



Georgia State Parks and Georgia Public Library Service celebrate 10 years of partnership with special programming through December

Library patrons can get free admission, discovery backpacks and more through their local library.

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Georgia's State Park System and Georgia Public Library Service are celebrating the 10th anniversary of their collaborative Library Loan Program. The partnership allows library patrons to check out free ParkPasses and historic sites passes, similar to checking out a book. To celebrate, special events will take place at libraries, state parks and state historic sites from June through December.

Since its inception in 2008, the partnership has saved Georgians more than \$1 million in parking and admission fees, and has enabled more than 120,000 people to explore beautiful attractions such as Cloudland Canyon and Magnolia Springs, and historic sites like Etowah Indian Mounds and Fort King George.

"We are so proud of our wonderful partnership with Georgia's Public Libraries," said Georgia State Parks Director Becky Kelley. "The Library Loan Program not only ensures every citizen can visit our sites for free, but it also encourages people to explore new getaways. This helps us showcase our beautiful natural resources and rich history to citizens who might not otherwise learn about. And of course, we hope they'll tell their friends and come back again."

Special events will include library visits from Scout, the State Parks' mascot; programming at the parks for libraries and programming at libraries with parks; park rangers reading to kids at library events; Scout stickers; and a chance to win a co-branded Discovery Backpack containing wildlife guides and binoculars.

“Our partnership with the State Parks and Sites is one of our most popular and enduring statewide collaborations. It has a very special place within the hearts of libraries and patrons,” said Georgia State Librarian Julie Walker. We hope families throughout the state will enjoy two of Georgia's greatest resources, their state parks and public libraries, this summer.”

With a valid library card from a participating library system, patrons can check-out the Georgia State Park ParkPass which is good for free parking at 46 state parks, plus admission for up to four people at 17 state historic sites. Along with the ParkPass, patrons are also welcome to check out a Discovery Backpack to use while camping, hiking, fishing, or a day of picnicking on a mountain or lakeside. State Park parking is normally \$5 per vehicle, and historic site admission typically ranges from \$2 to \$12.

Because of the program’s popularity, families interested in borrowing a ParkPass from their local public libraries are advised to plan early, as supplies of the passes are limited to four per library facility.

Participating Georgia State Parks and Historic Sites can be found on GeorgiaStateParks.org. To learn more about the Library Loan Program, visit GaStateParks.org/LibraryLoan. For more information on Georgia’s 407 public libraries and **the Discovery Backpack**, visit georgialibraries.org or your local library.

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The Georgia Public Library Service (GPLS) empowers libraries to improve the lives of all Georgians by encouraging reading, literacy and education through the continuing support and improvement of our public libraries. GPLS is a unit of the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia. www.georgialibraries.org

Georgia’s State Parks & Historic Sites are operated by the Department of Natural Resources. Most state parks offer hiking, kayaking, fishing, boating, swimming, geocaching, ranger programs, birding, playgrounds and more. Accommodations include campsites, cabins, lodge rooms and yurts. Call 1-800-864-7275 for a free brochure. GaStateParks.org