

Bill Fanning

Which historical site showcases the foundation of Georgia's parks system?

Well, I think as a region manager, we were assigned, maybe 17 state parks and historic sites. Historic sites were separate department, as you will, since the reorganization of state government and became part of the state parks systems and the district, or region supervisor; we became involved in their general operational management. And I think one of the greatest challenges was to understand and be sensitive to the historical values of the land, of the resources there, how they fit into Georgia's history. As as we gained that knowledge, we began to get a real appreciation of preserving and protecting and providing for the general public, these beautiful resources. I'd call them Georgia's crown jewels especially A.H. Stevens State Historic Site, A.H. Stevens State Park. And as you know, A.H. Stevens was Vice President of the Confederacy during one of the United State's most difficult times. And this man put his life on the line for his beliefs, right or wrong, he believed in what he was doing. He had a tremendous sense of value for his community, and that historic site down there in Crawfordville reflects that unique historical significance of Georgia's history. You walk in the home, and you walk in the museum, you pick up the mood, you pick up the sacrifice that was made at the time. So that to me was an exiting part of Georgia's history and then I loved the state parks too, A.H. Stevens because it reflects the CCC influence of Georgia's growth in the recreational mode and the little lake, and that was an old bathhouse and the group camp which served thousands and thousands of children all across Georgia's history with a focus on a better human being, a better person, how to understand nature, how to take care of your resources, how to love your mother and your father and your history, and the supreme being if you will. And the qualities that I thought the state parks should possess. And A.H. Stevens to me represented both of those the historic and the recreational. It wasn't that well used, not with thousands of visitors, but it had a beautiful value, if you will of Georgia's history and as I can saw again, it represented to me a real crown jewel in Georgia's history.