

JEKYLL ISLAND CELEBRATES 75 YEARS AS A STATE PARK

Commemorates State Era Throughout 2022

JEKYLL ISLAND, GA – There was a time when Jekyll Island was famous for its exclusivity. A place only those with means stepped ashore. But upon the Island's purchase in 1947, Jekyll quickly evolved to a destination like no other, bringing forward its now equally fascinating State-era history. As the island embarks on its 75th year as a state park, these are just a few of the moments in time that transitioned Jekyll Island from its Club era to State era—and into modern day:

- Visiting and living here is made possible in 1947 when the State of Georgia purchases the island from the Jekyll Island Club through condemnation proceedings for \$675,000, about \$6.7 million today.
- In 1948, Georgia Governor Melvin E. Thompson describes this Southern state of mind, a year after purchase: “A playground that now belongs to every Georgian.” But who will manage this new playground in the Golden Isles? A wonderland with Spanish moss draped on centuries-old live oaks, pristine beaches, and dolphins splashing just offshore.
- The Jekyll Island Authority is established in 1950 to operate the island in stewardship of its natural and cultural resources. Seven years after the state acquires Jekyll, a drawbridge opens in 1954, leading to the opening of the Jekyll Island Causeway as America drives forward.
- During segregation, St. Andrews Beach opens to black visitors at the southern end, one of few oceanfront gathering places accessible to blacks in the South at the time. The famous Dolphin Club opens in 1959 and hosts dozens of Blues legends including Otis Redding and B.B. King. All state-operated facilities are integrated on Jekyll Island in 1964, paving the way for the further integration of Georgia's diverse population and the rest of the South.
- As the Authority focuses on historic preservation and adding new leisure amenities, the Club-era is recognized in 1978 through the historic designation of the Jekyll Island Club National Historic Landmark District. Summer Waves water park opens in 1987 as a new recreational offering and attracts a new generation of families.
- Beginning in the mid-2000s, the island undergoes a revitalization period to update and enhance its facilities. The Georgia Sea Turtle Center opens as the state's only wildlife hospital and rehabilitation facility for sea turtles in 2007. An updated, silver LEED-certified convention center opens in 2012 and remains the only oceanfront convention center in the Southeast. New residential communities and flagship hotels bring enhanced accommodations to the island. And, in 2019 Jekyll Island ranks as the [#1 U.S. Travel Destination](#) by Money Magazine.

Now, as the new year kicks off, all of Jekyll Island will commemorate the last 75 years with anniversary events, new programming, and other celebratory experiences throughout 2022. Join [Mosaic, Jekyll Island Museum](#), for a special exhibit highlighting the state park purchase and the creation of “Fabulous Jekyll Island.” The exhibit is open to the public and will run through the summer season. Visitors can view photos and original videos from the island's opening in 1947, sit in the driver's seat of an original 1947 Studebaker, and sign up to participate in a commemorative oral history program! The island will also hold several commemorative events and activities throughout the year. Visitors to the island can stay updated by visiting: jekyllisland.com/75.

