

# The Skimmer

## Our Mission:

“Georgia 4-H empowers youth to learn, discover, and create in order to become self-directing, productive, and contributing members of society.”

Photo by Ricky Cassell

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## Notes from the Director's Desk

Greetings Friends of Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll! I hope this newsletter finds you well during these challenging times. Like each of you adjusting to the significant impacts from COVID-19, we are working hard to adapt our center operations and our Georgia 4-H Environmental Education and Summer Camping Programs to this new reality. We are heartbroken so many students, campers and youth from our EE and Summer Camp Programs, scouting, church, sports, and community groups were unable to visit this spring/summer. We are however thankful that we were able to serve so many of you earlier this year and celebrate our staff and families staying healthy. Everyone here at Camp Jekyll is looking forward to being able to serve you and your youth again soon by providing engaging learning and youth development in a safe and nurturing environment! I hope you enjoy reading this newsletter and thinking of sunnier days to come. Wishing you the very best and look forward to seeing you on the beach again soon!

~ Richard Chewning

Georgia 4-H started at Rock Eagle in 1979 and has expanded significantly ever since. Today, there are 6 centers around the state:

- ♣ Rock Eagle 4-H Center
- ♣ Wahsega 4-H Center
- ♣ 4-H Tidelands Nature Center
- ♣ Fortson 4-H Center
- ♣ Burton 4-H Center
- ♣ Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll

Over the last 41 years, these locations have proudly served over 1.2 million youth from 8 different states in the country! During the 2018-2019 Environmental Education season, 43,000 youth were served throughout all centers – 10,485 of those were here at Camp Jekyll! We are proud to serve youth from around the country, and we are looking forward to learning and growing with each and every one of you!



UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA  
EXTENSION



# Our New Facility!

In 2017, Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll opened with a brand-new look. Our 10-acre campus had undergone a complete renovation to match the longstanding quality of our curriculum. There are now six cabins spread across campus, each divided into two sides. Each cabin side contains two adult rooms, a common room, a camper sleeping area, and a large youth bathroom. All rooms have bunkbeds, vanities and luggage storage shelving; adult rooms have added luxury of private bathrooms.



Photo by Greg Kosik

New pavilions and fire pits were added along with lots of landscaped green spaces and our Historic Pavilion underwent an extensive renovation. Our new dining hall still serves delicious meals that accommodate dietary needs and restrictions. Lastly, the Learning Center is better than ever! It contains a large auditorium for all kinds of events—from orientation and classes, to talent shows, lectures, and dances. There are also eight classrooms and two animal labs, making the Learning Center the heart of campus.

Our wonderful facility not only has new buildings but also has walking trails and a dedicated boardwalk leading to the beach. Additionally, we are thankful for our great facility staff across the center from our food service workers to our housekeepers. They are keen to answer questions and help however they can. With all of these upgrades, Camp Jekyll is better equipped than ever to provide all who visit us with a fun and memorable experience!



Photo by Greg Kosik

## Did you know?

Camp Jekyll was once the Dolphin Club & Motor Hotel, which was built in the 1950's. It was the first public beach for African Americans during the time of segregation. Our historic pavilion is the only part of the hotel complex still standing.



Photo by Greg Kosik

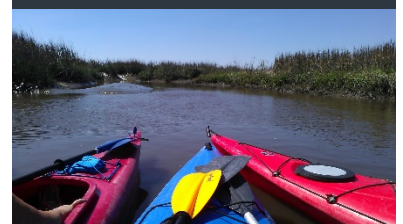


Photo from 4-H Tidelands Nature Center  
[Facebook](#)

## 4-H Tidelands Nature Center

Camp Jekyll isn't the only 4-H facility on Jekyll. Our sister-center, Tidelands, has some exciting new updates of its own. Some areas of their facility have gotten a new paint job, including new informative and artistic murals. However, the big project is a Wildlife Viewing Platform with a powerful mounted binocular. The platform is almost finished, and once complete, will feature signs with information about different species and habitats that can be seen from the viewing platform. This project is part of Georgia's State Wildlife Action Plan, which is meant to help conserve native wildlife species and habitats by raising awareness about them. The Wildlife Viewing Platform has been funded by Georgia's Department of Natural Resources Wildlife Conservation Section with the Wildlife Viewing Grants program and with matching funds from the Georgia 4-H Foundation. With these exciting new additions, the 4-H Tidelands Nature Center is better than ever!

# Environmental News!



Photo by Ricky Cassell

Click for more information  
about  
[sea turtle nesting](#),  
[diamondback terrapins](#),  
and [shorebird nesting](#).



## Fun Fact:

The [Georgia Sea Turtle Center](#) is located in Jekyll's Historic District. It is the only sea turtle hospital/rescue center in Georgia.



## Did you know?

There were 199 sea turtle nests laid on Jekyll Island during the 2019 nesting season.



Stay up-to-date on salvage efforts and other news about the [Golden Ray](#) cargo ship.

## Loggerhead Lookout

March 1st, 2020 marked the beginning of the sea turtle nesting season on the east coast of Florida. By the end of May, sea turtles will be nesting on Jekyll Island's beaches too, with most being loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*). The peak nesting occurs during June and July. Females migrate from foraging grounds to nest every 2-3 years. During these nesting seasons, they will lay an average of five nests during the summer. It takes roughly 60 days for the eggs to incubate; once hatched, the young turtles make their way to the ocean and begin their journey. Those that reach maturity—around 20-30 years of age—will return to the U.S. and continue the circle of life.

There are more loggerhead sea turtle nests in the U.S. than there are anywhere else in the world, making the Southeastern United States a hotspot. Green, leatherback, hawksbill, and Kemp's ridley sea turtles also nest in the U.S., but are more commonly found in Florida. During the summer months, shorebirds are also nesting on the beach, and diamondback terrapins are nesting along the edge of Jekyll Island's causeway. Please be mindful of the wildlife that we share some of our favorite places with!

## Ahoy, Golden Ray!

On September 8th, 2019, the Golden Islands made international news. At approximately 2 a.m. the outbound car carrier, the Golden Ray, lay on its port side in-between St. Simon's Island and Jekyll Island. Crew members were rescued, and boom lines were deployed to prevent the spread of oil from the ship to minimize impacts on critical wildlife areas. All hands were on deck as organizations from all over the U.S. were part of the initial response team. Water and air quality were being monitored on 118 miles of coastline, with 30 of those miles having oil present. Oil was manually picked up on the beaches, and sphagnum moss was sprayed in the marsh to absorb the oil off of the spartina grass to prevent spreading and to break it down naturally.

On January 7th, it was announced that T&T Salvage LLC's plan was selected to salvage the ship. They will be cutting the ship into 8 pieces. With the help of a massive 240 foot tall heavy lifting twin-gantry crane, each piece will be lifted onto a barge and taken to a salvage yard in New Orleans. It is predicted that the hull of the ship will be removed by August 2020, but cleanup efforts will continue to take place afterwards to make sure everything is removed from the water. The cause of the incident is still under investigation; however, the goal by the end of these efforts is to have the water in St. Simon's Sound look like it did on September 7<sup>th</sup> with no sign of the Golden Ray having been there.



Photo from [SSI Response](#)

# A Day in the Life of a Camper!

I've had a great couple of days on our class trip to Camp Jekyll! Yesterday, I learned about the Maritime Forest. It was like walking through Jurassic Park! I kept thinking a dinosaur was going to peek its head between the saw palmettos. As we were walking, we learned about a ton of different plants that live in the forest. My favorite was the live oak tree. I now know a lot of cool facts about the live oak – they are the state tree of Georgia and can live to be 400 years old! We even got to climb a live oak called the Grandfather Tree. I had a really great time.



Photo by Ricky Cassell

Today, we woke up early and went to breakfast. We had biscuits, which were my favorite, but all of my friends said that they liked the waffles and bacon. After breakfast, we went out to the beach. It was so cool! I found a lot of neat shells that I'm excited to take home.



Photo by Sarah Tolve

We learned about all of our shells, the horseshoe crab molt that we found, and the sand dunes. I had never really thought about it, but sand dunes are very important to the beach and the rest of Jekyll Island. They are able to make a wall to help protect the island from strong storms and lots of water. Sand dunes even have ingredients! They are made of wrack, sand, and plants. I can't wait to tell my family all about it next time we go to the beach. We also got to see the shorebirds that like to rest on the south end of Jekyll Island. One of those was the Black Skimmer. I learned that Black Skimmers are known for their uneven beaks; they skim the water with their long bottom jaw, which helps them catch a nice fishy meal. They can be found year-round on the coast of Georgia in large flocks on the beach.



Photo by Ricky Cassell

After beach class, we had some free time to visit the canteen and gift shop. I got so many good snacks, an ICEE, and a stuffed snake from the gift shop. We also played beach volleyball and basketball against our adult chaperones! Naturally, we won. Our teacher told us to go get boots for our next class before the bell rang, so I was curious about where we were going.

*Follow as we take you through what it would be like if you were a student at Camp Jekyll doing field studies!*



Photo by Vanessa Hoffman

## Did you know?

Jekyll Island has been continuously inhabited for over 3,500 years! The first people were Native Americans who came to hunt and fish. The first Europeans to arrive were the French in 1562.



## Fun Fact:

There are three main ecosystems on Jekyll Island: the beach, the salt marsh, and the maritime forest.

*Cont. on next page.*

Our instructor took us on a bus ride and explained to us that we were going to the marsh! To be honest, I had no idea what to expect, but it was so much fun. We got to catch fiddler crabs and put detritus mud on our faces! Some people were grossed out; I thought it was awesome. I learned that the spartina grass in the marsh is the same plant that washes up on the beach as wrack to build the sand dunes—everything here is related.



Photo by Ricky Cassell

Next, we went to lunch. Today was pizza day, and it was so good! We also got to meet all of the awesome people who work at Camp Jekyll and keep everything running. There's Monica, Tiffany, CiCi, Jim, Matt, and Jennifer who run the kitchen. Mark, Angie, Tammy, and Donna make sure everything is going smoothly on campus. In the offices, Richard, Greg, and Pam help make sure everything is prepared for the groups coming in. Combined with the EE staff, everyone here is so nice and helpful.

Tonight, we had our Night Walk. We got to go out on the beach while it was dark, and it was so different from being out there during the day. I could see all of the stars; Orion's Belt was my favorite. I can't wait to show my parents when I get home and tell them the story of Orion and Scorpio! We also learned about the adaptations of nocturnal animals, like their heightened sense of smell and echolocation. We had a great time. After our night canteen break, we had a campfire! Our teachers brought marshmallows for us too roast, and we got to perform funny skits for everyone. It was a great way to end the night.

Everything here has been tons of fun, and I don't want to leave tomorrow. I have learned so much and can't wait to keep learning for the rest of our time here. Plus, I think I am going to research some of the things we've talked about when I get home to keep learning! Thank you to everyone who has made this trip possible!



Photo by Vanessa Hoffman



Photo by Ricky Cassell

Camp Jekyll 2019-2020 EE Staff



Photo by Vanessa Hoffman

## Fun Fact:

During the late 1800's to early 1900's, Jekyll Island became a private club where the wealthy vacationed during the winter. At one time, 1/6 of the world's banking wealth lived on the island.



## Did you know?

Historic St. Andrews Beach is the landing site of the last slave ship coming to the United States. The Wanderer unloaded captured slaves on the beach, where they were provided a much needed meal—Brunswick Stew!

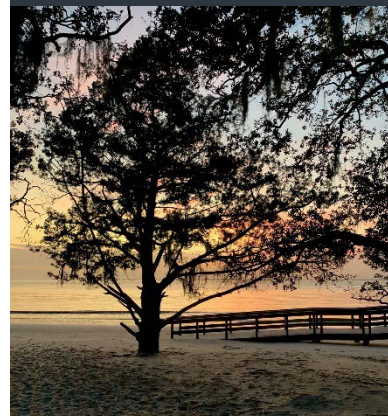


Photo by Vanessa Hoffman

# Sharing the World with Wildlife!



Photo by Ricky Cassell



## Talk to us!

We would love to hear about your time at Camp Jekyll to include in future newsletters! Make sure to include your school's name, when you were here, and a great story or experience you had during your visit!

Please feel free to send us your story via email to our center director Richard Chewning at [richrich@uga.edu](mailto:richrich@uga.edu)

We only have one Earth, so let's protect it! All living organisms need the Earth to survive, including humans! If we all take small actions in our everyday lives, our collective efforts can make a HUGE difference!

### ♣ Get outside!

The more time we spend outside, the more we appreciate the world around us!

### ♣ Reduce, Reuse, Recycle! (in that order!)

We cannot guarantee that every single piece of trash we throw in the recycling bin will be recycled—therefore, recycling should be a last resort effort. The best way to limit our carbon footprint is to reduce our waste & reuse what we already have.

### ♣ Conserve water.

All living organisms on this planet share a small amount of freshwater on Earth. Wastewater treatment is expensive and gives off greenhouse gases. Best practice is to only use water when you absolutely need it!

### ♣ Turn off lights.

Electricity is commonly produced by burning fossil fuels, which releases carbon into the atmosphere. Turn off lights when you don't need them to reduce your carbon footprint!

### ♣ Hang-Dry Laundry

Hang-drying laundry in the house or on a line outside conserves electricity (and saves money by using less electricity)!

### ♣ Compost

When food decomposes in the landfill, it gives off potent greenhouse gases. Composting breaks down our food waste into organic material, so it can be used naturally by plants and animals.

## Follow us on social media!

*We would love to stay connected with you!*



Visit our website at [georgia4h.org](http://georgia4h.org) to learn more about Georgia 4-H, field studies, and summer camp!

We're also on Facebook! Follow us at [Georgia 4-H at Camp Jekyll](https://www.facebook.com/Georgia4H) to stay up to date with Camp Jekyll news!

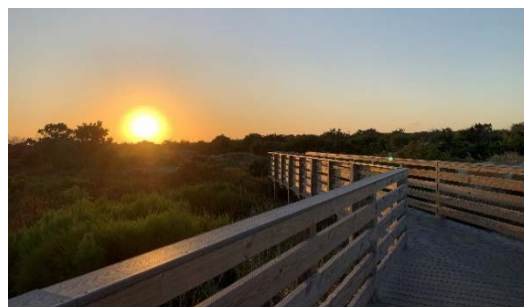


Photo by Vanessa Hoffman

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