

Proposal for Heritage Tourism

Stone Mountain Memorial Park

Presented to:

The Office of the Governor of Georgia
Honorable Governor Brian P. Kemp



And,

Georgia Department of Natural Resources
DNR Commissioner Mark Williams
Jeff Cown, Director of Parks, Recreation & Historic Sites Division



And,

The Stone Mountain Memorial Association



Submitted by:

Georgia Division, Sons of Confederate Veterans, Inc.

April 26, 2021

**Proposal for Heritage Tourism
Stone Mountain Memorial Park**

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Opening Statement

Building on the history of Stone Mountain Park, this proposal will identify how we preserve the local history, our Southern past, and the statutory purpose of Stone Mountain Park by meeting the current interest in history through tourism. The Park already provides outdoor recreation, and fitness opportunities. Through expanding historical tourism, we have the opportunity to substantially increase the Park's economic impact while fulfilling its legal and intended purposes as a Confederate Memorial.

Other historical parks and sites have aligned their purpose to a centralized theme. This theme is captured in every exhibit or attraction in these parks.

Heritage tourists visit historical attractions to learn the history of those parks, and for the numerous attractions at the parks. Compared to other out-of-town visitors, heritage-oriented tourists have been shown to make more return trips. Heritage tourists are also known to put more money back into the local economy, spending more than other kinds of tourists per trip.

There are opportunities available to further increase the attendance at Georgia's most popular tourist attraction. The Stone Mountain Park is perfectly situated to provide a living historical experience unlike any other in the country, thereby educating the public. Living History incorporates historical tools, activities, and dress into an interactive presentation. When paired with the historical settings of the Park, it gives participants a strong sense of stepping back in time. This methodology has proven to be powerful and repeatable.

This proposal will demonstrate the many activities and opportunities Stone Mountain Park has, and what can be realized through adopting a centralized theme across the Park. This theme will expand on the original intent for the Park while reaching out to tourists by sharing the heritage of Georgia and of Stone Mountain Park.

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Statutory Requirements

Recognizing the importance of the Memorial and the park to the people of Georgia as well as visitors from around the globe, the Georgia General Assembly has passed law defining and protecting the Mountain.

Official Code of Georgia section 12-3-191:

Article 12-3-192.1, Purposes of association states *“The purposes of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association shall include:*

- (1) To preserve the natural areas situated within the Stone Mountain Park area;*
- (2) To provide access to Stone Mountain for Georgia's citizens; and*
- (3) **To maintain an appropriate and suitable memorial for the Confederacy”***

In recent years, Paragraph 3 of the SMMA’s charge has come under fire from various organizations who seek to “contextualize” or diminish and even destroy Stone Mountain Park’s association with the Confederacy. These organizations suggest that the terminology “appropriate and suitable” are open to debate. Georgia law, however, clearly defines item (three) of the SMMA’s duties.

First and foremost, Stone Mountain Park has been set aside as a memorial to the Confederacy. Stone Mountain itself contains one of the largest carved monuments in the world. It is a monument to the Confederacy.

Secondly, Official Code of Georgia Annotated Section 50-3-1 defines the functions of a monument or memorial. It is *“dedicated to, honors, or recounts the military service of any past or present military personnel of this state; the United States of America... or the Confederate States of America.”*

Webster’s Dictionary defines honor as **“esteem due or paid to worth; high estimation; respect; consideration; reverence; veneration; manifestation of respect or reverence.”**

Therefore, under Georgia law, a memorial must pay honor, respect and reverence to the persons, organization, or event for which it was created. One of Stone Mountain’s defining charges is to pay that respect to the sacrifices of the American soldiers who served in the Confederate army.

Monuments and memorials are intended to emphasize the positive values that abide in each of us.

In regard to the Stone Mountain carving itself, Official Code of Georgia Section 50-3-1 states:

“Any other provision of law notwithstanding, the memorial to the heroes of the Confederate States of America graven upon the face of Stone Mountain shall never be altered, removed, concealed, or obscured in any fashion and shall be preserved and protected for all time as a tribute to the bravery and heroism of the citizens of this state who suffered and died in their cause.”

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A Vision for Stone Mountain Heritage Tourism

"Stone Mountain Park is Georgia's most visited attraction."

(ExploreGeorgia.com)

The myth that the Park in fulfilling its legislative mandate as a Memorial to the Confederacy is detrimental, or that it intimidates visitors, is obviously a political fabrication. The Park averages three to four million visitors annually of all races and backgrounds. This charge is clearly fact-free.

The many reviews of the park experience which are posted on public travel sites such as Tripadvisor demonstrate many things. But it is notable that negative comments concerning the Confederate content, or the mountain carving are simply not present. Reviewers do wish to see a considerably more unified park theme, and often express a desire for an increased emphasis on the history of Georgia and the War Between the States. A sampling of reviews is at the end of this presentation. We encourage you to do your own sampling of posted reviews.

Most people visiting heritage sites and memorial parks from outside the State of Georgia are coming here to see Tara, Gone with the Wind, and War Between the States history. This is particularly true of foreign visitors.

By adding more heritage events and attractions, the Park will increase attendance (and repeat visits) based on serving the well-recognized yet heretofore largely ignored historical tourist. One key benefit in appealing to these tourists (in addition to additional gate revenue) is their interest in revenue-generating events and attractions, instead of the free amenities.

Benefits of Heritage Tourism

The Heritage Tourist:

- Seeks travel experiences that broaden and deepen his or her understanding of other places and people.
- Wants to experience destinations with a distinctive sense of place.
- Older – Participation in cultural and heritage events peaks between ages 45 and 65, when people are at the height of their careers, earning power, and discretionary income.
- Generous in spending – Visitors to historic and cultural sites spend about \$62 more per day than other visitors. They tend to spend money on antiques, art, gourmet food, wine, health food, and outdoor experiences such as biking, hiking, canoeing, and bird watching.
- More inclined to stay overnight and stays longer than the average traveler.
- Interested in authenticity – The heritage tourist seeks out experiences that are authentic, to learn about a community's history and culture.

Social Benefits of Heritage Tourism:

- Promotes preservation of local traditions, customs and culture. UNESCO now recognizes intangible cultural heritage as being as important as buildings.
- Provides research, education and work-placement opportunities for students.
- Creates enjoyable opportunities for both local residents and visitors attracted to the cultural arts, history and preservation.

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Economic Benefits:

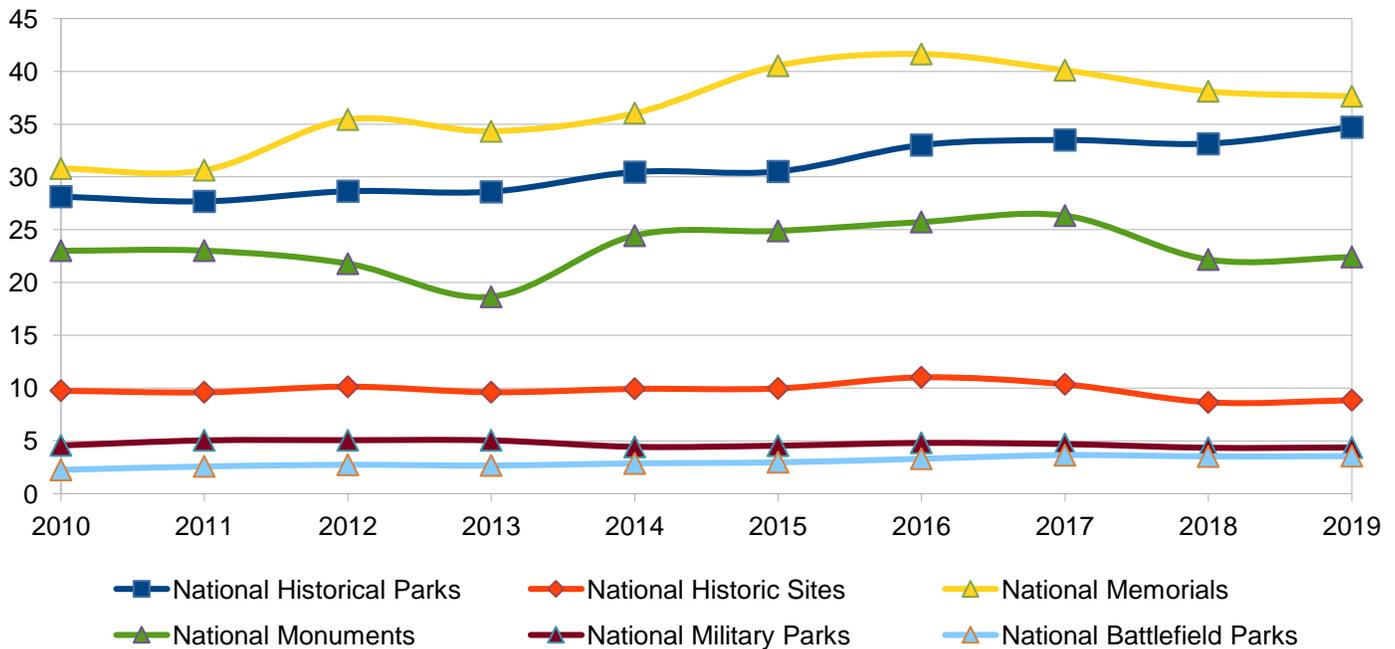
1. The creation of new jobs in the travel industry at cultural and historic attractions and in travel related establishments. Georgia tourism generated 241,000 jobs and had a direct economic impact of \$20.8 billion.
2. Increased revenues and taxes. Visitors to Georgia generated \$1.78 billion in retail sales; \$1.3 billion in entertainment and recreation revenues; \$5.67 billion in food service revenues; \$2.8 billion in lodging; \$7.4 billion in public and auto transportation revenues, all creating \$1.6 billion in local and state tax revenues.
3. 78% of all U.S. leisure travelers enjoy cultural and/or heritage activities while traveling, which translates to 118.3 million adults each year.
4. Cultural and heritage travelers spend an average of \$994 per trip and contribute more than 192 billion annually to the U.S. economy.

Heritage Tourism in the United States:

A review of visitation data for National historically oriented facilities by category, below, shows modest shrinkage in some areas, but strong dependable attendance in all categories. As a group, these are the sites frequented by Heritage Tourists. These are areas not presently being served fully by Stone Mountain Memorial Park. War Between the States history is strongly of interest as evidenced by the growth in visitation to National Historical Parks.

All historical sites demonstrate solid, reliable revenue over this entire decade surveyed.

Attendance, National Historically Oriented Sites
Millions of Visitors Annually



According to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, an effective heritage tourism plan should incorporate the following five principles:

- Find the Right Fit – Define Your Purpose
- Tell Your Own Story – Focus on Authenticity and Quality
- Preserve and Protect Your Resources – Foster a Preservation Ethic
- Make Tourism Sites Come Alive – Tell a Story
- Collaborate with Partners – Form Alliance

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Additional Attractions for Stone Mountain

Stone Mountain has so much potential to offer in the way of Heritage Tourism. We would like to suggest expanding the current attractions to provide more history/heritage tourism experiences for Stone Mountain visitors.

Historic Square: A Collection of Georgia Homes and Antiques:

PRESENT: This is a self-guided tour of a collection of buildings from around the state of Georgia that includes a garden and working cookhouse.

PROPOSED: The buildings are already here. Let us bring it to life with characters who live, work and educate visitors about plantation and small town Southern life in the 1800s. An additional emphasis on Christmas and the 4th of July with period decorations and attire will encourage return visitors.

The Memorial Lawn: Beautiful view of the Confederate Memorial & Stone Mountain:

PRESENT: At present there is the laser show at night and snow mountain during the winter. There is not much historical emphasis of the monument nor the history of the War Between the States.

PROPOSED: This large area is the perfect space to conduct a War Between the States re-enactments, much like the Battle of Gettysburg which draws thousands of onlookers each year. Imagine visitors lining the sloped hills, watching, and learning about their nation's history, feeling the concussion of firing canons, touring encampments, sutler tents, and taking part in living history demonstrations and hearing songs and stories from living historians. Georgia has many very professional reenactment organizations. Volunteers across the State and Nation could augment battle reenactments and encampments.

Stone Mountain Village:

PRESENT: A collection of buildings, and stores that make up an 1870's town that which could have a more cohesive theme and improved food and shows.

PROPOSED: The village could be the place setting for a Folk Center style town. If populated with real period craftspeople selling their wares; blacksmiths, leather-work, glass blowing, seamstresses, authentic food and period characters you would be following a formula which is proven successful in many places. The village could be topped off with period theater showcasing dancing and skits typical of the 1800s. Staging skits, songs (even group singing)

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are also popular at other historical tourist destinations. There is no reason this cannot be done at Stone Mountain.

Great Locomotive Chase Scenic Railroad:

PRESENT: Five mile open air car excursion around the mountain pulled by a 1940's locomotive.

PROPOSED: Why not return some excitement to the ride? Along the route presents a series of stops show casing historical mock-ups and skits. Recreate a mock-up of the Great Locomotive Chase, along the way showing the locomotive the *Texas* with Captain Fuller chasing (in reverse) the locomotive *General* with Andrew's raiders on board. Have skits on the way showing soldiers shooting at each other. A small farmhouse with family working in the garden and doing chores could illustrate ordinary citizens lives track-side. The "Northern Central Railroad" in Pennsylvania has gotten new constructed, reliable steam locomotives built to serve the Gettysburg area. The locomotives are authentic in appearance while providing operational ease.

The Lakes at Stone Mountain:

PRESENT: Stone Mountain has two large lakes in addition to several smaller ones. Boating is immensely popular on the lakes, and so is fishing. All of the large lakes are man-made.

PROPOSED: Let us get the riverboat's paddle turning again! And, to make it more exciting, let passengers witness a naval battle between mock-ups of the *C.S.S. Virginia* and *U.S.S. Monitor*. If only one ship were to grace the lake, the *C. S. S. Savannah* which successfully repelled Union forces at Savannah harbor might be considered. (The *Savannah* kept the Union fleet at bay by fear rather than combat prowess.) At port, guests could tour a recreation of the *H. L. Hunley* submarine – the first combat submarine to sink a major warship.

Mountaintop Visitor Center & The Skyride:

PRESENT: Mini museum that has a chronological history of the monument and also houses a snack shop for visitors.

PROPOSED: Let us also give credit to the last craftsman to finish the Stone Mountain Sculpture, Roy Faulkner, a Georgian, invented a process of heat sculpturing. Some demonstrations or illustrations explaining the unique process of heat sculpturing works could be very educational. Mr. Faulkner's invention made possible the completing the carving.

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In Closing

Stone Mountain Park is currently in a prime position to become the premiere living history destination of the South if not the nation. It has the buildings, museums, terrain, infrastructure and space. Living history is the perfect combination to make Stone Mountain Park the wonder it was intended to be. It adds excitement, realism, education, and economic impact while fulfilling its legislative mandate as a memorial to the Confederacy.

It has been our experience that education and focusing on all the many common attributes that we share as Americans helps bring understanding and a stronger sense of togetherness among all of us regardless of our backgrounds.

We hope this document will be a helpful tool when seeking a future lease partner for the Park or a helpful guideline if the State decides to take over the operations. Regardless of who takes over the event operations, the Sons of Confederate Veterans is a 125-year-old organization dedicated to protecting and preserving the good name of the Confederate Soldier, it is our charge. We are always available to provide any assistance to the SMMA with their mission to maintain Stone Mountain Memorial Park as a memorial to all the brave Georgia veterans who did their duty when call upon by their State and the many who gave the ultimate sacrifice.

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Appendices:

History of the Stone Mountain Memorial Park

Beginning with a newspaper article by William Terrell in the summer of 1914, interest has been high in creating and maintaining a memorial to the soldiers, sailors, marines and citizens of the Confederate States of America.

Immediately following this Mrs. C. Helen Plane, of Atlanta, presented the cause to the Daughters of the Confederacy of Georgia, which resulted in the sculptor, Gutzon Borglum, being invited to Stone Mountain to consider the carving of the Memorial to the Confederacy on the side of the Mountain.

Mr. Borglum visited the Mountain on August 17th, 1915, and in September following, the Stone Mountain Confederate Monumental Association was organized, and Mr. Borglum chosen for the work.

On Saturday, May 20th, 1916, Stone Mountain was formally dedicated to its lasting service as a memorial of the soldier-heroes of the Confederacy. Illness prevented the attendance of Mr. Samuel Hoyt Venable. In his stead the chairman, Mr. Forrest Adair, introduced Dr. James Nimmo Ellis, Mr. Venable's brother-in-law who after an eloquent speech honoring the veterans and the motives that prompted the memorial, delivered to Mrs. C. Helen Plane, President of the United Daughters of the Confederacy, Mr. Venable's duly executed deed to that part of the mountain designated as the Memorial Reservation, which includes an ample park frontage at the base.

As support developed across the nation, the President of the United States, Warren G. Harding and former president and Chief Justice of the United States Supreme Court William Howard Taft endorsed the grand carving on the Mountain. Numerous governors, other elected officials and businessmen joined the movement. The United States Congress authorized a commemorative half dollar to support the project. The Great War and the Great Depression both served to greatly delay the project. To bring the Memorial to completion, involvement of the State of Georgia was called for.

“The Stone Mountain Memorial Association was formed in 1958 as an Act of the Georgia Legislature to purchase the Stone Mountain and surrounding land for a park to serve as a memorial to Southern history and a place of recreation for Georgia ’s citizens and visitors.

In its role as a memorial, a large sculpture commemorating the Confederacy has been carved on the north face of the mountain overlooking a broad memorial lawn and adjacent museum.”

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Stone Mountain has served the state of Georgia, its visitors, and tourists alike as a place of recreation and relaxation as well as memorializing and educating visitors about our Southern and Confederate history.

“The Confederate Memorial Carving depicts three Southern heroes of the Civil War: Confederate President Jefferson Davis, Generals Robert E. Lee and Thomas J. “Stonewall” Jackson. The figures measure 90 by 190 feet, surrounded by a carved surface that covers three acres, it is larger than a football field – the largest relief sculpture in the world. The carving is recessed 42 feet into the mountain. Work on the Carving began in 1915 and was completed in 1972.”

...Stone Mountain Memorial Association

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O.C.G.A. § 1-4-20

GEORGIA CODE
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TITLE 1. GENERAL PROVISIONS CHAPTER 4. HOLIDAYS AND OBSERVANCES

O.C.G.A. § 1-4-20 (2015)

§ 1-4-20. Designation of Confederate History and Heritage Month

(a) The General Assembly hereby finds and determines that tourism is a great economic resource in Georgia; and historical, heritage, and cultural inheritance are among the tourism industry's most popular attractions. Georgia's Confederate heritage, physical artifacts and battle sites, and historic events and persons not only attract visitors, they are potentially of even greater importance and benefit to our state's economy. Increased development of our state's Confederate history and heritage as part of the tourism industry will be enhanced through recognizing, celebrating, and advertising that heritage and history.

(b) The month of April of each year is hereby designated as Confederate History and Heritage Month and shall be set aside to honor, observe, and celebrate the Confederate States of America, its history, those who served in its armed forces and government, and all those millions of its citizens of various races and ethnic groups and religions who contributed in sundry and myriad ways to the cause which they held so dear from its founding on February 4, 1861, in Montgomery, Alabama, until the Confederate ship CSS *Shenandoah* sailed into Liverpool Harbor and surrendered to British authorities on November 6, 1865.

(c) Officials and departments of state, county, and municipal governments, boards of education, elementary and secondary schools, colleges and universities, businesses, and all citizens are encouraged to participate in programs, displays, and activities that commemorate and honor our shared history and cultural inheritance throughout each April during Confederate History and Heritage Month.

HISTORY: Code 1981, § 1-4-20, enacted by Ga. L. 2009, p. 207, § 2/SB 27.

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§ 12-3-191. Definitions

As used in this part, the term:

- (1) "Association" means the Stone Mountain Memorial Association created by this part or any authority or body in which the duties and liabilities of the association created hereby may hereafter become vested.
- (2) "Bonds" or "revenue bonds" means any bonds issued by the association under this part, including refunding bonds.
- (3) "Cost of project" means the cost of acquiring, constructing, developing, improving, equipping, adding to, extending, remodeling, managing, and operating the project or any part thereof, including, without being limited to, the cost of all lands, properties, franchises, easements, and rights in property; the cost of all machinery and equipment necessary for constructing, improving, developing, adding to, remodeling, managing, maintaining, and operating the project; financing charges and interest accruing on any bonds issued by the association prior to and during the period estimated as necessary to complete the construction, development, and improvement of the project, and for one year thereafter; the cost of plans and specifications; the cost of engineering, engineers, and architects; legal fees; other expenses necessary or incident to determining the feasibility or practicality of the project or any part thereof; administrative expenses; and such other expenses as may be necessary or incidental to the financing authorized by this part, including fiscal agents' fees and the estimated cost of operating the project for a period not exceeding 12 months, and the expense of construction, development, improvement, management, maintenance, operation, or any other action permitted by this part with respect to the project and the placing of the same in operation, and including any other expense authorized by this part to be incurred by the association which is incurred with respect to any action as regards the project. Any obligation or expense incurred for any of the foregoing purposes shall be regarded as a cost of the project and may be paid or reimbursed as such out of the proceeds of bonds issued under this part for such project.
- (4) "Governing authority of a county" means the commissioner, board of commissioners, commission, or other person or body of persons at the time entrusted by law with the administration of the fiscal affairs of any county.
- (5) "Governing authority of a municipality" means the council, board of aldermen, or other person or body of persons at the time entrusted by law with the administration of the fiscal affairs of any municipal corporation.
- (6) "Master plan" means that document created by Robert and Company and adopted by the association in December, 1992, consisting of districts and plans for various construction projects as amended prior to January 1, 1995, and as it may be amended from time to time pursuant to Code Section 12-3-194.2.
- (7) "Project" means Stone Mountain and property adjacent thereto acquired by the association and all accommodations, utilities, facilities, services, and equipment necessary or convenient, and all property, real, personal, or mixed, used or useful, including franchises and easements, in constructing, erecting, improving, remodeling, developing, equipping, adding to, extending, maintaining, managing, and operating Stone Mountain, located in DeKalb County, Georgia, and property adjacent thereto, **as a Confederate memorial** and public recreational area, and the construction, improvement, development, maintenance, management, operation, and extension of any part thereof, as to which the association has undertaken or agreed to undertake any action permitted by this part.

§ 12-3-192.1. Purposes of association

The purposes of the Stone Mountain Memorial Association shall include:

- (1) To preserve the natural areas situated within the Stone Mountain Park area;
- (2) To provide access to Stone Mountain for Georgia's citizens; and
- (3) **To maintain an appropriate and suitable memorial for the Confederacy.**

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§ 50-3-1. Description of state flag; militia to carry flag; defacing public monuments; obstruction and relocation of monuments (a)

The flag of the State of Georgia shall consist of a square canton on a field of three horizontal bands of equal width. The top and bottom bands shall be scarlet and the center band white. The bottom band shall extend the entire length of the flag, while the center and top bands shall extend from the canton to the fly end of the flag. The canton of the flag shall consist of a square of blue the width of two of the bands, in the upper left of the hoist of the flag. In the center of the canton shall be placed a representation in gold of the coat of arms of Georgia as shown in the center of the obverse of the Great Seal of the State of Georgia adopted in 1799 and amended in 1914. Centered immediately beneath the coat of arms shall be the words “IN GOD WE TRUST” in capital letters. The coat of arms and wording “IN GOD WE TRUST” shall be encircled by 13 white five-pointed stars, representing Georgia and the 12 other original states that formed the United States of America. Official specifications of the flag, including color identification system, type sizes and fonts, and overall dimensions, shall be established by the Secretary of State, who pursuant to [Code Section 50-3-4](#) serves as custodian of the state flag. Every force of the organized militia shall carry this flag while on parade or review.

(b)(1) As used in this subsection, the term:

(A) “Agency” means any state or local government entity, including any department, agency, bureau, authority, board, educational institution, commission, or instrumentality or subdivision thereof, and specifically including a local board of education, the Board of Regents of the University System of Georgia, and any institution of the University System of Georgia.

(B) “Monument” means a monument, plaque, statue, marker, flag, banner, structure name, display, or memorial constructed and located with the intent of being permanently displayed and perpetually maintained that is:

(i) Dedicated to a historical entity or historically significant military, religious, civil, civil rights, political, social, or cultural events or series of events; or

(ii) Dedicated to, honors, or recounts the military service of any past or present military personnel of this state; the United States of America or the several states thereof; or the Confederate States of America or the several states thereof.

(C) “Officer” means an officer, official, body, employee, contractor, representative, or agent of any agency, whether appointed or elected.

(2) It shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, or other entity to mutilate, deface, defile, or abuse contemptuously any publicly owned monument located, erected, constructed, created, or maintained on real property owned by an agency or the State of Georgia. No officer or agency shall remove or conceal from display any such monument for the purpose of preventing the visible display of the same. A violation of this paragraph shall constitute a misdemeanor.

(3) No publicly owned monument erected, constructed, created, or maintained on the public property of this state or its agencies, departments, authorities, or instrumentalities or on real property owned by an agency or the State of Georgia shall be relocated, removed, concealed, obscured, or altered in any fashion by any officer or agency; provided, however, that appropriate measures for the preservation, protection, and interpretation of such monument or memorial shall not be prohibited.

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(4) Any person or entity that damages, destroys, or loses a monument or that takes or removes a monument without replacing it shall be liable for treble the amount of the full cost of repair or replacement of such monument and may be subject to exemplary damages unless such person or entity was authorized to take such action by the public entity owning such monument. In addition to treble the cost of repair or replacement and possible exemplary damages, the person or entity shall also be liable for the attorney's fees and court costs expended by the public entity owner of the monument or person, group, or legal entity in any action or proceeding required to establish liability and collect amounts owed. Should a public entity owner of the monument or person, group, or other legal entity prevail in any action under this Code section, such prevailing party shall timely pay for the cost of or repair or placement of the monument upon moneys being collected from the party damaging, destroying, or losing such monument.

(5) A public entity owning a monument or any person, group, or legal entity shall have a right to bring a cause of action for any conduct prohibited by this Code section for damages as permitted by this Code section. Such action shall be brought in the superior court of the county in which the monument was located.

(6) Except as provided in this paragraph, it shall be unlawful for any person, firm, corporation, or other entity acting without authority to mutilate, deface, defile, abuse contemptuously, relocate, remove, conceal, or obscure any privately owned monument located on privately owned property. Any person or entity that suffers injury or damages as a result of a violation of this paragraph may bring an action individually or in a representative capacity against the person or persons committing such violations to seek to recover general and exemplary damages sustained as a result of such person's or persons' unlawful actions. This paragraph shall not apply to an owner of real property storing privately owned monuments.

(7) Nothing in this Code section shall prevent an agency from relocating a monument when relocation is necessary for the construction, expansion, or alteration of edifices, buildings, roads, streets, highways, or other transportation construction projects. Any monument relocated for such purposes shall be relocated to a site of similar prominence, honor, visibility, and access within the same county or municipality in which the monument was originally located. A monument shall not be relocated to a museum, cemetery, or mausoleum unless it was originally placed at such location.

(c) Any other provision of law notwithstanding, the memorial to the heroes of the Confederate States of America graven upon the face of Stone Mountain shall never be altered, removed, concealed, or obscured in any fashion and shall be preserved and protected for all time as a tribute to the bravery and heroism of the citizens of this state who suffered and died in their cause.

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Reviews of the Park, from Tripadvisor 2020

Reviews concerning Heritage Tourism from Tripadvisor -

“As an Ohioan who attend General Sherman Junior High School, I was looking forward to experiencing some southern culture. At the recommendation of my southern born and bred husband we went to the laser show which he last saw 34 years ago. For him, a walk down memory lane, it was not. What we got instead, was a long Barney cartoon with bizarre references to Star Wars and just a few sound bites of southern rock along with even less civil war references.

While I’m not advocating the cause of the rebellion, Stone Mountains attempt to make a cartoon out of a historical site was a disappointment. A historical lesson on the civil war would have been much more enjoyable and appropriate.”

“The museum has interesting displays of the Civil War and construction details of the mountain carving. The Historic Square is an interesting self guided walking tour of historic buildings from 18th and 19th century Georgia. The buildings depict the diverse lifestyles of time past. Interesting for both adults and children.”

“We made the trek to Stone Mountain ostensibly to take in the last Laser Light Show of the season and secondarily to enhance our knowledge of all things Civil War related. The latter proved to be the better reason to be there. As far as the Light Show went...a lot of "sound and fury, signifying nothing"! It literally had "flashes of brilliance" but, overall, failed to live up to the hype. The etching, the Civil War museum, the sky lift to the top of the mountain and, even the train ride around the mountain more than made up for the flatness of the finale. A word to the wise...if you are going to visit this park and make a day of it, pony up the extra ducats and pay for the VIP package! The cost was something like an extra \$10 per person {which paid for itself the first time we bypassed long lines of people waiting to get on the sky lift!} Not getting the VIP deal will make it unlikely to do all things available in a single day. Special shout out: the gentleman that narrated on the train tour was exceptionally entertaining and knowledgeable”

“Great park to visit with many attractions. We came to see the carving and ride the lift to the top. Best view around to see 30 plus miles.

Bikers and hikers love the place as it has a paved road to get you safely around. Nice films about Georgia and the civil war along with the story about the carving. Park does a good job telling about the war and suffering by all parties.”

“We loved this park!! Admission is very reasonable and you may purchase a season pass. We visited twice in two days. The Confederate Building has informative entertaining videos to watch, explaining the history and carving of the figures, and another on the history of the war. They stated that the Civil war was about secession and not just about slavery. There is a gondola ride to the top of the mountain or you can hike up. We also visited on a Saturday evening for a light show. Most people brought picnic dinners to enjoy before the show. The light show was mostly geared towards the children, but was entertaining for all. It was wonderful to see people of all races come together enjoying this site and its history. The producers of the light show program incorporated patriotic music and themes along with contemporary music and figures. Thanks for a wonderful place to bring us together!”

Condensed from the March 2010 edition of “*Heritage Tourism Handbook: A How-to-Guide for Georgia*” published jointly by the Historic Preservation Division, Georgia Department of Natural Resources, 254 Washington Street, Ground Level, Atlanta, Georgia 30334 (www.gashpo.org) and Tourism Division, Georgia Department of Economic Development, 75 Fifth Street, NW, Suite 1200, Atlanta, Georgia 30308 (www.ExploreGeorgia.org)