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Georgia Southern University's Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center To Open New Addition

APRIL 15, 2009



Georgia Southern University's Center for Wildlife Education and the Lamar Q Ball, Jr. Raptor Center will celebrate the grand opening of the Center's Wetland Preserve with an afternoon of festivities from 3 p.m. until 7 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. The event is free and open to the public.

The Wetland Preserve is a 12-acre expansion of the Center that includes a small pond and capture basin that houses a beaver lodge, a cypress pond that will be home to a variety of wading birds like herons and egrets, and a waterfowl pond. The Center is located on Forest Drive in the heart of the Georgia Southern University campus.

"This expansion means we now have 17 acres which is very large when you think of a university center, especially one that sits right in the middle of campus. I think the expansion raises not only the Center but the University to a higher level. This truly makes this a preeminent environmental center not only within the state but within the southeast," said Center director Steve Hein.

Visitors should note that the entire Center will not open until 3 p.m. on April 25. Grand opening events include behind-the-scenes tours at 3:15 p.m. and 5:45 p.m., an Outdoor Classroom wildlife program at 5 p.m. and 6:15 p.m., and a lecture and tour of the new indoor Frog Exhibit hosted by John Jensen at 4 p.m. and 5:45 p.m. A Wetland Preserve tour and feed the ducks activity at the waterfowl pond will take place at 3:30 p.m. and 4:30 p.m. Other activities include crafts, scavenger hunts, geocaching, and wetland conservation experiments in the new Outdoor Classroom.

"While visitors will now have the chance to see even more species of wildlife at the Center, the real function and purpose behind the expansion and the creation of the Wetland Preserve is to educate visitors about water and the impact it has on all life. Visitors will see firsthand how water or the lack of it affects ecosystems and the dramatic impact it has on the wildlife who live in those ecosystems," said Hein.

Maintaining the Center and caring for the expanded collection will be aided by a new, modest admission fee. Beginning April 27, 2009 adult admission will be \$2. Admission for children age 3-11, active military with I.D. and senior citizens will be \$1. Admission will remain free for children under 3 and University faculty, staff and students (all with I.D.). Annual, unlimited admission passes are now available. The passes are \$8 for adults and \$6 for children ages 3-11, active military with I.D. and senior citizens. All admission fees exclude special event fees and field trip fees.

Special note to the media: A private V.I.P. ribbon cutting, tour and reception will be held at the Center beginning at 1:30 p.m. on Saturday, April 25. The keynote speaker will be Dr. Carol Couch who is director of the Environmental Protection Division of the Georgia Department of Natural Resources. You are invited to attend this event as well as the rest of the afternoon's activities. When you arrive at the lobby of the Center, you will be directed to the appropriate location on-site for the ribbon cutting.

Georgia Southern University, a Carnegie Doctoral/Research University, offers 116 degree programs serving nearly 18,000 students. Through eight colleges, the University offers bachelors, masters and doctoral degree programs built on more than a century of academic achievement. The University, one of Georgia's largest, is a top choice of Georgia's HOPE scholars and is recognized for its student-centered approach to education. Visit: www.georgiasouthern.edu.