



FOR RELEASE
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Stone Mountain Park Plans Restoration Project for Famed Memorial Lawn

Stone Mountain, GA - As part of its ongoing commitment to preserve Georgia's natural treasures and to create a great place for families to enjoy the great outdoors together, Stone Mountain Park (SMP), in conjunction with the Stone Mountain Memorial Association (SMMA), is starting work on a year-long, \$3.5 million restoration project for the Memorial Lawn. The work begins now and is expected to last through summer 2010.

"Our goal is to make it easier and more enjoyable for guests to view the historical mountain and its carving. In the park's original master plan, the lawn was designed as a spot to contemplate 'The Rock' including its natural and man-made beauty. As was in the plan, we are working to restore the best scenic vistas for the millions of visitors who come each year," said Gerald Rakestraw, vice president and general manager, SMP.

Park management is collaborating with expert arborists and landscape architects to assure the work is done as eco-friendly as possible. The work is led by Atlanta landscape architects, Robert and Company, who wrote the original master plan for the park back more than 50 years ago. Examples of the enhancements SMP will make include removing concession stands currently on the lawn, relocating production towers which hinder access to the lawn, improving lighting, restoring the terraces and widening walkways.

"When Stone Mountain became a park half a century ago, it was a place where families gathered to marvel at the massive granite stone and soak in the great outdoors. We have grown to become Georgia's #1 attraction and are committed to maintaining one of the park's greatest assets – the Memorial Lawn – so future generations can also enjoy it," said Curtis Branscome, chief executive officer of the SMMA.

The lawn restoration project is part of SMP's *Go Greener* initiative. The initiative focuses on enhancements which assure the park is maintained for future generations to enjoy. In 2008, the park's *Go Greener* initiative focused on water management and conservation. Within 12 months, SMP saved nearly 40 million gallons of water.

For the past decade, Herschend Family Entertainment (HFE) has been SMP's operating partner. In addition to managing the park's daily commercial operations, HFE has overseen the renovation and expansion of the park's entertainment, recreation and hospitality offerings. The SMMA is a Georgia self-supporting state authority and receives no tax dollars. Its mission is to preserve, protect and enhance SMP's 3,200-acre natural resource for the people of Georgia and visitors from around the world.

Listed in *Frommer's 500 Places to Visit with Your Kids Before They Grow Up* and cited by the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* as one of "35 Natural Wonders in Georgia You Must See Before You Die," Stone Mountain Park is located just 16 miles east of downtown Atlanta. To get to the park, take I-285 to exit 39B, Highway 78 East. Stone Mountain Park is exit #8 on Highway 78. More information regarding Stone Mountain Park attractions and hours of operation are available at 770-498-5690 or by visiting www.stonemountainpark.com.

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