



State Encourages Citizens to 'Get Outdoors' this Summer: Go Adventure Georgia!

ATLANTA, July 29, 2009 -- The state's "Get Outdoors Georgia" initiative encourages citizens to lead healthy, active lifestyles in the great outdoors. Coordinated by the Department of Natural Resources, the program includes hiking, biking and paddling clubs, as well as outdoor events. A recently launched series from DNR Commissioner Chris Clark highlights affordable getaways and outdoor activities close to home.

August's outdoor adventure tip from Commissioner Clark is "Go Adventure Georgia," showcasing ten exciting outdoor activities around the state.

- **Strap on your backpack and sleep under the stars.** Many of Georgia's state parks have backcountry campsites that can be reserved in advance. With no RVs nearby, backpackers' closest neighbors will be songbirds and cicadas. Backpacking trails can be found at Black Rock Mountain, Cloudland Canyon, Fort Mountain, Unicoi, Vogel and a few other state parks. Learn more at www.GaStateParks.org.
- **Join the Muddy Spokes Club biking challenge.** Grab your mountain bike, helmet and energy bars. This series includes 11 state parks with bike trails ranging from paved paths to serious single-track. Finish all 69 miles and get a "mud-splattered" t-shirt. Details are found at www.GaStateParks.org/muddyspokes.
- **Schedule a girls' weekend out. Outdoors, that is.** For a real adventure, try camping, shooting, fishing or outdoor cooking. Through the Women In The Outdoors (WITO) organization, ladies across the country participate in educational outdoor recreation activities. Two fun-filled afternoon events are scheduled this summer – Saturday, August 1 in Taylorsville and Saturday, August 15 in Fayetteville. Visit www.womenintheoutdoors.org for more information or to register.
- **Paddle your way through the mysterious Okefenokee Swamp.** One of the most beautiful places in Georgia is open for exploration with a visit to Stephen C. Foster State Park near Fargo. Plan now for a fall or winter escape because campsites and cottages go quickly. Once there, rent a canoe or kayak, or take a guided pontoon boat tour to look for heron, egrets, black bear, raccoons and, of course, alligators. Learn more at www.GaStateParks.org/scfoster or call 912-637-5274.
- **Hike your way to Georgia's only backcountry inn.** Leave your car at the top of 729-foot Amicalola Falls and journey to the unique Hike Inn. Hearty meals, hot showers and private rooms await at the end of a scenic five-mile hike. The next morning, visitors can journey back to their car or continue to Springer Mountain, the southern end of the famed Appalachian Trail. Learn more at www.Hike-Inn.com or call 1-800-573-9656.
- **Explore Tallulah Gorge by moonlight.** During summer and fall, rangers at this northeast Georgia park lead monthly excursions under the full, glowing moon. Canoe

across Tallulah Lake or hike to a suspension bridge swaying 80 feet above a waterfall. Register in advance by calling 706-754-7970.

- **Dive on a subway car.** Don your scuba gear and climb aboard Georgia's newest underwater destination, a New York City subway car. The latest addition to Georgia's artificial reef system, surplus subway cars at CCA-JL, L, DRH and HLHA artificial reefs provide habitat for marine life and recreational opportunities for anglers and divers alike. For more information about Georgia's offshore artificial reefs, visit www.coastalgadnr.org.
- **Paddle and fish on Georgia's coast.** If you love to fish, the thrill of fighting a big redfish from a kayak is an adventure you won't want to miss. Launch at the public boat ramp on Jekyll Island and enjoy breathtaking views of the Marshes of Glynn while you stalk tailing reds in the flooded *Spartina* grass. For more information, visit www.coastalgadnr.org.
- **Let the kids lead the way on opening day of squirrel season.** Keeping up the pace on a squirrel hunt is part of the adventure. Unlike big game hunts, pursuing bushytails involves lots of action and keeps both youth and adults engaged for hours. Celebrate opening day, Saturday, August 15, by visiting a nearby wildlife management area or a favored hunting destination to pursue Georgia's abundant gray and fox squirrel population. For information about hunting regulations, visit www.gohuntgeorgia.com.
- **Offer an adventure for the kids at the Hunter Education Skills Challenge (HESC) competition August 29 in Albany.** A relatively new program, HESC lets young people improve their outdoor education skills through competition. Activities simulate realistic conditions to help reinforce and test a young hunter's skills, and include archery, air rifle shooting, wildlife identification and more. Top-scoring youth at local events can compete in the state challenge in early 2010. Find upcoming events across the state at www.georgiawildlife.com under the "Education" tab.

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