



georgiarocks.us

PO Box 33522, Decatur GA 30033
Phone: 770-934-5644 Web: georgiarocks.us/events

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Geology and Natural Communities Walk November 14 at Providence Canyon State Outdoor Recreation Area

Two authors will team up on November 14 to reveal the geology of Providence Canyon and how it influences plants and animals. Geologist Dr. Bill Witherspoon, co-author of *Roadside Geology of Georgia* and biogeographer Dr. Leslie Edwards, co-author of *Natural Communities of Georgia*, will lead a walk followed by a book signing. Both *Roadside Geology of Georgia* (Mountain Press Publishing) and *Natural Communities of Georgia* (University of Georgia Press) “take the general reader to Georgia’s natural wonders and explain the science that lies behind the scenery,” according to Witherspoon.

Providence Canyon was eroded into colorful layers of sand and clay less than 150 years ago, because of poor farming practices in the 1800’s. The layers themselves, in nearly every color of the rainbow, were deposited more than 60 million years ago, when much higher sea level brought the shoreline of the Gulf of Mexico into the area. Hiking into the canyon, you can stand on the boundary that represents the time when dinosaurs became extinct.

Edwards, whose PhD dissertation research took place at Providence Canyon, says the natural communities clearly tell the story of the canyon’s erosion and recovery. The surprisingly diverse vegetation includes trilliums, a rare azalea, and northerly species that may have remained in the area since the last glaciation. There is an unusual diversity of oak species in the canyon, and they, along with the hickories should be in their full fall color.

The walk, which is free with park admission, is from 2:00 to 3:30. Information on Providence Canyon events is at <http://www.gastateparks.org/ProvidenceCanyon>.

Witherspoon, who taught geology to K-12 teachers and their students for 17 years at DeKalb County Schools’ Fernbank Science Center, says *Roadside Geology of Georgia* appeals to families who travel in Georgia. “If you’ve visited an overlook in north Georgia, left tracks in the sand on Tybee Island, or floated the rapids along the Columbus Riverwalk, you’ve had a rock adventure. This book lets you spice those adventures up with a little science, by understanding the geology behind the landmarks we encounter whenever we go outside in Georgia.”

Natural Communities of Georgia teaches the public to recognize and protect Georgia’s many treasures of the natural world. “You will be amazed to learn of Georgia’s diversity, from high

mountain peaks that host species that are typically found much farther north, to the incomparable Okefenokee Swamp, where alligators and plants combine to form a lush, tropical feel,” according to Edwards, who retired this year from Georgia State University.

Edwards and Witherspoon gave the keynote presentation at this year’s Wildflower Pilgrimage of the Georgia Botanical Society, which is co-sponsoring the event.

Attendees who register for *Roadside Geology of Georgia* author events can pick up the COOL BILLION-year-old rock described at georgiarocks.us/corbin. Register at georgiarocks.us/events or “Join” in facebook.com/RoadsideGeologyGA/events. Contact for information: Dr. Bill Witherspoon, bill@georgiarocks.us.