

Friends of Georgia State Parks
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FRIENDS MAKES PLEA FOR SUPPORT OF STATE PARKS DURING STATEWIDE BUDGET CUTS

Friends responds to Department of Natural Resource's announcement of the restructuring of Georgia's system of state parks and historic sites by asking Georgians to increase their support of their favorite state parks and historic sites.

GEORGIA – Friends of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites is asking its members and all Georgians to support Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites.

On May 27, 2009 the Georgia Department of Natural Resources (DNR) announced a restructuring of state parks and historic sites in response to a nearly 39% reduction in state appropriations for the park system and a projected 24% loss of operating revenue for the state's fiscal year starting on July 1, 2009. The restructuring will have a significant impact on parks and historic sites across the state, including:

- Reduction in services and access at five state parks
- Reduction in operational days and/or pursuit of community support at twelve state historic sites.
- Elimination of 12% of the workforce in addition to furloughs for the remaining staff.
- Other, major cost reduction measures.

Andy Fleming, Executive Director of Friends of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites responded with a message to the group's membership stating, "As Friends, we know the decisions were tough and that DNR was left with few options following the legislative session earlier this year which approved these massive budget reductions. We are also truly saddened by the impact these decisions will have on the separated employees and their families." Echoing these sentiments, Chris Clark, Commissioner of DNR said, "Now more than ever, we need help with fund raising, maintenance, programming and other activities."

Friends encourages all Georgians to get involved in the effort to preserve Georgia's award-winning system of state parks and historic sites by visiting state parks and historic sites and by visiting www.friendsofgastateparks.org for more information on how to help.

With 40 Chapters across the state, Friends of Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites is a growing group of dedicated people who show their support in a number of ways. Friends is a non-profit corporation formed by Georgia citizens to support Georgia's system of 63 state parks and historic sites. For more information, contact Friends at 770-975-7533 or visit www.friendsofgastateparks.org.

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