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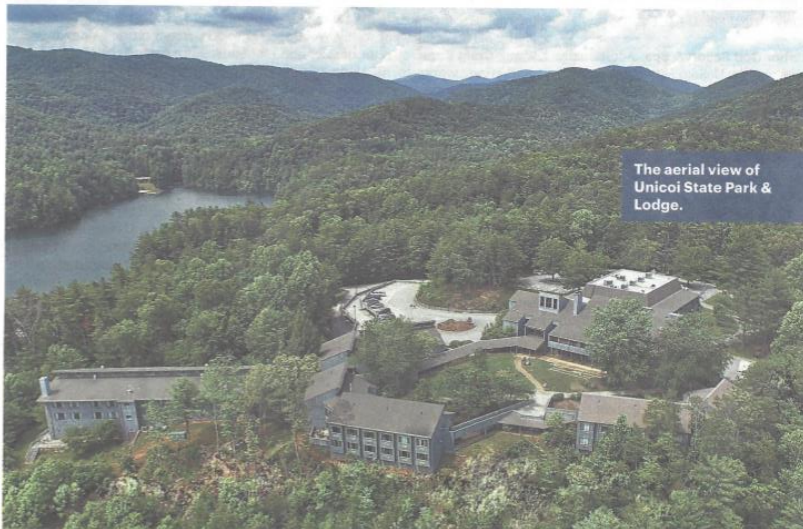
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SEPTEMBER 1-7, 2017
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MEETING PLANNERS GUIDE



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MEETING PLANNERS GUIDE



The aerial view of Unicoi State Park & Lodge.

SPECIAL

The mountains are calling

BY TONYA LAYMAN
Contributing Writer

With North Georgia mountains in the background, renovated meeting spaces and accommodations, and activities that run the gamut from serene spa services to high-adventure ziplining, tourism officials in North Georgia believe they have the perfect recipe for a productive corporate gathering.

A number of North Georgia facilities have responded to the demand by altering their properties to better serve the corporate group clientele.

Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa in Young Harris has recently upgraded its meeting and event spaces, along with guest rooms and cabins, at the state-owned facility. Opened in 1995, Brasstown Valley was created to bring new jobs to one of the state's poorer areas. It has resulted in a profitable resort model, with profits going back to the state to invest in parks and land purchases.

The state recently invested \$6 million in facility renovations and mechanical upgrades, said **Charles Burton**, general manager of Brasstown Valley. The renovation allowed them to protect the mountain feel of the lodge - preserving the rock work and large wood beams - thus embracing the cozy ambiance. With 134 guest rooms, 97



Charles Burton

traditional rooms, five suites and eight four-bedroom cabins, Brasstown is positioned to serve the group market, which has been growing steadily there since the



Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa lodge resort to open large seating.

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economic downturn, said Burton. "About 65 percent of our business annually is group travel, and I would say with confidence that 80 percent of those groups come out of Atlanta," Burton said. "It is a huge population base and a big area for us to look to for business. [Participants] can drive in, but one of the things that makes Brasstown so attractive to groups is when you host a meeting here, you are far enough away that you can have everyone's full attention."

After business is handled, activities abound including golf, horseback riding, a full-service spa and nature hikes. Additionally, the resort provides shuttles for boating and winery outings.

"Here people can get away from the hustle and bustle. Decompressing allows people to open up some thought," Burton

said. "We have 500 acres where you can take a hike and do some brainstorming. You can sit on the rockers on the veranda and see some great wildlife. You can remove stress so you can focus on what is important for the meeting."

The property includes 14,000 square feet of air-conditioned meeting space, including a 3,800-square-foot ballroom, a 100-person indoor amphitheater and an indoor, air-conditioned pavilion with electric walls opening to the great outdoors. In addition to the main dining room and sports grill, they have several locations for catered functions. "We work hard to customize our offerings," said Burton. "You can stay in the meeting room to aggressively tackle the topic or you can schedule breaks that allow

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people to take it all in."

Brasstown Valley is managed by **Coral Hospitality-GA**, which also manages **Amicalola Falls State Park & Lodge** and **Unicoi State Park & Lodge**. Both of these parks have undergone renovations and are now better equipped to cater to group events, said **Heath Carter**, regional vice president of sales and marketing at Coral Hospitality-GA.

"With Amicalola Falls State Park & Lodge, the state saw a fantastic location that needed to be updated to attract groups, so they invested in a multi-million-dollar renovation to the property," he said, adding the facility has been transformed into an upscale environment that will suit a variety of corporate functions.

"It is not campy," he said. "When you conjure up a state park you are not thinking about the level of amenities now available at Amicalola," he said. The property includes lodge rooms and 14 cabins, a team building course, a zipline course, 2,600 square feet of meeting space with seven meeting rooms, a ballroom that accommodates 250 people, and full service food and beverage offerings.

The state of Georgia government invested millions into Unicoi State Park & Lodge by refurbishing the more than 100 lodge guest rooms and conference spaces. The facility offers one of the largest ballrooms in the North Georgia mountains, a 4,300-square-foot space that can accommodate 450 people theater style with an additional 2,000 square feet of meeting space, and 29 one-, two- and three-bedroom cabins.

three-bedroom cabins.

Along with full food and beverage service, the site is home to many gathering places for meetings. For instance, the lodge's courtyard offers a fire pit, where companies can host a s'mores reception right off Lake Unicoi, Carter said. "At these facilities, you get to get away from the day to day. Especially our visitors from Atlanta," he said. "I think that is one of the most appealing things about [coming to a meeting here from] Atlanta - you are so close to the North Georgia mountains. Our facilities being state parks, we have thousands of acres to play in."

The feedback from group travelers since the renovations has been positive, said Carter. "We always heard from groups that they love the location but we needed the facilities to match and now we have them," he said. Both Amicalola and Unicoi meeting facilities have state-of-the-art Internet and audio-visual capability as well.

When not tackling business, opportunities abound for team building. The Adventure Lodge program debuted in June 2015 at both parks, through a joint venture between Coral Hospitality and the North Georgia Mountains Authority, which is focused on building safe and innovative adventure attractions. Adventure activities vary by park and include ziplines, archery, guided hikes, climbing walls, survivalist camp, GPS scavenger hunts, fly fishing, paddle boarding, mountain biking and

Amicalola Falls State Park & Lodge offers guided hikes.



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Meeting attendees can work and play at Brasstown Valley.



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birds of prey exhibitions.

Lake Chatuge Lodge in Hiawassee is another natural meeting setting that offers two 1,400-square-foot meeting rooms and 98 rooms and six suites with an excellent view of the lake and mountains, said **Doug Canup**, the lodge's group sales manager. "We offer a beautiful setting with so much to do nearby," he said. "The seven-acre lake allows for a lot of fun activities. We have a lot of hiking in the area with the Appalachian Trail nearby. Hamilton Gardens at Lake Chatuge is a great public garden that is within walking

distance," he added. "Across the way is a county-operated beach and pavilion, and there are three golf courses within 10 minutes."

Additionally, the **Rabun County Civic Center** offers 12,000 feet of flexible space for tradeshow and events.

These amenities make North Georgia mountains a popular destination for business groups from Atlanta, Canup said. "They can come unplug and enjoy the rustic feel of our lodge," he said. "It really is a serene atmosphere that helps people brainstorm."

THE LIST

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GEORGIA'S RESORTS

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

Name of resort/ Website	Address Phone	Accommodations	Number of meeting or event rooms	Golf course(s) access	Partial listing of amenities	Year opened
Atlanta Evergreen Marriott Conference Resort evergreenmarriott.com	4021 Lakeview Dr., Stone Mountain, GA 30083 770-474-9900	313 guest rooms and 25 suits	48	Lakewood and Stonemont courses	restaurants, indoor/outdoor heated swimming pools and hot tubs, 36 holes of golf, spa, jogging, hiking, Stone Mountain- themed attractions	1989
Barnsley Resort barnsleyresort.com	597 Barnsley Gardens Rd., Adairsville, GA 30103 770-773-7480	90 guest rooms and suites, new 50-room inn opening in 2018, bringing the total to 150 guest rooms and suites	9	Fazio Course	restaurants, spa, sporting clay course and instruction, bird hunting preserve, outdoor activities including horseback riding, bicycles, team games, extensive team-building activities	1999
Brasstown Valley Resort & Spa brasstownvalley.com	8321 U.S. 76, Young Harris, GA 30582 850-201-3205	102 lodge guest rooms, 37 cottage guest rooms, deluxe spa suite	18	Brasstown Valley Smart Golf Course	golf, stables, pool, fitness center, spa services	1995
Cabin Bluff cabinbluff.com	3852 Union Carbide Rd., Woodbine, GA 31788 912-728-5606	20 rooms set in waterfront cabins	3	Cabin Bluff Golf Course	indoor/outdoor fishing, sporting clay, fire-stove course, pool, tennis and bocce courts, boat, wild bird, deer and turkey hunting on 24,000 acres, kayaking, regional fare in main dining room	1928
Callaway Gardens Resort callawaygardens.com	4500 Southern Pine Dr., Pine Mountain, GA 31822 844-543-4374	807 guest rooms made up of Inn, Cottages, Villas, Cabins and The Lodge	53	Mountain View and Lake View courses	golf, tennis, bicycling, fishing, nature trails, azalea gardens, birds of prey show, educational workshops, art exhibits, Robert Lake Beach, miniature golf, shuffleboard, Aquia Island	1956
Chateau Elan Winery & Resort chateauelan.com	100 Rte. Chalkentangle, Brasstown, GA 30517 678-423-0900	424 guest rooms, including 275 inn rooms, 14 spa suites, 40 villa rooms and 95 Lodge rooms	30	Chateau, Woodlands, The Legends, Executive Par 3 Course	Viking Culinary Studio, 33,000-square-foot spa, winery tours and tastings, five restaurants, two lounges, Star Sweep Tennis Center, nature trails, health club, outdoor pool, equestrian show center	1984
Dillard House Inc. dillardhouse.com	768 Franklin St., Dillard, GA 30517 706-746-5348	85 motel rooms, 17 cabins	4	Sky Valley Country Club	horseback riding, fly fishing, hiking	1917
Forrest Hills Mountain Resort & Conference Center forresthillsresort.com	135 Forrest Hills Rd., Dahlonega, GA 30533 706-864-6456	cabins, lodge rooms, suites	8	Achute Golf Course	team building, outdoor pool, horseback riding, church organ dinners, massage spa, nature trails, outdoor hot tubs, fitness center, beach volleyball courts	1978
Foxhall Resort & Sporting Club foxhallresort.com/sporting-club	1000 Capt. Ferry Rd., Dacula, GA 30015 770-489-4380	lodges, villas	7	NA	sporting clay course, equestrian center, polo fields and riding trails, fishing, sports lawn, archery range, private club and drive-in, volleyball and badminton, golf driving range	2006
Hilton Atlanta/Marietta Hotel & Conference Center atlantamarriott.com	100 Powder Springs St., Marietta, GA 30064 770-427-2500	198 guest rooms	20	The City Club Marietta Golf Course	outdoor pool and hot tub, pool tables, fitness center, on-site 18-hole golf course, pet-friendly	1994
Hotel Tybee hoteltybee.com	1401 Strand Ave., P.O. Box 2880 Tybee Island, GA 31328 912-786-7777	208 guest rooms	10	Wilmington Island Club	swimming pool, various outdoor water sports, ocean-view dining	1889
Jekyll Island Club Hotel jekyllclub.com	371 Riverview Dr., Jekyll Island, GA 31527 912-435-2600	157 rooms and suites	12	three 18-hole courses (Oaksdale, Indian Mound, Pine Lakes), one 9-hole course (Great Dunes)	cruises, bicycle rentals, nine miles of beach, charter fishing, putting green, pool, history tours, Georgia Sea Turtle Center	1887
Kingwood Country Club & Resort	401 Country Club Dr.				private outdoor pool, clubhouse, tennis courts	

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GEORGIA'S HISTORICAL AND STATE PARKS

LISTED ALPHABETICALLY

Park*	Address	Acres	Partial listing of campsites and other lodging	Activities	Park*	Address	Acres	Partial listing of campsites and other lodging	Activities
A.H. Stephens Historic Park	456 Alexander St. N.W., Columbus, Ga. 30631 706-452-2602	1,177	22 campsites, 4 cottages, 1 pioneer camp, 1 group camp	geocaching, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, boat rental, playground, herbicides, waterfalls	James H. 'Sloppy' Floyd State Park	2800 'Sloppy' Floyd Lake Rd., Summerville, Ga. 30747 706-857-0826	561	25 campsites, 4 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, boating, fishing, small boat rental, two playgrounds, canoe and kayak rental
Amicalola Falls State Park and Lodge	280 Amicalola Falls State Park Rd., Dawsonville, Ga. 30534 706-263-4731	820	56 lodge rooms, 21 campsites, 14 cottages	hiking, ranger programs, picnicking, trout fishing, playground, waterfall photography, geocaching	Kolomoki Mounds Historic Park	205 Helen Mounds Rd., Blakely, Ga. 30823 229-724-2150	1,204	24 campsites, 1 group camp, 2 pioneer camps	geocaching, hiking, boating, boat rental, miniature golf, wave Indian mounds, museum and gift shop
Black Rock Mountain State Park	3085 Black Rock Mountain Pkwy., Mountain City, Ga. 30562 706-746-2141	1,743	44 campsites, 10 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	hiking, backpacking, picnicking, photography, lake fishing, lake canoeing and kayaking, playground	Laura S. Walker State Park	5053 Laura Walker Rd., Waycross, Ga. 31503 912-287-4000	626	44 campsites, 1 group camp, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, boating, water skiing, canoe rental, fishing, miniature golf, Wildlife Adams Golf Course & Pro Shop
Bobby Brown State Outdoor Recreation Area	21509 Bobby Brown State Park, Elberton, Ga. 30835 706-339-3438	605	61 campsites	fishing, boating, hiking, picnicking, playground, self-guided nature courses	Little Ocmulgee State Park and Lodge	80 Lee Oak Trail, Milledgeville, Ga. 31133 706-947-3104	1,340	60 lodge rooms, 54 campsites, 10 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, fishing, boat rental, lake and boat fishing, miniature golf, Wildlife Adams Golf Course
Chattahoochee Bend State Park	425 Sabalville Way, Newnan, Ga. 30054 770-254-7271	2,910	51 campsites, 2 picnic shelters	hiking, canoeing, kayaking, geocaching, fishing, geocaching	Magnolia Springs State Park	1053 Magnolia Springs Dr., Milledgeville, Ga. 31133 478-582-1860	1,070	26 campsites, 8 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, fishing, boating, swimming, picnicking, rental spray and boardwalk, 2 playgrounds
Cloudland Canyon State Park	122 Cloudland Canyon Park Rd., Ring Pines, Ga. 30738 706-637-0950	3,488	1 group shelter, 72 campsites, 15 cottages, 4 pioneer camps	hiking, lake sport, picnicking, geocaching, tennis, fishing, horseback riding	Mietloee State Park	3735 Mietloee Rd., Appling, Ga. 30802 706-543-0322	1,820	92 campsites, 10 cottages, 1 pioneer camp, 2 backcountry camps	geocaching, hiking, boating, boat rental, lake swimming, playground
Crooked River State Park	6322 Charles Smith St. Hwy., So. Macon, Ga. 31208 912-852-5256	500	62 campsites, 11 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	watercolor fishing, guided fishing, golf, boating, kayaking, hiking, boating, miniature golf, geocaching	Moccasin Creek State Park	3655 Georgia 157, Cartersville, Ga. 30123 706-947-3104	32	54 campsites, 1 picnic shelter	geocaching, hiking, lake and stream fishing, boat rental, playground, 1-mile run-golf interpretive trail
Don Carter State Park	5000 North Browning Bridge Rd., Gainesville, Ga. 30506 800-864-7275	1,040	8 cottages, 4 campsites, 4 picnic shelters	fishing, boating, lake swimming, hiking, hiking, picnicking, playground	Panola Mountain State Park	2600 Georgia 135 S.W., Doddridge, Ga. 31021 770-889-7801	1,615	4 picnic shelters, 4 picnic tables	archery range, geocaching, hiking, tree climbing, fishing, jogging, boating, fishing, boat rental, picnicking
Elijah Clark State Park	2959 McCannock Hwy., Lincolnport, Ga. 30817 706-354-3454	447	173 campsites, 20 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	boating, water skiing, fishing, swimming, picnicking, hiking, picnicking, miniature golf, playgrounds, shuffleboard	Providence Canyon State Outdoor Recreation Area	8030 Canyon Rd., Lumpkin, Ga. 31145 770-838-6470	1,003	1 pioneer camp, 4 backcountry campsites	hiking, backpacking, geocaching, picnicking, photography, astronomy and golf programs
F.D. Roosevelt State Park	2970 Georgia 105, Pine Mountain, Ga. 31222 706-463-4838	9,049	108 campsites, 22 cottages, 1 group camp, 1 pioneer camp	hiking, backpacking, fishing, boat rental, picnicking, playground, horseback riding, geocaching, stargazing	Red Top Mountain State Park	50 Lodge Rd. S.E., Cartersville, Ga. 30123 770-975-0355	1,728	92 campsites, 1 yurt, 38 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, picnicking, fishing, hiking, boating, boating, swimming
Florence Marina State Park	218 Florence Rd., Macon, Ga. 31201 229-838-6870	373	41 campsites, 15 cottages	boating, fishing, boating, playgrounds, walking, miniature golf, geocaching, wildlife photography	Reed Bingham State Park	542 Reed Bingham Rd., Amd., Ga. 31620 229-896-1551	1,613	1 pioneer camp, 1 camp island, paddle-in	geocaching, hiking, boating, boat rental, miniature golf, lake rental, pontoon boat tours, boating, playground
Fort McAllister Historic Park	3894 Fort McAllister Rd., Richmond Hill, Ga. 31334 912-727-2139	1,725	65 campsites, 10 cottages, 1 pioneer camp, 1 backcountry camp	Civil War programs, fort tours, volunteer fishing, boating, canoe rental, hiking, fishing, picnicking, geocaching	Richard B. Russell State Park	2650 Russell State Park Rd., Elberton, Ga. 30835 706-333-3045	2,508	28 campsites, 20 cottages	geocaching, Archwood Fossil Golf Course, disc golf, fishing, boating, water-skiing, tennis, boat rental, lake swimming
Fort Mountain State Park	181 Fort Mountain Park Rd., Ocmulgee, Ga. 30705 706-422-1312	3,712	20 campsites, 15 cottages, 3 pioneer camps	hiking, backpacking, lake swimming, boat rental, miniature golf, playground, geocaching, horseback riding	Sapelo Island Reserve and Reynolds Mansion	Route 1, Box 1500, Darien, Ga. 31405 912-485-2399	6,110	The Mansion (13 rooms), 1 pioneer camp	visitor center, guided tours, beach and beach walks
Fort Yargo State Park	210 South Broad St., Winder, Ga. 30095 770-867-3489	1,810	52 campsites, 6 yurts, 3 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, swimming, hiking, disc golf, lake swimming, fishing, boating, boat rental, picnicking	Seminole State Park	7870 State Park Dr., Douglasville, Ga. 30145 229-861-3137	604	46 campsites, 14 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, boating, water skiing, fishing, lake swimming, hiking, boat rental, miniature golf, boating
General Coffee State Park	46 John Coffee Rd., Nichols, Ga. 31554 912-368-7082	1,511	1 group shelter, 50 campsites, 6 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	hiking, horse trails, history and nature programs, fishing, canoe and bicycle rentals, geocaching, playgrounds	Skidaway Island State Park	52 Skidaway Caseway, Savannah, Ga. 31411 912-999-2300	588	87 campsites, 3 pioneer camps	geocaching, hiking, boating, fishing, ranger programs, three playgrounds
George L. Smith State Park	371 George L. Smith State Park Rd., Tullahoma, Ga. 30471 478-783-2759	3,014	25 campsites, 8 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	fishing, boat rentals, walking, biking, geocaching, playgrounds, boating	Smithgall Woods State Park	51 Thelall Trail, Helen, Ga. 31245 706-478-3087	5,664	6 cottages, 2 pioneer camps	geocaching, trout fishing, fishing, hiking, ranger programs, guided tours, picnicking, nature observation
George T. Bagby State Park and Lodge	330 Bagby Pkwy., Fort Gaines, Ga. 30851 229-768-2571	700	300 lodge rooms, 1 group shelter, 5 cottages	Miniature Links Golf Course & Pro Shop, fishing, boating, geocaching, tennis, kayak rental, boating, playground	Stephen C. Foster State Park	17515 Georgia 177, Fargo, Ga. 31631 912-437-5274	80	64 campsites, 5000-acre Blue Eco-Lodge*	boat rental, guided pontoon boat tours, fishing, boating, geocaching, hiking, nature photography
Georgia Veterans State Park	2459 U.S. 280 W., Condon, Ga. 31015 229-276-2371	1,308	10 cottages, 78 lodge rooms, 77 campsites, 2 pioneer camps	Lake Blue Lake Tower & Golf Club, 54M Shortline Excursion Train, boating, swimming, water skiing, fishing, boating	Sweetwater Creek State Park	1750 Mount Vernon Rd., Lima Springs, Ga. 30122 706-712-5873	2,349	8 picnic shelters, 1 group shelter	geocaching, hiking, boating, fishing, lake and stream fishing, boat rental, picnicking, ranger programs, bird club, playgrounds
Gordonia-Alatamaha State Park	322 Park Lane, Georgia 280 W. Haldeman, Ga. 30513 912-557-7744	662	39 campsites, 5 cottages	geocaching, miniature golf, playgrounds, aerial boat rental, fishing, Russell Creek Golf Course	Tallulah Gorge State Park	138 Jewett Park Dr., Tallulah Falls, Ga. 30293 706-754-7970	2,779	50 campsites, 1 pioneer camp, 1 backcountry camp	geocaching, watercolor and authentic water rafts, fishing, mountain biking, waterfalls, fishing, tennis
Hamburg State Outdoor Recreation Area	6071 Hamburg State Park Road, Mitchell, Ga. 30820 706-456-2643	741	30 campsites	boating, geocaching, fishing, hiking, picnicking, playgrounds, Civil War and Museum	Tugalo State Park	1763 Tugalo State Park Rd., Laney, Ga. 30553 706-256-4362	393	113 campsites, 25 cottages, 1 group shelter	geocaching, fishing, boating, hiking, boat rental, wildlife, herbicides, miniature golf, lake swimming, tennis
Hard Labor Creek State Park	5 Hard Labor Creek Rd., Rutledge, Ga. 30663 706-557-3001	5,804	48 campsites, 20 cottages, 2 group camps, 4 pioneer camps	geocaching, boat rental, The Creek Golf Course, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, swimming, boating, playground	Unicoi State Park and Lodge	1788 Georgia 356, Helen, Ga. 30549 706-478-4726	1,050	100 lodge rooms, 105 campsites, 10 cottages	geocaching, hiking, mountain biking, fishing, fishing, lake swimming, ranger programs, recreational programs
Hart State Outdoor Recreation Area	130 Hart Park Rd., Hartwell, Ga. 30643 706-213-2045	147	61 campsites	fishing, boating, hiking, hiking, playground	Victoria Bryant State Park	1101 Bryant Park Rd., Repton, Ga. 30662 706-245-6270	502	85 campsites, 2 pioneer camps	hiking, geocaching, Highland Walk Golf Course, hiking, fishing, swimming, group baptisms, school programs
High Falls State Park	76 High Falls Park Dr., Jackson, Ga. 30233 478-981-2053	1,050	100 campsites, 6 yurts, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, fishing, boating, boat rental, miniature golf, swimming, playground	Vogel State Park	405 Vogel State Park Rd., Hokesville, Ga. 30312 706-743-2828	333	103 campsites, 35 cottages, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, hiking, backpacking, hiking, lake swimming, boat rental, miniature golf, museum
Indian Springs State Park	678 Lake Clark Rd., Franklin, Ga. 30216 770-504-2277	528	66 campsites, 10 cottages, 1 group camp, 1 pioneer camp	geocaching, boating, fishing, boat rental, lake swimming, miniature golf, museum, hiking, boating	Watson Mill Bridge State Park	605 Watson Mill Rd., Coner, Ga. 30629 706-763-5349	502	35 campsites, 3 pioneer camps	hiking, geocaching, Highland Walk Golf Course, hiking, fishing, swimming, school programs

* The Georgia State Parks website (gastrparks.org) lists state parks and state historic sites operated by the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. State Mountain Park, the Chattahoochee River National Recreation Area, Ringneck Park, Lake Lanier State Park and the Okefenokee National Wildlife Refuge are city parks, county parks or parks operated by another government agency, and therefore are not listed in the above chart. Due to budget cuts, the hours of operation, staff and some amenities at select parks have been reduced or eliminated. Call each park or visit www.gastrparks.org for specific details. * Swannan River Eco-Lodge is 1.8 miles from Douglas C. Foster State Park.

SOURCE: Atlanta Business Chronicle research and Georgia State Parks website (gastrparks.org)