a National Historic Landmark for its architectural significance.

The Lapham-Patterson House is a museum and national historic landmark because it is a one-of-a-kind building with architectural features found nowhere else. It exemplifies the craftsmanship and creativity of High Victorian houses in Georgia.

Laura S. Walker State Park



Ware County

Date Established: 1941

Original Acreage: 306

Current Acreage: 306

In the 1930s, the federal government bought land under Depression-era programs during the administration of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Some of the land was purchased from farmers to show that eroded, worn out, uneconomical farmlands could be developed for recreational purposes. From this land, a park was constructed near Waycross in 1937. It was purchased under a Federal Land Use Areas project and was the first state park named after a woman — Laura Singleton Walker.

Walker's literary ability and efforts on behalf of the community were tremendous. Some of her greatest involvement in the area was centered on protecting the natural resources. The people of Georgia, particularly South Georgia, wished to reward Walker for her work. Two U.S. Senators of the time, Walter F. George and Richard B. Russell, helped by asking President Roosevelt to name the park after this outstanding citizen. He did so with a Presidential proclamation.

Through the years many rental facilities, such as campsites, group shelters, picnic shelters, one pioneer camp, and a large 142-capacity group camp have been added. Recreational opportunities have also been expanded with the main attraction being the 120-acre lake. Kayak rentals, water skiing, fishing, two nature trails, wildlife observation platform, sand volleyball court, and four horseshoe pits provide additional opportunities for leisure. Camper cabins will hopefully be added by August 2015. Naturalists provide interpretive information about the park's natural resources.

Little Ocmulgee State Park



Wheeler County

Previous Names: Shamrock Springs

Date Established: 1935

Original Acreage: 950

Current Acreage: 1,360

In 1935 city merchants in McRae gave lands to become a recreational area for the townspeople. The Civilian Conservation Corps, Department of Forestry Geological Development and the National Park Service were to help in this endeavor. By 1936, work had already been started on a clubhouse for dancing and parties, which is now the CCC Lakeside Annex. Cottages were constructed around 1938 for overnight guests. The recreational facilities now include a 265-acre lake, boat ramp, fishing dock, and swimming pool.

The park provides recreation on Gum Swamp and the Ocmulgee River. The habitat seen on the trails are of mixed forest, swamp and sand hills, which provide a unique look into the environment. The park is full of wildlife, including the Gopher Tortoise, American Egrets, and a variety of snakes.

In 1987 the lodge and conference center were constructed and was named the "L.L. (Pete) Phillips Conference Center." Since 2013 Coral Hospitality has been contracted to manage the lodge facilities as well as the entire park.

Little White House Historic Site



Meriwether County

Date Established: 1948

Original Acreage: 4,000

Current Acreage: 163

In 1945, Franklin D Roosevelt died in Warm Springs and his will stipulated that his property, house, and contents were to be left to the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation. The foundation quickly realized it needed to be preserved and opened to the public in the president's memory. A private Memorial Commission was set up and charged with acquiring all the adjacent property to control future development. Funds were not available to build a separate museum, so a Memento Room was added under the sundeck of the house. Auxiliary buildings and a parking lot were added as well.

In 1959, a former neighbor left her home to be used as a museum. It was remodeled and opened to the public in 1961. This museum was refurbished in 1973. The Georgia Department of Natural Resources took over operation of the museum, historic house, and property in 1980. Much of the acreage was transferred to F.D. Roosevelt State Park at that time. The pools

Roosevelt built in 1928 for therapy also passed to DNR in 1980 and extensive repairs to that property were completed in 1995. A museum was added at the pool complex in 1997. In 2004, a new museum was opened at the main site.

The Pools Museum allows visitors to explore the history of the warm springs and Roosevelts' involvement in the area. The new FDR Memorial Museum allows the opportunity to interpret the life and achievements of a man considered by many to be our nation's most outstanding President. The historic house offers a glimpse of a moment frozen in time as it is preserved very much as it was on the afternoon that FDR died in 1945.

Magnolia Springs State Park



Jenkins County

Previous Site Name(s): Camp Lawton (during the Civil War), Millen National Fish Hatchery (1948), then Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery and Aquarium (1988)

Date Established: 1939

Original Acreage: 959

Current Acreage: 1,037

Magnolia Springs State Park was created in 1939, the culmination of a 15-year effort by local citizens to have the site developed into either a national or state park. Millen Mayor Walter Harrison, described as "always in the front of every progressive movement for the development of both the town and county," was in the forefront of the movement. Landowner W.E. Alwood donated a 58-acre tract that included the remains of old Fort Lawton, and the rest of the property was purchased by Jenkins County.

The development of Magnolia Springs as a state park was a project of the Civilian Conservation Corps, Company 3465. It was composed of up to 175 officers and men, and commanded by Albert C. Haley. Designated SP-16, the camp contained 22 buildings including five barracks. The spring-fed stream that runs through the park was dredged, dammed and widened to create a large swimming area. Roads, a bathhouse, "casino," and several other buildings were constructed at that time.

Prior to its operation as a state park, Magnolia Springs was the site of a state fish hatchery. It was also a popular privately owned recreation area. It is reported that as many as 1,100 people per day utilized the area for picnics, church gatherings, family reunions and swimming.

In 1948, more than 100 acres of park property was transferred to the federal government for the creation of the Millen National Fish Hatchery. In 1988 this facility was renamed the Bo Ginn National Fish Hatchery and Aquarium. A variety of sport and endangered fish were raised at this hatchery until its closing in 1996. At that time the property, including aquarium and ponds, was returned to Magnolia Springs State Park.

Magnolia Springs is named for the water source that produces up to 9 million gallons of freshwater per day. This natural feature was recognized as a prime recreational opportunity during the late 19th and early 20th centuries. During the Civil War this same spring saw the Confederate military prison, Camp Lawton, developed along its banks. At least 10,000 prisoners were held captive with at least 500 of these succumbing to disease and exposure.

Mistletoe State Park



Columbia County
Date Established: 1965
Original Acreage: 1,920
Current Acreage: 1,920

In 1952 the Corps of Engineers leased 1,920 acres to the state of Georgia for what was to become Mistletoe State Park. It was named after a small town called Mistletoe Corners that had a preponderance of mistletoe in the early 19th century. Mistletoe Corners had been a thriving little community with a post office, one-room schoolhouse and “Bunk” Bullard’s store, which was the heart of the community. The park was established in 1965 and dedicated in 1971 by Georgia Governor Lester Maddox. By 1971 many families had already considered Mistletoe State Park their vacation/recreation center.

The park provides recreation on Clark Hill Lake, a 72,000-acre lake billed as the “largest man-made impoundment east of the Mississippi.” The lake is a haven for all water-related activities and is also touted as the best bass fishing lake in the Southeast. Clark Hill is in the top ten of the most visited recreational lakes in the nation. The park is rich in cultural history from the Paleo Indians through the Revolutionary War, slavery and king cotton.

Moccasin Creek State Park



Rabun County
Previous Name: Georgia Power Campground
Date Established: 1966
Original Acreage: 32
Current Acreage: 32

In the early 1960s, Fulton Lovell, Director of the DNR’s Fish and Game Division, envisioned a campground located on the adjacent hatchery property for fishermen who visited each season. In 1963, a proposal was made to land owners Charles and Lona Hunt for the use of Lovell’s vision. In May 1963, \$63,415 was given to Fish and Game to convert what was once a cornfield into a Georgia Power campground, run by the Fish Hatchery.

By 1966, the campground was too popular for the hatchery to manage. It was turned over to the state and the name was changed to Moccasin Creek State Park, in reference to the stream

that flows between the park and the hatchery. In 1968, a pavilion was completed with money donated by Governor Lester Maddox to be used as a Chapel. In the 1970s, the trailer that served as an office was removed and a formal office was constructed. In the mid 1970s, the comfort stations were built, sewage system installed, and multiple water faucets added. In the '80s, the chapel was designated a pavilion due to "Church and State" controversy. In 1993, the pavilion was dedicated to Lovell and is known today as the Fulton Lovell Assembly Shelter.

The park provides recreation on Lake Burton, a 2,800-acre impoundment maintained by Georgia Power Company. Tallulah River, Coleman River, and many other streams that flow straight out of the mountains feed the lake. The lake offers boating, fishing and swimming. The rivers and streams offer excellent trout fishing opportunities. Moccasin Creek offers fishing to the handicapped, beginners and experienced anglers within the park boundaries. The park ~ being relatively flat, located on the lake, and with a trout stream – an easily accessible base camp for adventures in fishing, hiking, hatchery tours, boating, hunting, swimming, and natural water slides. The park's location also provides visitors with the opportunity to visit mountain overlooks and nearby state parks.

New Echota Historic Site



Gordon County
Date Established: 1962
Original Acreage: 200
Current Acreage: 200

In 1916, the Calhoun Women's Club purchased the New Echota Cemetery, and in 1931, the National Park Service erected a 25-foot tall granite Cherokee Memorial monument. The New Echota Foundation was formed in 1953 under the Gordon County Chamber of Commerce's leadership. Using the 1832 land lot surveys, historian Dr. Henry Malone, located the exact site of the town in August 1953. Archaeologist Clemens de Baillou of the University of Georgia was hired in 1954 to determine original building locations.

After purchasing the property from local farmer Jess Wilbanks, the New Echota Foundation deeded the property to the state of Georgia in 1956. During the late 1950s, the mission home of Samuel Worcester was restored, an 1805 Cherokee Tavern was moved to New Echota, and the Cherokee Print Shop and Court House were reconstructed on the property.

On May 12, 1962 Governor Ernest Vandiver led the dedication ceremony as the site was officially opened to the public, and in 1969 a new visitor center/museum was built. Eight years later, the site celebrated the sesquicentennial of the adoption of the 1827 Cherokee Constitution, and New Echota was designated as a National Historic Landmark. During the 1980s and '90s, two historic farmsteads and the Cherokee Council House were reconstructed, and in 2002 a visitor center and museum exhibit renovation were completed.

The 150-year anniversary of the 1828 Cherokee Phoenix newspaper's beginning took place in 1978, and in 1988 a memorial was held for the Sesquicentennial of the 1838 Trail of Tears Cherokee Removal. In 1992, the Cherokee Nation Council met at New Echota (the first council meeting on Georgia soil since 1830), a 1993 Georgia Supreme Court special court session met in the reconstructed New Echota Court House, and a 1996 Council House dedication/ Atlanta Olympic Torch Relay event with Deputy Principal Chief James Garland of the Cherokee Nation participating.

New Echota reigned as the capital of the Cherokee Nation only from 1825-1838; however, during that short time period, events of local, regional, state and national historical significance occurred. During its short history, New Echota was the site of the first Indian language newspaper office, a court case which carried to the U. S. Supreme court, one of the earliest experiments in national self-government by an Indian tribe, the signing of a treaty which relinquished Cherokee claims to eastern lands, and the assembly of Indians for removal west on the infamous Trail of Tears. Today, visitors can see a recreation of the town of New Echota including 12 historic and reconstructed buildings and a museum with a 17-minute film.

Panola Mountain State Park



Rockdale County

Previous Names: None, but often referred to as "Little Stone Mountain" and Hog or Pig Mountain

Date Established: 1974.

Original Acreage: 471 acres

Current Acreage: 1,230 acres

In 1967, 471.5 acres of land including a 100-acre granite mountain was put up for sale by the Yarborough family. The Georgia Conservancy purchased an option on the property but was unable to close on the property in 1968. As a result, The Nature Conservancy put up \$20,000 as a down payment toward a total purchase of \$200,000. In 1969, The Nature Conservancy offered the property to the state. That same year, the general assembly approved the purchase, and received the necessary funds through the U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Outdoor Recreation, Land and Water Conservation Fund. In 1971, an advisory committee of area naturalists and educators was formed. Panola Mountain State Conservation Park was opened and dedicated by Governor Jimmy Carter on July 24, 1974.

The purpose of Panola Mountain, Georgia's first "conservation park," was to protect the unique features of this area, to interpret the significance of its natural history, and to create a place for public recreation oriented toward a better understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of the natural environment. In 1974, 66 additional acres were acquired through the Georgia Heritage Trust, and in 1979, 89 additional acres were acquired again through the trust. In 1980, Panola Mountain was dedicated as a National Natural Landmark. In 1991, six additional acres were acquired through Preservation 2000. In 1998, the state purchased an additional 136.665 acres and the park was dedicated by executive order of Governor Zell Miller as a Heritage Preserve. In 2002, Panola received 155.8 acres of land formerly owned by respected conservationist Ed

Alexander. In 2003, Panola acquired the last working farmland in DeKalb County, 141 acres from S.B. Vaughters. In 2004, Panola Mountain acquired 166 acres that was Southernness Golf Course.

Panola Mountain is a 100-acre granite mountain, one of only a few major pristine granite outcroppings in the Southeast. The ecology on the granite outcrops, although rugged in terms of dealing with extreme climatic conditions, is fragile in terms of human impact. The flora and fauna that are adapted to live in these arid environments are specialists, and some of them are now extremely rare. To protect the ecology of Panola Mountain and interpret the importance of the plant and animal communities of the area, visitors can access Panola Mountain by guided hikes only. Panola Mountain also has an interpretive center with geology, plant, and animal displays, and three self-guided nature trails with interpretive signage.

Pickett's Mill Battlefield Historic Site



Paulding County
Date Established: 1974
Original Acreage: 452 acres
Current Acreage: 765 acres

Only a few local historians knew the exact location of Pickett's Mill Battlefield. The site was studied and informally mapped by Wilbur Kurtz and Beverly Debose in the 1930s. Interest remained minimal until the 1960s and the Centennial of the American Civil War. At that time the site, owned by Georgia Craft Paper Company, was becoming increasingly popular among relic hunters. Finally, in 1972, several amateur historians led by Dr. Phil Secrist purchased a core piece of the battlefield consisting of 400 acres. After convincing legislators of the value of the property, the state purchased it in 1974. Fortunately, the site had changed little since the Civil War battle 110 years earlier, and was in almost pristine condition. The state negotiated with several other smaller land owners and purchase the last piece of the park in 1982. A group shelter was built in 1989 and the visitor center was built in 1990. After completion of exhibits, the site was officially opened to the public in May 1992.

The property protects and interprets the site of the Battle of Pickett's Mill. Ten thousand Confederate and 15,000 Union soldiers fought over this ground in General William T. Sherman's attempt to bypass the Confederate position and move his army towards Atlanta. The four-hour battle resulted in 1,500 Union and 500 Confederate casualties. Most of the dead were buried on the site, though after the war they were moved to the Marietta National Cemetery. There are several miles of trenches dug by these men still in existence on the park. The site of the mill is still readily seen and period dirt roads crisscross the battlefield. Besides the site's historical importance, the 765 acres of green space are a valuable asset in an area that is quickly becoming urbanized.

Providence Canyon Outdoor Recreation Area



Stewart County

Previous Site Name: Also called "Georgia's Little Grand Canyon"

Date Established: 1971

Original Acreage: 1,108.6

Current Acreage: 1,108.6

Eight acquisitions made up the total 1,108.6-acre park:

1. 11/13/70 - 754.0 acres previously owned by Ingram-LeGrand Lumber Company
2. 01/04/71 - 9.2 acres previously owned by Melvin & Madge Rutledge
3. 01/13/71 - 168.6 acres previously owned by Ellis-Worthington et al
4. 02/08/71 - 22.9 acres previously owned by Georgia Kraft Company
5. 02/15/71 - 73.2 acres previously owned by Stewart County
6. 04/21/71 - 49.8 acres previously owned by Stewart County
7. 05/17/71 - 1.2 acres previously owned by Stewart County
8. 07/10/75 - 29.7 acres previously owned by Ellis-Worthington et al

Total Acres - 1,108.6

The land that is now Providence Canyon State Conservation Park was originally owned by three families (the Worthingtons, Woodalls and Humbers) and Providence Methodist Church. Stewart County purchased some of the land from these families and made a small county park that only included picnic tables. Many families would pack a lunch; attend church services and picnic at one of the tables overlooking the largest of the canyons. The local people referred to this canyon lying on the western rim as Grandfather Canyon. On July 1, 1971 after buying the land, Governor Jimmy Carter signed the bill making it a state park. Over the years the park has grown from a few picnic tables to include 10 miles of hiking trails, backpacking sites, pioneer group sites, playgrounds, a group shelter, open-air picnic shelters, a museum/interpretive center and gift shop, and more picnic tables that now include grills.

The farmers who scratched out a hard living growing mainly cotton out of the soil here 170 years ago did not know about soil conservation practices such as contour plowing, crop rotation and cover crops. They would be astounded if they could see today what they started with their mule-driven plows. These poor farming practices, along with the extremely soft soils, have provided today's visitors with the opportunity to view land that was once under the sea. Take a look at the walls and you will see slanting lines, some leaning to the left others leaning to the right. This is referred to as cross bedding and actually shows where the ocean currents laid down the sands millions of years ago. Today there are 16 canyons in all where 43 different colors can be seen. The park is host to several rare plants the most famous of all is the Plumleaf Azalea that blooms along the canyon floor. This shrub grows only in a 165-mile radius in southwest Georgia and southeast Alabama. Providence Canyon is known worldwide as having the largest natural concentration of this azalea.

Red Top Mountain State Park



Bartow County
Date Established: 1950
Original Acreage: 1,457
Current Acreage: 1,553

Red Top Mountain, located on Lake Allatoona, consists of 1,553 acres and derives its name from the rich red color of the soil that comes from the high iron content in the ground. In 1950, the state initially leased the land for 25 years from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. The park served not only to preserve the area's history, but also boost Bartow County's growth and agricultural economy.

Also in 1950, Atlanta resident and former Tuskegee Airman John Loyd Atkinson was instrumental in establishing George Washington Carver State Park, the state's only park named after a Black man. Carver was a brilliant inventor and chemist who helped the devastated farming community and spurred the South's peanut industry. Atkinson had leased the 345 acres adjacent to Red Top Mountain Park from the Corps of Engineers with the intention of establishing a private resort for Blacks. Governor Herman Talmadge helped lease the land and assimilate it into Red Top Mountain State Park, although operated and maintained separately. Atkinson became the superintendent, the first African-American park manager in the state, serving from 1950 to 1958. Clarence Benham became Bartow Carver's second park manager, serving for three years.

In 1989, a 33-room lodge, conference center, and full-service restaurant were opened at Red Top Mountain. In the early 1990s, with the help of The Etowah Valley Historical Society, the Vaughan Cabin Relocation Project began in 1993. The Vaughn family donated the 1870s log cabin to the society. Partnering with Red Top Mountain State Park, the cabin was preserved and relocated to the park. In 1997, a contract was awarded to AMFAC Corporation to operate the lodge, cottages, and campground, while the DNR retained operation of the park. In March 2001, the contract with AMFAC was terminated and the DNR assumed operation of Red Top Mountain Lodge, cottages, and campground again. The Lodge closed in June 2010 and the conference center was demolished in after a fire in July 2016. A new Visitor Center was built in its place in November 2019.

Through a partnership with the Friends of Red Top, the park is able to increase the awareness and appreciation for the region's resources. These include Lake Allatoona and the Etowah River shed, various forms of wildlife, and plants found in both the Piedmont and Mountain communities. Cultural resources include a working example of an iron foundry complex, an 1800s log cabin and blacksmith shop that once belonged to local families, and archaeological sites including open pit iron mines and associated railroads, pioneer roads, a church, school and home foundations. Recreational resources include hiking trails, a combination bike/walking

trail, boat dock, ropes course, tennis courts, swimming areas, picnic facilities, playgrounds, mini golf, and a privately run marina.

Reed Bingham State Park



Cook and Colquitt Counties

Date Established: 1958

Original Acreage: 1,613

Current Acreage: 1,613

In the 1930s, Amos Reed Bingham envisioned the creation of a dam to generate electricity to the rural community. It was determined that the Little River could not provide sufficient continuous water flow for the purpose intended. He pursued a new strategy that still included the building of a dam but with hopes that it would lead to a recreational opportunity that would bring families in the community together. The lake that it created is one of the main reasons for the many visitors at the park each year. Bingham, after whom the park is named, worked for many years to get his idea in motion. Finally, in 1952, the 71-year-old man convinced the Moultrie Chamber of Commerce and city and county officials to obtain an engineering survey to include plans for a lake and park. The park did not become a reality until 1958 when Cook and Colquitt counties bought the land and deeded it to the state.

The original dam was constructed on the Little River in 1965, creating a 400-acre lake that was used for water sports and fishing. The dam ruptured on July 1, 1967 but was rebuilt, after many delays, by December 1970. On December 24, in the dead of winter, the water started flowing over the dam, and that day skiers started trying out the lake again. The park now offers places for families and friends to meet and enjoy the park's unique natural resources. The park contains many miles of undisturbed woodlands that many plants and animals call home. Every year volunteers and staff contribute to the survival of Georgia's state reptile, the Gopher Tortoise, through education, research and fieldwork. The Little River, Reed Bingham Lake and Coastal Plain Nature trails are wonderful places to enjoy bird watching, stargazing and fishing. They also offer opportunities to appreciate the park's abundance of distinct wildlife, such as the yearly migration of thousands of Black and Turkey Vultures.

Richard B. Russell State Park



Elbert County

Previous Name: Coldwater Creek State Park

Date Established: 1987

Original Acreage: 2,508

Current Acreage: 2,508

In 1987, the Army Corps of Engineers leased to the state of Georgia this property for the purpose of creating a state park.

The park was originally called Coldwater Creek State Park and was the only one planned for the Georgia side of Lake Russell.

In 1988 the name was changed to Richard B. Russell State Park, in reference to the newly built Corps lake by the same name and Richard B. Russell, a former state representative and Georgia's youngest governor. Construction was started on the first phase of development in October 1987. The park would be limited to a day-use area only with picnic sites, three picnic shelters and a beach. The plans were to open the facility in December of the same year, but with weather delays the park opened in May 1989. In June 1990 the park was dedicated. In 1997, 10 cottages, 28 campsites, 3 boat ramps, 3 picnic shelters, a rowing center and disc golf course were added. During July 1996 the park rowing area was used as pre-Olympic training site for over 130 athletes. Arrowhead Pointe Golf Course, Georgia's newest 18-hole state park course, opened July 2004.

The park was created to offer recreational opportunities after the development of Lake Russell. Several Indian sites were excavated during the building of the lake in the 1980s, indicating that Paleo-Indians lived in the area more than 10,000 years ago. The area is called Rucker's Bottom and lies within the waters of Lake Richard B. Russell.

Robert Toombs House Historic Site



Wilkes County

Date Established: 1982

Original Acreage: 4.34

Current Acreage: 4.34

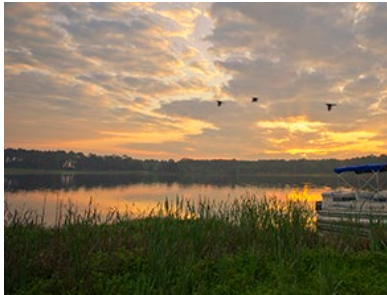
In 1973, the Colley Family, descendants of Robert Toombs' brother, owned this Antebellum mansion. Frank Colley contacted Governor Jimmy Carter about the state of Georgia purchasing the Toombs House. Governor Carter took the request before the Heritage Trust on March 21, 1973. In November 1973, Attorney Wilbur Orr, Frank Colley, Kathleen Colley Goldsmith, and Helen Colley Reiber deeded the Robert Toombs House to the state.

The site was named for Robert Augustus Toombs, a successful planter, attorney, mayor of Washington, state legislator, U.S. congressman and senator, Confederate Secretary of State, Brigadier General in the Army of Northern Virginia, and state attorney for railroad litigation until 1880. His greatest contribution to the state was helping create the Georgia Constitution of 1877.

Changes to the Robert Toombs House have been the result of careful research. Historical, architectural, and archaeological research was compiled to provide a restoration plan. Eventually, the Parks, Recreation and Historic Sites Division removed all the features postdating 1885, which was the year of Toombs' death.

The historic site protects one of Georgia's cultural resources. The 19-room, 7,129-square-foot Antebellum mansion represents evidence of growth through Federal, Greek Revival, and Victorian styles of architecture. This is the essence of its architectural merit. The original outbuildings, trees, outside heirloom plants and approximately 200 pieces of 18th and 19th century furnishings are evidence of the culture of the era the house and grounds represent.

Seminole State Park



Seminole County

Previous name: Marvin Griffin State Park

Date Established: 1956

Original Acreage: 598

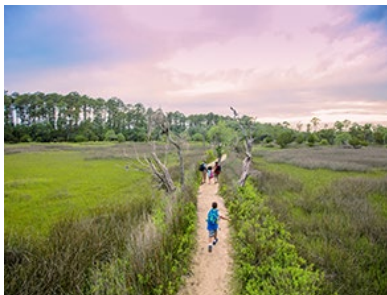
Current Acreage: 604

In 1956, the Army Corps of Engineers leased to the state of Georgia this property for the purpose of creating a state park.

The park was originally called Marvin Griffin State Park in honor of the governor at that time. In 1960, the park's name was changed to Seminole State Park in reference to Lake Seminole on the shores of which the park is located. In 1992, the Harvel Pond tract was added to the park bringing the total park acres to 604. The addition of this land was for the purpose of preventing further residential encroachment and to create a barrier between adjacent private hunting land and public use areas within the park. Acquisition of the Harvel Pond tract included an existing boat ramp and parking area. The land will also be used in the future to increase the size of the park's nature trail.

The park provides recreation on Lake Seminole, a 38,000-acre lake created and maintained by the Army Corps of Engineers. The three major tributaries that flow into Lake Seminole are the Chattahoochee and Flint Rivers, as well as Spring Creek.

Skidaway Island State Park



Chatham County

Date Established: 1975

Original Acreage: 480

Current Acreage: 588

In 1941 Union Bag & Paper Corporation bought a portion of Skidaway Island for use as a source of pinewood for the Savannah paper mill. By 1953 pulpwood cultivation by barge

became uneconomical. For the next 20 years nature again took over the island, returning it to its natural beauty. In 1956 Union Bag merged with the Camp Manufacturing Company to become Union Camp Corporation. In 1964 Union Camp offered to donate 500 acres for a state park if a bridge to the island was built. No one was willing to build the bridge so nothing came of this offer. Eventually Chatham County citizens voted to build a bridge. In 1968 Union Camp donated 267 acres for the development of the park. The park purchased an additional 213 acres

from Union Camp in 1969, making a complete 480 acres. The bridge was completed in 1971 and the park opened in 1975 with a community building, swimming pool (now closed), picnic areas, 100 campsites, and nature trails through woods and marsh. In the late 1980s the park went through a land swap and now has a total of 588 acres.

The park protects a portion of one of Georgia's barrier islands. The Sandpiper Trail gives a close look at Georgia's salt marsh ecosystem, which is full of tidal creeks and sand flats that act as a nursery for the ocean. The tidal creeks provide protection and food for minnows, shrimp, crabs, and oysters. It also showcases the Black Needle Rush, Spartina, Saw palmettos, Cabbage palms, the Georgia state flower (Cherokee Rose) and many other native plants. The trail is part of the Colonial Coast Birding Trail and lets birders see many shore birds and the Painted Bunting that nests on the trail from April through July.

The Big Ferry Trail is part of the historical Big Ferry Road that was once the main road leading from the island to Savannah. It was an essential link for farmers to sell their produce and wares. This trail takes visitors by salt and fresh water sloughs where Great White Egrets and Blue Herons can be found, old shell middens and liquor still sites from previous inhabitants. Many of the coastal islands, including Skidaway, were used to defend Savannah during the Civil War with Earthwork Fortifications and Mortar Batteries that can be seen along the trail.

The island's name could be derived from a few different sources. From the Native American words skeedowa, skeadoway, or skidowa, none of which have defined. It's thought the English gave it a nautical name from releasing a sheet attached to a sail known as "sheet away." If the English did in fact name the island, it probably came from a place in England on the Chatham River called Skedway.

Smithgall Woods State Park



White County

Previous name: Dukes Creek Woods

Date Established: 1994

Original Acreage: 5,555

Current Acreage: 5,664

Businessman and conservationist Charles A. Smithgall, Jr. began buying property near Helen in 1981, assembling more than 5,500 acres. He carefully managed the property with expert advice from the Department of Natural Resources, the University of Georgia, and other forestry and conservation experts. In 1994, the Smithgall family turned the land over to the state of Georgia as a gift/purchase. Governor Zell Miller dedicated the area as a Heritage Preserve. As a Heritage Preserve, Smithgall Woods is open to individuals or groups for "natural, scientific, and cultural purposes based on environmentally sound practices."

The purchase of additional land was to protect a small watershed, pond, and cabin. The cabin is used to further the site's education and program offerings. The education program is managed

and staffed in partnership with the Wildlife Division of DNR, and this site is one of the Parks Division's first properties to allow hunting (limited schedule).

The primary watershed for the site is Dukes Creek. Flanked by the Southern Appalachians, Tray Mountain and Mark Trail Wilderness Areas, Smithgall Woods offers trophy trout fishing on Dukes Creek, one of Trout Unlimited's 100 U.S. streams. The stream is home for Rainbow, Brown and the native Brook Trout.

The site boast numerous trails, one of which winds through an old, historical gold mining area. Other trails lead to waterfalls, beautiful natural vistas, and rare mountain wetlands. The site is bordered on the north and west sides by the Chattahoochee National Forest (over 700,000 acres), providing a continuation of an important wildlife corridor. Smithgall Woods, at the southern terminus of the Appalachian Mountain range, provides one of the richest and most bio-diverse habitats on the planet. The Smithgall Woods watershed is over six linear miles of Dukes Creek, an important tributary in the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River.

Stephen C. Foster State Park



Charlton County

Previous Site Name: Camp Stephen Foster

Date Established: 1954

Original Acreage: 80

Current Acreage: 80

State Senator Iris Blich introduced a resolution in the Georgia Senate during the 1953 session. She and Representative Downing from Homerville promoted an effort to get the state to purchase the Okefenokee Recreation, Inc. concession. The resolution passed and was signed by the governor on December 12, 1953.

The resolution authorized the governor and the director of the State Parks Department to negotiate for the purchase of the facilities of Okefenokee Recreation, Inc. in the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, and for the assignment of certain lands in the refuge from the federal government to establish a state park. The facilities of Okefenokee Recreation, Inc. included an administration building, kitchen and dining room with living quarters; three double-cabins, one dormitory building with double-decker beds; a deep well; 45 boats; a boat basin and boat run to Billys Lake, Minnies Lake and Big Water Lake; a telephone line (18 miles) from Edith to the Camp, and highway entrance signs. Okefenokee Recreation, Inc. estimated that their property had been acquired or constructed at a cost exceeding \$35,000. The governor and director were authorized to negotiate a purchase price not to exceed \$27,500.

Due to the shortage of funds, no action was taken on the proposal through the spring and into the summer. Finally, on July 8, 1954, the Board of Directors of Okefenokee Recreation, Inc. met with the director of the Georgia State Parks Division and transferred all of their property and interests in Camp Stephen Foster to the Georgia State Parks Division.

In 2001 Georgia State Parks acquired 316 acres of land mostly along the Suwannee River in Fargo from Superior Pine Products Company. On this land, the Suwannee River Visitor Center was completed in 2003, and rental cottages are under construction. This area is operated by Stephen C. Foster State Park.

Located within the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge, Stephen C. Foster State Park is remote, wild and scenic. Wildlife is abundant and water trails allow visitors to see the natural beauty of the Okefenokee Swamp. The park provides access to this refuge, through camping, cottages, an interpretive center, nature trail, picnic shelters, boat tours and boat rentals.

Sweetwater Creek State Park



Douglas County

Previous name(s): Sweetwater Creek State Historic Park

Sweetwater Creek State Park

Date Established: 1972

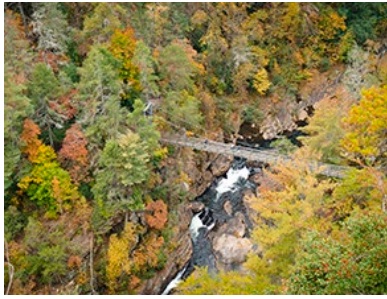
Original Acreage: 1,097

Current Acreage: 2,574

During the second half of the 1960s, a group of local visionaries began an effort to preserve the ruins of the Civil War-era New Manchester Manufacturing Company along the banks of the Sweetwater Creek valley. With help from the fledgling Georgia Conservancy, the park was authorized by the legislature in 1972 with the park gates opening in 1976. Property that was to become the park was assembled by purchase and lease throughout the 1970s and into the 1980s. Significant additions included the 1978 lease from the City of East Point of 503 acres (including the 215-acre George Sparks Reservoir) and the purchase of the 514-acre New Manchester properties in 2001. The late 1980s saw the park confirmed as a “day use” park, with no overnight facilities to be authorized. In 1998, Heritage Preserve status was placed on the park, further guaranteeing the property will never be used for other than the intended “traditional” recreation purposes. It was at this time that the current name of Sweetwater Creek State Conservation Park was adopted.

Originally the primary focus of the effort to establish this state park was the Civil War ruins of the New Manchester Manufacturing Company. In operation between the 1840s and 1864, the textile mill was burned by Sherman’s forces in July of 1864. At five stories tall, this building was taller than any building in Atlanta at the time. The story of the burning of the mill and the “refugeeing” of the mill workers is particularly poignant. The ruins of this brick building have been described as one of the last and finest of Civil War ruins in the Atlanta area. Also an important goal when the park was established was the conservation of the Sweetwater Creek valley. One can leave the hustle and bustle of the metro area and loose oneself in the wooded trails along Sweetwater Creek. Finally, though not a primary part of the vision at the time, the value of preserving 2,000+ acres less than 20 miles from Atlanta’s core will only increase as development continues to eat away at the metropolitan area’s natural character.

Tallulah Gorge State Park



Rabun County

Date Established: 1993

Original Acreage: 2,710

Current Acreage: 2,710

Tallulah Gorge State Park officially became a state park in 1993, although original discussion of making the park began in 1905.

The wife of General Longstreet, Helen Dortch Longstreet, worked diligently to push for the gorge to become a national park. Although, it didn't happen in her lifetime the way she had hoped, the land is finally protected. In 1911, the Georgia Power Company bought the land surrounding the gorge in order to produce electricity from the Tallulah River. The Georgia Power Company and Department of Natural Resources worked together, and the park became the first public-private partnership of this magnitude in Georgia.

Tallulah Gorge State Park and Georgia Power Company established a land-lease agreement that would allow for the Department of Natural Resources to maintain the conservation easement. Currently, Georgia Power Company still manages the day-use area and campground.

Tallulah Gorge State Park is like no other place in the southeast. With a gorge that runs almost two miles long and 1,000 feet deep, five waterfalls rapidly move the water from the Tallulah River into Tugaloo Lake. Along the steep terrain and rocky slopes, the Persistent Trillium blooms from March until May, the Eastern Hemlock shades the 1,099 stairs to the suspension bridge, and salamanders and lizards scurry to find the sun. Tallulah Gorge is the home to several endangered species from the Green Salamander to the Monkeyface Orchid. The park offers rock climbers walls to climb, boaters rapids to beat, and hikers trails to walk. Tallulah Gorge State Park offers a variety of activities for a variety of visitors.

Traveler's Rest Historic Site



Stephens County

Previous name: Jarrett Manor

Date Established: 1955

Original Acreage: 3.2

Current Acreage: 5.1

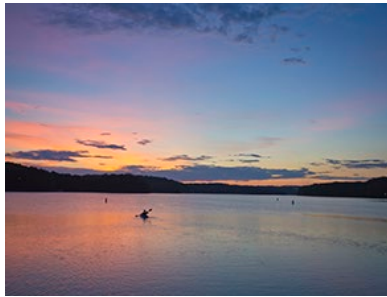
In July 1955, Mary Elizabeth Jarrett White, the granddaughter of Devereaux Jarrett, sold this home site to the state of Georgia. It was the residence and inn of the Jarrett's thriving plantation during the mid 1800s. Originally, the plantation consisted of 14,400 acres and 11 businesses. It is located on the banks of the Tugaloo River and at the crossroads of the old Nations/Kings Highway and the Unicoi Turnpike.

The house has more than 6,000 square feet, 13 rooms, and 11 fireplaces. Doors to every front downstairs room open onto the porch. The house, pre-assembled and cut to fit together, has numbered studs, rafters, joists and sills. Inside the house is a collection of original furniture of

the Jarrett family. Many pieces were hand made by the craftsman Caleb Shaw from Franklin County during the 1840 and 1850s.

Traveler's Rest was recognized as a National Historic Landmark in 1966 because it is the last standing stagecoach inn built along the Unicoi Turnpike. Today, visitors receive a guided tour to see what life would have been like at a very busy plantation and inn during the mid 1800s.

Tugaloo State Park



Franklin County
Date Established: 1965
Original Acreage: 393
Current Acreage: 393

In 1965, the U.S. Army Corp of Engineers leased a site on Lake Hartwell to the state of Georgia for the creation of Tugaloo State Park. This 393-acre park was to be the first recreation area on the newly created 56,000-acre reservoir built at the confluence of the Tugaloo and Seneca rivers. Governor Earnest Vandiver, a Lavonia native, was influential in the establishment and development of the park.

Lake Hartwell's popularity has grown over the years to become one of the most heavily visited recreation lakes in the country, and Tugaloo State Park with it. Swimming beaches, picnic areas, boat ramps, camping and cottages have been developed to provide the residents of Georgia access to this tremendous recreational resource, and the park has become a popular destination for visitors from all over the Southeast and beyond. The rugged peninsula provides almost unlimited access to the lake, but also protects the site from encroachment from nearby subdivisions and businesses that have grown with the popularity of the area.

Tugaloo State Park also is rich in cultural and natural history. Tugaloo is a Cherokee Indian word meaning "rushing waters," which describes the Tugaloo River prior to the creation of Lake Hartwell. This river was an important trade route for the Cherokees and other tribes, and at one time many Cherokee villages were established along its shores. The park also protects a rich diversity of plant and animal life typical of the upper piedmont.

Unicoi State Park and Lodge



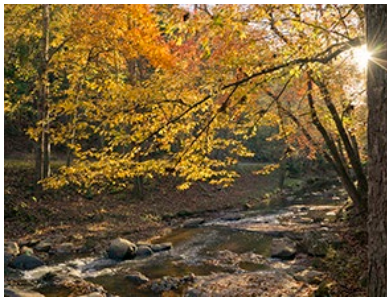
White County
Previous name: White County Area State Park
Date Established: 1954
Original Acreage: 278
Current Acreage: 1,050

In 1954, the state opened Unicoi State Park named after the Unicoi Turnpike, which was a toll road used in the 1830s to bring the first white settlers to the area. The Cherokee word “unega” means “white,” thus the meaning of Unicoi is “Place of the White Man,” “White Man’s Way,” “The New Way,” or “The New Beginning.”

Concerned north Georgians worked for many years to create an outdoor recreation experiment station, and in 1968 their goal was attained. The General Assembly created the North Georgia Mountains Authority, which was given the title to the existing park and facilities. In September 1973, The Lodge at Unicoi opened for business. In 1974, the experimental station was abolished and became a state park once again. In 1997, a contract was awarded to AMFAC Corporation to operate the lodge, cottages, and campground, while the DNR retained operation of the park. In March 2001, the contract with AMFAC was terminated and the DNR assumed operation of Unicoi Lodge, cottages and campground. Since 2013 Coral Hospitality has been contracted to manage the lodge facilities as well as the entire park.

Unicoi State Park and Lodge is the largest of all Georgia Lodge Park operations, and the barrel cottages and squirrels nest campsites are unique to the park. Features include a trading post, year-round interpretive programs, pedal boats and canoe rentals. The park has recreational opportunities on 53-acre Smith Lake with a swimming beach and fishing docks. Smith Creek has over three miles of trout fishing. The park has eight miles of hiking trails and seven and a half miles of mountain bike trails. All of these amenities make it one of the main tourist attractions in northern Georgia.

Victoria Bryant State Park



Franklin County

Date Established: 1952

Original Acreage: 45 acres

Current Acreage: 502.34 acres

1953, Franklin County resident Paul E. Bryant of Royston dedicated 45 acres as a living memorial to his mother, Victoria Osborn Bryant, and to provide recreational opportunities for the community. In 1957, 1962 and 1966 he donated or sold additional tracts of land. In 1967, the state purchased several tracts of land for purposes of constructing a nine-hole golf course and other amenities. These purchases included: 1) 16.71 acres from Hubert Hickman, 2) 16.24 acres from Paul E. Bryant, 3) 0.84 acres from Paul E. Bryant, and 4) 191.66 acres from Boyd Brown. Bryant made his final donation in 1972 and passed away five years later. In 1998 the state purchased 92.75 acres from Leyland Gawt to expand the golf course to 18 holes.

The Cherokee and Creek Indians once roamed the hills and valleys of what is now Victoria Bryant State Park. They found good hunting and fishing in the rolling hills and dense wooded areas. Indian artifacts and arrowheads are occasionally found in the park. As the white man settled the area, crops of corn, wheat and rice were cultivated. The park’s pioneer camping area was once a swampy flood plain suitable for growing rice, providing the name for Rice

Creek. A sawmill was added and the remains of some homes can still be found in the park. In 1910, a raging flood washed away the mill, which was never rebuilt. Parts and pieces remained over the years, but today only a few metal pins can be found to mark the spot along the creek shoals where the mill was originally built.

In the years prior to the state park being built, the area became a recreational draw as people from the area enjoyed swimming, wading and picnicking along the creek. Bryant donated the land to promote the welfare of his fellow citizens through increased recreational facilities. During his final years, he expressed his hope that generations to come would enjoy and benefit from the facility.

Vogel State Park



Union County
Date Established: 1927
Original Acreage: Unknown
Current Acreage: 238

Vogel State Park is the second oldest state park in Georgia and one of the oldest parks in the nation. Fred and Augustus Vogel of Milwaukee, Wisconsin gave the property to the state in 1927. They owned thousands of acres of land in north Georgia to harvest bark from oak and hemlock trees. This bark was shipped north to Wisconsin to the Phister-Vogel Leather Company for use in the preparation of the leather. During World War I a synthetic method to tan leather was developed so there was no further need for the north Georgia resources. As a result, the land was slated to become a state park.

The “boys” of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) developed the park during the Great Depression of the 1930s. Since then, Vogel has long been a destination for family vacations. The goal of the park is to continue this tradition by preserving the natural, historical, cultural and recreational opportunities afforded by the area. Visitors can hike, swim, and dream of earlier times when an Indian, settler or CCC Boy may have done the same thing. The park also provides habitat for numerous plant and animal species.

Watson Mill Bridge State Park



Oglethorpe and Madison Counties
Date Established: 1969
Original Acreage: 144
Current Acreage: 1,118

The Bryan family, owner of Jefferson Textile Mills, donated the original 135 acres of land to the state of Georgia as the nucleus of a new park. The establishment of the park was a grassroots effort by local citizens and the Bryan family to preserve an old covered bridge and surrounding

natural area for future generations. For more than 25 years, the park was focused mainly around the covered bridge, which was placed on the National Register of Historic Places, and provided camping, picnicking, nature trails, and fishing. Seeing the potential for greater natural resource protection and park expansion, the state worked with the Trust for Public Land in 1996 on three phases of land acquisitions. By the end of the decade, the park acreage was at 1,018 acres. In 2006, an additional 100 acres was acquired through DOT land mitigation funds, bringing the total acreage to 1,118.

One of Georgia's few remaining covered bridges is the focal point of the park, preserving a link to the culture of a bygone era. The bridge crosses a natural flowing river, which is surrounded by rich natural resources of flora and fauna. The biodiversity of this site is varied with different ecosystems. It is one of only two parks in Georgia that operate an equestrian stay-use area. There are presently 19 miles of trails with some designated as horse trails, some as hiking/biking, and some as walking only. With the natural scenic beauty of the site, it is a subject for many artists and photographers in the state.

Wormsloe Historic Site



Chatham County Date Established: 1973 (as part of the Heritage Trust program)

Original Acreage: 822

Current Acreage: 1,232

In 1972, the Wormsloe Foundation conveyed 822 acres to the Nature Conservancy with the stipulation that the property be available to the public, highlighting Wormsloe's historical and natural resources. In 1973, Wormsloe was acquired by the state of Georgia under the Heritage Trust Program to become a Historic Site. At that time, the relevancy of interpretation to the public became the site's mission. Without the generosity of the descendants, part of Georgia's early history would be lost. In 1997, with the support of the Wormsloe Foundation, the state acquired an additional 410 acres, which was originally one of Noble Jones' holdings and was the site of the blockhouse.

As one of the first colonists in Georgia, Noble Jones' history is important, not only in Georgia, but as a foundation to the establishment of the United States. The tabby remains of Jones' fortified house with its defenses are a rare find, if not the only remaining example of fortified domestic architecture typical of coastal Georgia. In addition to the Colonial relevance, Wormsloe's rich history ranges from prehistoric shell mounds, to the late 19th Century oak avenue. The coastal pine forest amid tidal river marshes offers a unique natural setting for its resources.