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## **Leave No Trace Campaign Kicks Off at Arabia Mountain** *Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance and DeKalb County Department of Recreation, Parks & Cultural Affairs Partner on Education and Conservation Campaign*

**STONECREST, Ga.** – DeKalb County Recreation, Parks and Cultural Affairs (RPCA) and the Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance (the Arabia Alliance) have launched a “Leave No Trace” campaign to urge visitors to the **Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve** to help protect the rare and beautiful greenspace, located at 3787 Klondike Rd., Stonecrest, GA 30038. All patrons are welcome to take only pictures and to Leave No Trace by treading lightly and staying on the bare granite as they walk.

Arabia Mountain is home to fragile ecosystems and species found almost nowhere else on earth, including a variety of rare and endangered plants. These plants live in the solution pits (small patches of sand, dirt, and muddy water) that dot the seemingly barren rock face. At various times of year, the plants that live in the solution pits bloom, covering the mountain with beautiful life. That includes the vibrant red diamorpha, which explodes into color in the spring, and the yellow daisies that have blanketed the trails this fall. In order to sustain the natural beauty of our ecosystem and wildlife, visitors must adhere to all guidelines of the preserve.

It is imperative to not disturb puddles, sandpits, rock piles or any other part of the rock face. Although some of the plant habitat looks innocuous – a tiny patch of sand or gravel, for example – patches of sometimes-barren earth contain beautiful flowers in other parts of the year. As visitors hike on the rock outcrop, they are asked to “stay on the gray,” meaning staying on the bare rock whenever possible. Stepping in solution pits can damage the fragile ecosystem and hurt the plants that depend on that thin layer of soil to survive. Staying on the gray will help prevent endangering the natural habitat.

Additionally, the COVID-19 pandemic has made outdoor spaces all the more popular and important for physical and mental wellbeing. As a result, Davidson-Arabia Mountain Nature Preserve has become very crowded on most weekends. In order to reduce crowds and manage parking, rangers are asking people to visit during the weekdays if possible (when there is much less traffic). For those who do visit on the weekends, please consider parking at alternative parking lots. The two most popular parking areas are located at 4158 Klondike Road (the AWARE lot) and at 3787 Klondike Road (the Nature Center lot); these both fill up very quickly on busy weekends. Instead, visitors can park at 3366 Klondike Road (the Vaughters’ Farm lot) or the Polebridge Trailhead (6262 Browns Mill Road). For more alternative parking suggestions, [click here](#).

To stay connected and to learn more about the Leave No Trace campaign please visit [www.dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/leave-no-trace-campaign](http://www.dekalbcountyga.gov/parks/leave-no-trace-campaign).

Take a photograph of yourself practicing Leave No Trace hiking and send it to us! Photos for the campaign may be submitted via Twitter, Facebook and Instagram with the hashtag, #Preservethepark. You can follow (and tag) the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area on all three platforms.

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#### **About the Arabia Alliance**

The Arabia Mountain Heritage Area Alliance is dedicated to protecting, connecting and sharing the powerful history, rich culture and engaging landscapes of the Arabia Mountain National Heritage Area (AMNHA) for the benefit and enjoyment of all. The staff and volunteer board of the Arabia Alliance work with partners across the AMNHA to ensure that everyone can benefit from the cultural and natural resources of the National Heritage Area. For more information, visit [www.arabiaalliance.org](http://www.arabiaalliance.org).