

**GA Bat Working Group
2017 Bat Blitz
Vogel State Park, Georgia
May 11-14, 2017**

Dear GBWG Bat Blitz Participant,

This yearly event is organized to collect more information about the bat community in a specific area in a short period of time. Blitz participants should be current bat researchers, researchers hoping to gain more bat experience, and students interested in gaining experience in the field. This is not a public event. Members of the public are welcome at our free bat blitz education event on Saturday, May 12th. Please visit our website at www.gabats.org for more information.

You must be registered to attend the blitz! Please be sure you completed your online registration form and sent in your check. Registration information can be found here: https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeSMDYrOlyyTiKXypICU3AEXUXvfN_34JYQILzEgeoB1YNVvg/viewform

We are looking forward to seeing you at the Georgia Bat Blitz! This is an informational letter to let you know what to expect before you register. If you have logistical questions please contact Laci Coleman (laci.coleman@dnr.ga.gov; cell: 470-316-3071).

SAFETY FIRST!

- **ALL participants must attend a mandatory welcome orientation/safety meeting Thursday, May 11th at 2:00 p.m. at Blitz Headquarters – Picnic Shelter #1 at Vogel State Park, GA. Included in the safety briefing will be explicit instructions related to permits, WNS protocols, and who may handle bats at the event.**
- Participants MUST have pre-exposure rabies vaccinations to handle bats. Proof of a recent titer or booster shot is **required** to document vaccination status.

ARRIVAL & CHECK-IN; REIMBURSEMENTS

- The Bat Blitz will be held at Vogel State Park near Blairsville, GA. See directions to park at: <http://gastateparks.org/Vogel>. Registration will be located at Picnic Shelter #1 at the park.
- **Please park in the large parking lot across the street from the visitor's center when you are in the blitz headquarters area. You must purchase a parking pass for each vehicle at the park office before heading to the picnic shelter. You will need a pass for Thursday – Sunday (\$5/day).**
- **All meetings and the Friday meal will be at Picnic Shelter #1.**
- **Registration will begin at noon on Thursday, May 11th.**
- **TEAM LEADERS please arrive and register by noon for a team leader meeting and the mandatory meeting at 2pm.**
- **ALL OTHERS please arrive in time to register before the meeting on Thursday, May 11th at 2 p.m.**
- If you are not a Forest Service or Georgia Department of Natural Resources employee, you must sign a Georgia DNR and USFS Volunteer Agreement, which allows you to travel as a passenger in a Forest Service or Georgia DNR vehicle. *Your signature on the*

registration form indicates that you agree to comply with all Forest Service, Georgia DNR, and SBDN policies covered at the orientation meeting on Thursday, May 11th including safety, non-discrimination, and non-harassment policies.

LODGING

- Camping spots at the pioneer camp will be available for registrants. This is a primitive, rugged site located by itself and is not accessible by road. The camping area is a 3/10 of a mile from the parking area and requires a moderate uphill walk. Please pack accordingly as all gear needs to be carried in. The site has no water (water is located at parking) or electricity. There are two Adirondack shelters (Each sleeps about 10 comfortably), picnic shelter (with picnic tables), pit toilet and fire ring.
- If you would prefer a public campsite or cabin you can reserve them at your own expense. To find alternative housing in the park visit <http://gastateparks.org/Vogel> and make a reservation.
- You must purchase a parking pass for each vehicle at the park office before heading to the pioneer camp, your campsite or cabin. You will need a pass for Thurs – Sunday (\$5/day).
- Please check in at Picnic Shelter #1 when you arrive.
- Pioneer camping space is available on a first come, first serve basis.
- To check out, inform the blitz registration staff of your departure.
- Please leave pets at home.

FOOD and BEVERAGES

- Only one meal will be provided during the blitz. Please come prepared! There are no kitchen facilities available for this group during the blitz. There are restaurants and grocery stores in Blairsville, a 20-minute drive from the park.
- The Friday night meal will be provided at Picnic Shelter #1 at 4pm on Friday.
- We will try to have coffee available at the picnic shelter. If you require coffee, please bring your own travel mug.
- To make the Blitz a more ecologically responsible event we will not be providing bottled water or disposable cups for coffee. To ensure that you have water to bring with you to your netting sites make sure you bring a water bottle, camel back, or some other water storage device. If you want coffee or tea during the Blitz, please make sure you bring a coffee mug!

SCHEDULE and TEAM ASSIGNMENTS

- **Team leaders will meet on Thursday for their briefing at noon at the Blitz Headquarters. Trap site information will be included in team leader packets.**
- A team sign-up board will be posted each morning; blitz participants should check the board and sign up for a group for that night. During the day, enjoy free time at the park or surrounding forest and towns. Be prepared to gather your gear and meet your team leader for the 5:00 p.m. departure time. Teams will return to Headquarters no later than 2:00 a.m. each morning. Each team leader will check-in when they return.
- Many of the sites require trucks for access. If you have a truck or SUV available to drive we would appreciate your help.
- ***Saturday Education Event*** - On Saturday, May 13th from 1:00 pm-4:30pm the Georgia Bat Working Group will be hosting an afternoon of batty fun at Vogel State Park. There will be information booths, interactive games for the kids, tattoos, displays of mounted bats featuring Georgia's 16 species of bats, bat house kits for sale, crafts and 2 presentations featuring live fruit bats. At 7:30pm there will be a presentation about

Georgia Bats followed by a mist netting demonstration. If you are interested in volunteering during this event, please contact Vicky Smith (batlady1963@yahoo.com).

HOSPITALITY and SOCIALIZING

- Socializing with friends before and after official blitz work is a much anticipated activity. After hours gathering areas will be explained further during the mandatory meeting on May 11th.
- This year's blitz headquarters is in a very public location. Because it is so close to campers and the park entrance, after hours socializing will not be allowed at blitz headquarters. Plan to socialize at the pioneer camp or your private campsite/cabin.
- State park policy: ***Alcohol consumption is allowed at the pioneer camp and privately reserved cabins only.*** It is not allowed in public areas of the park and **NO ALCOHOL WILL BE ALLOWED AT BLITZ HEADQUARTERS.** Alcohol will not be provided at the blitz so plan to BYOB.
- The GA Bat Working Group encourages participants to be responsible in their alcohol consumption. Blitz participants are responsible for policing the area and behaving responsibly. Your cooperation in this matter is essential! We can't compromise the reputation and integrity of the Bat Blitz and disappoint our sponsors, and our host, Georgia State Parks.
- Alcohol consumption during working hours is prohibited.
- We will NOT be the only guests at the park so please be respectful of other park visitors.

COMMUNICATIONS

- Cell phone availability is variable at the park and surrounding areas. There will be some trapping sites with no cell service so be prepared!
- If someone needs to contact you in an emergency, call the Park Office 706-745-2628 between 8:00 & 4:30; or Trina Morris (678-836-5769) or Laci Coleman (470-316-3071) after hours.

WHITE-NOSE SYNDROME

In efforts to prevent the spread of WNS we request that Bat Blitz participants follow the USFWS guidelines for decontamination that can be found here:

<https://www.whitenosesyndrome.org/topics/decontamination>

Please use common sense when moving gear and equipment from site to site. All decontamination will be the responsibility of the team leaders.

Forest Pests

There is currently a huge effort to prevent the introduction of and/or eradicate several species of forest pest within Georgia State Parks. Please aid these efforts by not bringing firewood with you for use at the blitz. Firewood will be available for purchase at the park office.

Items to Bring to the Bat Blitz: All items used previously for any bat related activity or caving must be disinfected prior to coming to the Blitz!

Essential Items

- Water bottle (no bottled water will be given to participants)
- Coffee mug (no disposable cups will be available)
- Bright flashlights or headlamp– critical for fieldwork and navigating trails at night
- Rain jacket
- Sleeping Bag
- Linens
- Pillow
- Towels and washcloth (same as above)
- Toiletries, including soap and shampoo
- Boots or sturdy protective footwear
- Prescription medications
- Cookware/Plates/Utensils
- Cooler
- Food & Drinks
- Netting gloves (if rabies vaccinated)

Suggested Items

- Collapsible camp chair or stool
- Knee/hip boots or waders
- Insect repellent
- Allergy medications and meds for other (headache, poison ivy/oak, insects)
- Sunscreen
- Shower shoes (e.g., flip-flops)
- Batteries/battery charger
- Digital camera
- Day pack or grocery sack
- Bandanas
- Hand Sanitizer
- Ear plugs for daytime sleeping
- Bathing suit & beach towel
- Towels and dish soap.