



## STATE PARKS & HISTORIC SITES

May 28, 2009

A Letter to Georgia's Citizens:

Georgia is blessed with abundant natural beauty and a rich cultural heritage. Many of these amazing landscapes and historic sites are part of our award-winning state parks system, with 63 properties from the mountains to the coast. During the last month, I've seen families hiking the highest waterfall on the East Coast. I've watched children paddle a kayak across a pristine mountain lake. I've helped a retired couple park their RV beside a rolling river. I've seen my son touch his first snake as a park ranger explained. The list goes on and on.

Unfortunately, the economic crisis is hitting these special places. Because of declining revenues and budget cuts, the Department of Natural Resources recently announced significant operational changes, including reducing services at some state parks, cutting days of operation at 12 historic sites, layoffs and furloughs. If revenues continue to decline this summer due to the weakened economy, our facilities will be at even greater risk.



Georgia's state parks need your help. What can you do?

- Buy an annual ParkPass. These funds are used specifically for repairs and maintenance.
- Stay overnight. Our campgrounds, cottages and lodges offer affordable summer vacations.
- Book an event. Our facilities are great for family reunions, company retreats and other gatherings.
- Join your local chapter of Friends of Georgia State Parks & Historic Sites. The benefits are many, including free admission and discounts.
- Volunteer. Now more than ever, we need help with fund raising, maintenance, programming and other activities.

I take very seriously the role that state parks and historic sites play in our local communities. They offer outstanding outdoor recreation and they also stimulate the economy, particularly in rural areas. As we continue to evaluate operations during this difficult time, our emphasis will be on partnering with local communities, businesses and non-profits to keep these sites available to the public.

So come and visit. The dollars you spend go directly towards protecting our natural resources and preserving Georgia's state parks and historic sites for future generations.

Chris Clark, Commissioner  
Georgia Department of Natural Resources  
[www.GeorgiaStateParks.org](http://www.GeorgiaStateParks.org)