

GEORGIA TRAVELER 111- Seven Natural Wonders  
CAPTIONING SCRIPT

**David Zelski VO:**

Coming up on this week's Georgia Traveler, discover the seven natural wonders of Georgia, deep gorges and high mountains, beautiful waterfalls and breathtaking canyons, special springs and still swamps.

**Music**

On the road most every day, looking for a place where you can play, looking for the best place you can stay. From the mountains to the coast, looking for a trip you'll like the most, maybe even find a friendly ghost, we're Georgia Traveler. Well we're from Georgia and we travel, that's why we call it Georgia Traveler, and nothing rhymes with Georgia Traveler, but still we're called the Georgia Traveler.

**Woman:**

Georgia Traveler is made possible in part by the Georgia Tourism Foundation.

**Woman:**

We all have dreams.

**Man:**

To wear the green jacket.

**Woman:**

To see wild horses.

**Kid:**

To catch a major league ball.

**Man:**

To create memories with my family.

**Woman:**

Put your dreams in motion. Visit Georgia dot org.

**Woman:**

And by...

**Woman:**

People are drawn to this state for its unbelievable beauty. We're working hard to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, proud sponsor of the programming that also enriches our lives.

**Woman:**

And by...

**Woman:**

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The Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation, Inc.

**Woman:**

And by...

**Woman:**

Supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting.

**Woman:**

Thank you.

**David Zelski:**

Hello and welcome to Georgia Traveler, I'm your tour guide David Zelski and right now I'm standing in front of the amazing Stone Mountain, that's because this week we are visiting Georgia's seven natural wonders. We have a lot of great stories for you including Stone Mountain, but first, let's take a look at some of the sights and sounds you'll experience when you visit Georgia's Seven Natural Wonders...

**MUSIC**

**David Zelski:**

We begin our tour of the Seven Natural Wonders at Amicalola Falls, just 15 miles north of Dawsonville.

**MUSIC**

**Elisabeth Pinion:**

Amicalola Falls is considered one of Georgia's seven natural wonders. It is the highest cascading waterfall east of the Mississippi river. That is of course something that you don't see everyday. There are 7 cascades that drops 729 feet, and that in itself is a pretty unique feature to the area.

**David Zelski:**

The name, Amicalola, means "tumbling waters" in Cherokee, but this State Park offers more than just fantastic views of the falls.

**James Hamilton:**

Amicalola is really one of our flagships of the whole state park system and it's a very, very popular park. The late 1980s, the state built a lodge up here on top of the mountain with just a fantastic view looking out.

**Elisabeth Pinion:**

The park itself is about 900 acres. It has about 12 miles of hiking trails. You can fish in the park. We have a 56-room lodge and 24 campsites on the park as well.

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**David Zelski:**

One of the park's most interesting facilities is the Len Foote Hike Inn.

**David Freedman:**

The Len Foote Hike Inn is accessible by a five mile hiking trail from Amicalola Falls State Park. It's moderately strenuous; you know anywhere up in the mountains there's a lot of up and down, but it's a beautiful hike, if you drove in, which you are not allowed to, and just came to the building; you really wouldn't feel the same. It's the whole experience of hiking on a trail and coming to this spectacular place in the mountains.

**David Zelski:**

A spectacular place that is also environmentally friendly.

**David Freedman:**

A Green Building is a building that minimizes the adverse impact on the environment and its occupants. Our intent is that the buildings that we are building today will last another hundred years, by incorporating a lot of these green principles into our buildings. Things like recycle your rainwater, using it for flushing and hand washing, using waterless plumbing fixtures, natural light glazing, use of local and regional materials.

**David Zelski:**

And by using worms. That's right, worms.

**David Freedman:**

What we do here at the Hike Inn is we have a vermiculture process which uses earth worms to break down the waste. Out here in a remote area, we have to be smart about how we deal with our water and waste issues. So through the worm process, or vermiculture, we take all our waste and dump them in worm bins and then worms decompose all the waste.

**David Zelski:**

One thing that is never a waste is a trip to Amicalola Falls State Park. Some people even come here to attempt an incredible feat, hiking the Appalachian Trail.

**Elisabeth Pinion:**

The 8.5-mile approach trail is located here in the park and that will take you to Springer Mountain, which is the southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail.

**David Zelski:**

But it's the natural splendor of the waterfall that people have come to see for decades. As visitors hike to the top of the falls, the water races to the bottom and off to the sea, oblivious to all the attention.

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**Keely Walker:**

Just south of Waycross we find our next natural wonder, the Okefenokee Swamp.

**MUSIC**

**Keely Walker:**

It's a bowl shaped swamp covering over 700 square miles and the largest national wildlife refuge in the eastern United States, one of Georgia's most unique land features and a wildlife paradise unparalleled in the region. The Okefenokee is a natural wonder of Georgia and in some opinions one of the natural wonders of the world. One of the best ways to really see the swamp is to take a boat tour. And so far we've already spotted three gators.

**MUSIC**

**Joe Yeager:**

Once you go out in your boat and you get out into the swamp it's like nothing has changed. It's been kept very natural. It's a national wildlife refuge that assures us that things stay the way they are.

**Keely Walker:**

One of the reasons the Okefenokee Swamp is considered one of Georgia's Seven Natural Wonders is its inhabitants. There are thirty species of native mammals, fourteen species of turtles, eleven species of lizards, thirty six species of snakes, fourteen different families of fishes, twenty species of frogs and toads, over two hundred species of birds, sasquatch, **imferial** entities, and extra terrestrials.

**MUSIC**

**Keely Walker:**

To celebrate their love for the swamp, the little town of Folkston, Georgia known as the Gateway to the Swamp holds its annual Okefenokee Festival on the second Saturday in October.

**MUSIC**

**Keely Walker:**

Isn't she a little bit of gator bait down in the swamp. I found the tactical team. To protect me they did some excellent marching earlier. You guys can show me how to march.

**Tactical Team:**

Alright. Yea. Keep your hands like this by your side.

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**Keely Walker:**

Ok.

**Tactical Team:**

Feel safe?

**Keely Walker:**

I feel safe.

**Tactical Team:**

Feel good?

**Keely Walker:**

I've never felt safer. And what better way to celebrate the Okefenokee Swamp then by turning the tables on its most notorious predator, the alligator. Have you tried gator yet?

**Festival Participant:**

Have I tried gator yet? No.

**Keely Walker:**

You going to try the gator?

**Festival Participant:**

What is the gator?

**Keely Walker:**

Alligator tail on a stick.

**Festival Participant:**

Oh no, I'll pass on that one. Sorry.

**Keely Walker:**

Has she tried the gator yet?

**Festival Participant:**

Say no.

**Keely Walker:**

Have you tried the alligator tail yet today?

**Festival Participant:**

No we have not, no.

**Keely Walker:**

Are you going to try it?

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**Festival Participant:**

No I don't think so.

**Keely Walker:**

You don't think so.

**Festival Participant:**

I love alligator. You never had alligator? Honey you don't know what you're missing. It is really really good. Try it.

**Keely Walker:**

I don't know.

**Festival Participant:**

I'm serious try it...

**Keely Walker:**

Really.

**Festival Participant:**

You'll like it.

**Keely Walker:**

Ok.

**MUSIC**

**Keely Walker:**

Well I've been hearing about the alligator kabob.

**Alligator Farmer:**

It's farm raised, south Georgia.

**Keely Walker:**

Farm raised. Did you wrestle that alligator?

**Alligator Farmer:**

No I sure didn't wrestle it. I cut it up and skewered it up.

**Keely Walker:**

It's hot.

**Alligator Farmer:**

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I've been selling gator tail for sixteen years...It will be four dollars mam. Talk to me mam.

**Keely Walker:**

That's alligator.

**Alligator Farmer:**

Thank you mam.

**Philip Proctor:**

Next, we're off to Providence Canyon, just 7 miles west of Lumpkin.

**MUSIC**

**Philip Proctor:**

For a place to be nick-named "Georgia's Little Grand Canyon" it had better evoke some genuinely dramatic images and in that respect Providence Canyon does not disappoint. Providence Canyon is not a "natural" wonder at all but man-made, however, unintentionally so.

**Sherry Stephens:**

The settlers came into this area to farm what was then the major crop of cotton. And they stripped all the vegetation from the land, cutting all the trees in order to plant cotton.

**Joy Joyner:**

The thing is they plowed downhill and the soil here is very sandy.

**Philip Proctor:**

Erosion ate through the sandy soil quickly creating canyons nearly 150 feet deep. The canyons no longer grow deeper but they do grow wider every time it rains.

**Joy Joyner:**

We lose between three and five feet of the canyon walls each year, an inch here and an inch there. The canyons are constantly changing. Providence canyon was named after Providence Methodist Church. It had to be moved back in 1859 due to the expansion of the canyons.

**Billy Townsend:**

Providence canyon is an erosional scar caused by poor land management. But it developed into one of the most beautiful places because of the layers of sand there. And it is a very difficult place not to take a really nice photograph.

**MUSIC**

**Joy Joyner:**

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Providence Canyon state park is an awesome place. We have 16 canyons in all. There are 43 different colors of sands on the canyon walls. There's a 3-mile trail that circles 9 of the canyons. You can actually go off the trail and into the canyons themselves.

**Philip Proctor:**

If you come to hike, be aware that the canyon floor is often muddy.

**Joy Joyner:**

When you come hiking, it's best to wear boots or maybe old sneakers because if you wear white sneakers, they will never be white again.

**Philip Proctor:**

Visitors who choose to hike into the canyons are sure to discover some interesting sites.

**Joy Joyner:**

You can see what I call pueblo villages, miniature pueblo villages. If you look really closely, you can see on the top of the different peaks is a small stone. Those stones are protecting the erosion of the soil beneath them. You'll see on the floor of the canyons is plant oils. When the plants die and decompose, it leaves a film of oil on the floor and you see it more in the stagnated water on the sides of the canyons. When you're at Providence Canyon you need to be sure not to tell any secrets. If you're standing up on the rim of the canyons and you're talking a normal tone of voice, the people who are in the floor of the canyons can hear and understand every word you say. The same thing goes if you're talking in the floor of the canyons, so be sure don't tell any secrets.

**Keely Walker:**

Outside of Albany, we find our next natural wonder, Radium Springs.

**MUSIC**

**Keely Walker:**

It is the largest natural spring in the state of Georgia. The deep blue waters flow at 70,000 gallons per minute and empties into the Flint River 4 miles south of Albany. Old timers would know have known it as Blue Springs until it was renamed in 1925 when trace amounts of the radioactive element radium were discovered in the water. The temperature of the water remains 68 degrees year round—a full 20 degrees cooler than it's fellow natural wonder Warm Springs.

**Keely Walker:**

Radium Springs is the least accessible of the seven natural wonders in Georgia but there was a point in time when this was the hot spot.

**Lamar Clifton:**

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Oh yeah, I mean that was probably the only game in town.

**Keely Walker:**

The Radium Springs Casino was built in the late 1920's. And that was before air conditioning, so people in Albany would come out here in the afternoon.

**Morgan Murphy:**

They would go swimming in the sixty-eight degree water and that would keep them cool all night.

**Lamar Clifton:**

The girls were all so pretty and were up primping and everything while us boys were running around jumping out of the trees and skinning ourselves on that, on those cement banisters down there and that sort of thing.

**Keely Walker:**

The casino was a popular place for parties, dancing, senior proms and class reunions. In fact, the springs has been a gathering place for centuries before the Casino.

**Morgan Murphy:**

There were a number of tribes that lived in this general area and. This was sort of sacred land for them.

**Keely Walker:**

When European Explorers came to this continent in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the Native Americans protected their secluded spring. But the springs has been the victim of both floods and drought and the casino burned twice and was finally torn down by FEMA in 2003.

**Elizabeth Dean:**

The old casino was a real social center in the life of the community and when that disappeared it was felt as a great loss.

**Keely Walker:**

The site of the old casino and the access point to the springs is presently closed off to the public but there is a small area open to exploration. If you visit Radium Springs today you can enjoy the Radium Springs Walking Trail and Arboretum. Now it has a very nice observation deck over-looking Radium Creek. In the future the area around the springs will also be accessible and this, a natural wonder of Georgia, will hold even more appeal to visitors.

**Lamar Clifton:**

Being one of the seven natural wonders of Georgia, we can still live up to it.

**David Zelski:**

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Located just east of Atlanta, Stone Mountain is a natural wonder that you don't want to take for granite. Welcome to Stone Mountain.

**MUSIC**

**Christine Parker:**

Stone Mountain is definitely a natural wonder, the mountain itself is over 300 million years old, stand over 800 feet in the air. We have the worlds largest high relief carving which has Jefferson Davis, Robert E. Lee and Stonewall Jackson. The carving itself took over 70 years to complete. What most people don't realize is our carving here, the confederate memorial carving is actually larger than Mount Rushmore.

**David Zelski:**

Approximately 300 million years ago, an underground molten eruption occurred directly under where I'm standing...and after over 200 million years of erosion, mother nature created the world's largest piece of exposed granite, we know today as Stone Mountain.

**Christine Parker:**

We have a lot of people who specifically come here just to see the mountain and then are pleasantly surprised by all the other things they can experience here at the park.

**MUSIC**

**David Zelski:**

There more than a dozen attractions at the park which families can enjoy. Spend some time at the crossroads village. Learn about the art of Glass blowing. After that you can follow your nose and watch these ladies cook up some peanut brittle, the freshest around and also the tastiest.

**Cindy Duty:**

If we let it sit on a cold table for just two or three minutes, it helps to not stick in your teeth quite as bad. It still does a little bit, that's the nature of the brittle.

**David Zelski:**

And of course no trip is complete without a summit sky-ride to the top of Stone Mountain. One thing kids can't miss is the Tree house. And this isn't your everyday back yard tree house either.

**Christine Parker:**

We asked kids if you could play against anybody, who would it be, and inevitably the boys always said the girls and the girls always said the boys, so we have dueling tree houses. From the moment they get in they gravitate to their own side and basically it's a war, they're fighting to see who gets the most points.

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**MUSIC**

**David Zelski:**

When the sun goes down, the Stone Mountain experience gets even more exciting. Focus your eyes on the carving and experience the world's largest laser show, a Stone Mountain staple from Spring through Fall for nearly 25 years. If one day isn't enough for you, stay a night at the Evergreen Marriot or the Stone Mountain Inn located within the park.

**Warren Woodard:**

We are the only option really to stay inside the park. There's really more than you can do just coming out for sort of a day trip. And it really gives you the opportunity to kind of stretch it out and enjoy things like going up on the mountain, and riding the sky lift, and doing the train and all the things that the hotel offers as well.

**David Zelski:**

Begin your second day on one of Stone Mountain's two public golf courses. Stonemont which opened in 1969 is the only course in the state of Georgia designed by Robert Trent Jones, Senior, the father of modern golf course architecture.

**Steve Hupe:**

They are always going to be in great shape you know very playable but yet interesting. And I just can't think of a more scenic spot to play.

**David Zelski:**

Soon after golfing you can cool off by taking the kids for a Ride on the Ducks.

**Duck Operator:**

Howdy folks.

**Duck Riders:**

Howdy.

**Duck Operator:**

That's better, that's better.

**David Zelski VO:**

If you want to, you can even drive the ducks. And for a few very lucky riders you may see a dance from Howard the Duck Driver.

**MUSIC**

**David Zelski:**

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So whether you spend one day or one week at Stone Mountain, the park's 32-hundred acres of Natural Wonder and beauty are sure to be a splash.

**Philip Proctor:**

Up in the northeast Georgia Mountains, we find our next natural wonder within the city limits of Tallulah Falls. It is one of the newest additions to the Georgia State Park system but among the oldest in Geologic time, a worthy addition to the seven natural wonders of Georgia.

**Gaye Stovall:**

It is probably the oldest natural feature on the North American continent, and arguably maybe the oldest in the world.

**Philip Proctor:**

Almost two miles long and one thousand feet deep Tallulah Gorge is home to five gorgeous waterfalls that rapidly move the water from the Tallulah River into Lake Tugaloo. Visitors who came during the heyday of tourism in the late 1800s called it the "Niagra of the South". The name "Tallulah" is a Cherokee word that means fearsome. The difficult terrain of the gorge, the roaring water and walls of mist earned the spot a place in Cherokee legend as an entrance to hell. Early settlers and tourists didn't put much stock in the tales.

**Gaye Stovall:**

For a long time this was the terminus for the railroad. This was as far as you could go in the state of Georgia. So people would come and stay here. And so for the better part of 20 years Tallulah Gorge was the hotspot.

**Philip Proctor:**

In 1911, a hydroelectric dam was built across the gorge and the tourists dried up along with the water. A glimpse into the past is available several times a year when an aesthetic release of water through the dam returns the tempestuous personality of Tallulah Falls back to life. Twice men have ventured across the Gorge, both times successfully. Professor Leon made it across on July 24, 1886 and Karl Wallenda repeated the feat 84 years later in the 1970s.

**Danny Tatum:**

It was a remarkable feat. He started from that side, the north side and walked to the south side, stood on his head twice, amazing, no safety net, just amazing feat to see. It brought a lot of the people back to Tallulah Falls that hadn't been here in years.

**Philip Proctor VO:**

Visitors today can cross the gorge in a much safer way by using a suspension bridge that sways 80 feet over Hurricane Falls. Other activities include biking, kayaking and even rock climbing if you dare.

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**Keely Walker:**

Our seventh and final natural wonder is located just south of a town by the same name, Warm Springs.

**MUSIC**

**David Burke:**

Everything around here is a result of the water. There's a town today that's a thriving tourist town, but it's result of the warm springs. There's an institute today that's world class in its operations, but it's a result of the warm springs. We have a four-time elected president of the United States, never had been done before, never will be done again, and it's a result of the warm springs.

**Keely Walker:**

The water is a gift of nature, which has been used for its healing powers since pre-historic times. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the warm springs became a popular attraction and the rambling Meriwether Inn was constructed in the 1890s. But the invention of the automobile enabled people to explore further a field and the appeal of Warm Springs waned. By 1924 it was a rundown resort, but Franklin Delano Roosevelt was a polio victim who was desperate to walk again.

**David Burke:**

Roosevelt for the first time was able to feel his toes move for the first time in three years. That right there was a miracle in Roosevelt's life. He attributed to the water. He wrote letters home to his mother saying that he felt a cure for infantile paralysis could be discovered here. He really believed that.

**Keely Walker:**

Using two-thirds of his personal fortune to purchase the property Roosevelt established the Georgia Warm Springs Foundation, which helped thousands of polio victims regain their strength. The water has no healing power, but the warmth and mineral content do work their magic.

**David Burke:**

One of the chief elements is bicarbonate. And, bicarbonate gives you a lifting feeling kind of like if you're in the ocean swimming. The other elements combined, such as magnesium and sulfur, which is similar to Epsom salts like qualities makes it a very soothing water, like your grandmother did when she would soak her feet.

**Keely Walker:**

Revitalized by the hydrotherapy, FDR became governor of New York twice and president four times. Over the years he made 41 trips to Warm Springs, building his retreat, the Little White House, on the grounds.

**Suzanne Pike:**

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It was a great time when he would come to Warm Springs. The whole town would turn out and get ready for him. He would drive to 38 Ford from the train station. They would gather in a semi-circle out in front of the portals of Georgia Hall and welcome him back. It was just a, a great time.

**Keely Walker:**

Today, the little White House is a state historic site, drawing more than 100,000 visitors a year.

**MUSIC**

**David Zelski VO:**

We hope you enjoyed our tour of the Seven Natural Wonders. Now here's a sneak peek at what's coming up on the next Georgia Traveler. Join us for our first ever European Tour of Georgia. Explore Athens, Brunswick, Dublin, Rome and Vienna, or as we say here in Georgia, Vi-Anna!

**Woman:**

Georgia Traveler is made possible in part by the Georgia Tourism Foundation.

**Man:**

Located 16 miles east of downtown Atlanta on 3200 acres of natural beauty, Stone Mountain Park features a wide variety of entertainment and recreation for every member of the family. The sky ride offers up close views of the memorial carving. Guests can take a five mile train ride or a paddle wheel river boat cruise. And the crossroads area offers the chance to interact with demonstration crafters. The park also features ride the duck tours and the laser show spectacular. More information is available at stonemountainpark dot com.

**Woman:**

And by...

**Woman:**

People are drawn to this state for its unbelievable beauty. We're working hard to keep it that way. We're Georgia Power, proud sponsor of the programming that also enriches our lives.

**Woman:**

And by the Ray M. and Mary Elizabeth Lee Foundation. And by supporters of Georgia Public Broadcasting. Thank you.

**Music**

Credits

**Man:**

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