



2ND ANNUAL LAKE JAMES DRAGONBOAT FESTIVAL



A year in the life of Lake James State Park has traditionally been punctuated by three main events; Memorial Day, Independence Day and Labor Day. With the right weather forecast, any or all of these national holidays can result in a full parking lot and crowds of park visitors enjoying themselves. After Oct 13, 2018, it might be time to add a fourth big day to the calendar – the Lake James Dragonboat Festival.

For the second year, this exciting event has brought a full house of spectators and participants to the Paddy's Creek

Area side of the park. Under sunny skies and breezy conditions, 18 teams competed in five divisions to find out which could paddle their massive, 20-seat war canoes the fastest.

Locals will be familiar with our own Lake James Healing Dragons team, which finished second in the Women's Division. Members of the park staff, Friends of Lake James State Park and other friends of the park formed their own team, called the James Gang and finished fourth in their division. The fastest time of the day belonged to the Secret City Dragons.

Proceeds from the event will help fund the Blue Ridge Health Care Foundation, which benefits Carolinas HealthCare System Blue Ridge Cancer Center.

A date for next year's festival has not been set, but when it has, you can be sure you'll hear about it here and in other media outlets. The Lake James Dragonboat Festival has gotten too big to ignore.



FALL FOLIAGE BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, NOV. 3

This might be your last chance to experience the fall foliage season before winter takes a firm grip and what better way to enjoy it than by boating around beautiful Lake James. Join Ranger Clay Veasey aboard the park patrol boat as we seek out the reds, golds, purples, and oranges of autumn. Only eight spaces are available and pre-registration is required. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to save your spot. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter at 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 o'clock departure.

LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, NOV. 11

Lake James is a wintering spot for dozens of common loons coming from their northern nesting territories. On quiet, still mornings you can often hear their iconic cries echoing across the water. Join Ranger Earl Weaver aboard the park's patrol boat in search of these graceful waterbirds and others that call Lake James home during the winter. Registration is required and only the first eight respondents will get to enjoy this unique opportunity. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter at Paddy's Creek Area at 10:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 11 a.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.

WALKING THE WETLANDS – FRIDAY, NOV. 16

Park Ranger Clay Veasey will be meeting a group of adventurous hikers to the Old Catawba River to search for aquatic plants, animals, insects and birds. The wetland habitat in this area is rich in biodiversity and rarely visited by humans. Meet Ranger Veasey at the Canal Bridge Boat Access on NC 126 at 1:45 p.m. for a 2 p.m. carpool caravan to the site.

Continued Next Page

PRE-THANKSGIVING FOX DEN LOOP HIKE – THURSDAY, NOV. 22

Before we belly-up to the Thanksgiving spread, let's get some exercise under our belts. November is a great time to walk through Lake James State Park in search of the park's furry and feathered residents. The leaves have mostly fallen, but their aroma still hangs in the air as many of park's animals are easily seen throughout the day. Meet Ranger Jamie Cameron as he leads a hike around the Fox Den Loop to see what animals can be found during Fall. The hike starts from the Catawba River Area breezeway at 9 a.m.

POST-THANKSGIVING MILL'S CREEK HIKE – FRIDAY, NOV. 23

Let's work off that second slice of pumpkin pie. November is a great time to walk through Lake James State Park in search of the park's furry and feathered residents. The leaves have mostly fallen, but their aroma still hangs in the air as many of park's animals are easily seen throughout the day. Meet Ranger Jamie Cameron as he leads a hike along the Mill's Creek Trail to see what animals can be found during Fall. The hike starts from the East Picnic Shelter in the Paddy's Creek Area at 9 a.m.

FALL BIRDWATCHING HIKE – SATURDAY, NOV. 24

Bird migration is in full swing and it's time to go watch the spectacle. The Paddy's Creek parking area offers just the right mix of open water, shoreline woods and fields to see lots of species in a morning. Join Ranger Jamie Cameron for an exciting morning. We'll start at 9 a.m. from the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them.



PHOTO SAFARI – SUNDAY, NOV. 25

Autumn colors might still be vibrant for this guided photography hike along the Fox Den Loop. Shutterbugs of all skill levels are welcome to join Park Ranger Jamie Cameron, whose former career as a photojournalist and newspaper editor has equipped him with some helpful tips on composition – whether you shoot with a phone or a large format SLR. We'll meet at the main office breezeway at the Catawba River Area at 9 a.m.

MASS MIGRATION BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, NOV. 28

Many species of waterfowl, including ducks, grebes, loons and cormorants visit Lake James on their way to the southern wintering grounds and now you have an opportunity to observe them in their element. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for birds. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly if you are one of the eight lucky participants. Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to reserve your spot. Meet your captain at the Paddy's Creek Area, East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing prior to departure promptly at 2 o'clock.

Continued Next Page

WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE – SATURDAY, DEC. 8

Many species of waterfowl, including ducks, grebes, loons and cormorants spend the winter months on Lake James and now you have an opportunity to observe them in their element. Ranger Clay Veasey will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for birds. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly if you are one of the eight lucky participants. Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to reserve your spot. Meet your captain at the Paddy's Creek Area, East Picnic Shelter at 9:45 a.m. for a briefing prior to departure promptly at 10 o'clock.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, DEC. 9

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for loons, otters, eagles and scenic vistas. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly if you are one of the eight lucky participants. Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to reserve your spot. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2 p.m. departure.

LAKE CHANNEL OVERLOOK HIKE – SATURDAY, DEC. 15

Check out one of the best views on the lake with Park Ranger Jamie Cameron. The Lake Channel Overlook Trail is a moderate, 1.5 mile route through a section of the park that has been under prescription for fire. Come see for yourself the amazing habitat improvement that can be achieved through a thoughtful prescribed burning program and bring your camera to record the awesome overlook view of Lake James. Meet at the Catawba River Area parking lot at 1 p.m.



Continued Next Page



WINTER BIRD HIKE – SUNDAY, DEC. 16

It may come as a surprise to some, but birdwatching during the winter can be excellent. With all of the winged visitors from the north, we might see as many as 30 different types of birds in little more than an hour. Join Ranger Jamie Cameron for a walk around the Paddy's Creek Area to see what kind of surprises we might turn up. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 9 a.m.

CHRISTMAS EVE BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, DEC. 23

The weather outside may be frightful, but Lake James still hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for loons, otters, eagles and scenic vistas. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly if you are one of the eight lucky participants. Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to reserve your spot. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2 p.m. departure.

FIRST DAY HIKE – TUESDAY, JAN. 1

There is no better way to start off a new year than with a hike at Lake James. Meet Park Ranger Jamie Cameron for what has become a cherished holiday tradition at Lake James State Park – the First Day Hike. Whether you're interested in starting a resolution of fitness, nature appreciation or learning about the environment, make a visit to Lake James State Park part of your family's holiday tradition. The hike will start at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. Bring warm clothing and be prepared to walk two miles.

RANGER KEVIN BISCHOF PROMOTED

“Our loss will be Mount Mitchell’s gain,” Lake James State Park Superintendent Nora Coffey reflected upon learning Ranger Kevin Bischof has accepted the promotion to superintendent of the highest peak east of the Mississippi River. “Kevin has been an exemplary ranger at Lake James and at the posts he’s held before this one. He’ll be an excellent superintendent and I have no doubt Mt. Mitchell State Park will flourish under his stewardship.”

Bischof came to Lake James during 2013 as an advanced ranger and has served as the park’s interpretation and education coordinator. Frequent I&E program attendees can no doubt attest to Kevin’s expertise and enthusiasm for teaching people about the park and its incredible wildlife and outdoor recreation opportunities. He has also been pivotal to the planning and organizing of the annual Catawba RiverFest.

In his division-wide announcement regarding Bischof’s new post, Mountain Region Superintendent Sean McElhone wrote, “I am very happy to announce that Kevin Bischof has accepted the Park Superintendent position at Mount Mitchell State park. Mount Mitchell is the most iconic park in the state; its unique climate and terrain make it stunningly beautiful, but also complex to manage. The winter weather makes it one of the most difficult places to work and live. It takes a very committed person to take on these challenges.”

Although his last day on duty at Lake James State Park is Nov. 18, Bischof officially became superintendent on Oct. 29. Thank you Ranger Bischof for your years of outstanding service to Lake James and best of luck in your future endeavors.



NATURE NOTES

Depending on how you view it, it's either the saddest or the happiest time of the year. The hot, summer sun is lower in the sky, cold winds are blowing from the north and the lake has gone from the temperature of bath water to a potential survival situation if you were to accidentally fall in. On the bright side, it's sweater weather, the park is less-crowded and there's lots of wildlife to look at.



The end of the calendar year marks a time of great transition for the plants and animals that call Lake James State Park their home. Whether they are year-round residents or winter visitors has a significant influence on how critters spend their days here.

Among our resident animals, black bears have, or are soon to go into their winter dens. These are the only large mammals in the Southeast that have adapted a strategy of slowing their metabolic rate to the point that food and water is no longer necessary in order to survive the lean winter months. It is during this period that female bears will give birth, typically to 2-to-3 cubs.

On the flip side of the coin, white-tailed deer, our other resident, large mammal, stays active throughout the winter. In fact, with dwindling food sources, deer often have to search longer and farther for sustenance as winter drags on. If the season is especially harsh and traditional foods like acorns, green briar and other leafy plants are exhausted, the deer herd will be forced to eating less nutritious items like rhododendron leaves, grasses and even the bark of some trees.

Squirrels and smaller rodents will also be searching for food throughout the winter, or hitting their caches of seeds and nuts when necessary. At the same time, these small mammals will be trying to avoid predators like red and gray foxes, bobcats and coyotes who are also trying to make it through to spring.

Be they predators or prey, winter is a great time for nature watchers to observe fur-bearing animals. Bundle up and take advantage of the season. Hope to see you out on the trail!

WHO WE ARE

A group formed in 2010, made up of dedicated people work together to help Lake James State Park meet its mission of providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education while still protecting the natural beauty and historic integrity of the State Park.

BOARD MEMBERS

Eric Jenkins - President

Robert Hunter - Vice President

Mike Sewell - Secretary

Annette Bryant - Membership Coordinator

Randall Conley - Member at Large

George Milner - Member at Large

Greg Norell - Member at Large

Molly Sandfoss - Member at Large

Jeff Stark - Member at Large

Jim Williams - Member at Large

To contact the Friends of Lake James State Park Group please email info@lakejamesstatepark.org

YEAR OF THE FISH: MINNOWS

As the Year of the Fish comes to an end, we saved some of our smallest fish for the end. Last, but certainly not least, our smallest fish covered this installment will be from the minnow family. The minnows, belonging to the Cyprinidae family, more than make up for their diminutive size with their magnificent coloration which often rivals tropical aquarium fish. Blues, reds, yellows and even metallic silver are all colors that can be found on the minnow species that live in the streams that feed Lake James.

The Cyprinidae is the largest family of fish, consisting of more than 2,000 species; 231 of which are found in North America. "Minnow" is typically a generic term is given to any small fish and is generally used to describe small bait fish used to catch larger game fish such as bass or catfish. But, the true members of the minnow family include shiners, chubs, dace, stonerollers, carp and even goldfish. These fish vary in appearance, just as they vary in name. The peak of minnow coloration occurs during breeding season, with the males achieving brighter markings as they fight for the attention of females. One of these minnows that can be found within the park is the warpaint shiner. The warpaint shiner can grow to lengths up to five-and-a-half inches and have



Rosyside Dace

a torpedo shaped, metallic-silver body. Where the warpaint shiner excels in appearance, is the markings that give this minnow its name. Just behind the gill plate, on the dorsal fin and tail fin, the warpaint shiner has black bars. Accenting these black markings, the warpaint shiner is decorated with red markings on its face and dorsal fins, making the fish look as if it were a Native American brave preparing for battle. This is just one of the brightly colored fish in the minnow family we have at Lake James State Park.

Minnow species are generally pretty small, so what do they eat? The sandbar shiner is a species that spends most of its time in the mid-water levels of a stream, pursuing crustaceans and various insects. Other species, such as the central stoneroller, consume mostly algae and some invertebrates. Minnows

as a group don't have teeth lining their mouths, but they do have series of teeth located down in their throat that help them crush food. Being the small fish in the pond, or stream as the case may be, makes our minnows prey for many animals. Larger fish, birds, snakes, turtles, frogs, raccoons, crayfish, aquatic insects and even spiders prey upon minnow species.

Some of the Lake James' minnow species can be found in the lake, but the

majority can be found in the streams that flow through the park. Where exactly depends on the species of minnow. Creek chubs can be found cruising stream bottoms in search of algae while others, like the rosyside dace cruise in the middle of the water column.

Our park's minnows frequently go overlooked and they can be hard to find. Creek exploration programs happen throughout the year and are one of the best chances to see some of them. So, keep an eye out in the park newsletter and online program schedule for these opportunities as the Year of the Fish comes to a close. We hope to see you in the park.

FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

FONTA FLORA BARNBURNER 50K

The inaugural Fonta Flora Barnburner 50-K Mountain Bike Race took place Sept. 29th with around 200 participants taking on the challenge of the trail system at Lake James State Park and a portion of the new Fonta Flora Trail. Byron Rice was the overall winner, followed by Miles Hubbard and Forrest Howard.



Photo courtesy Mark Schmerling

KAYAK RAFFLE

Michael Lowther, owner of Overmountain Cycles in Morganton, was this year's lucky winner in the Friends of Lake James State Park kayak raffle fundraiser. Lowther's ticket happened to be drawn on the evening of Sept. 29, the same day as the inaugural Barnburner 50-kilometer mountain bike race - an event he organized and donated all of the proceeds (around \$2,250) for the Fonta Flora State Trail Project.



FISHING 101

The North Carolina State Parks' "Year of the Fish" campaign ends New Year's Eve. Here at Lake James State Park, both rangers and maintenance staffers introduced dozens of angling neophytes to the sport. In this photo, Maintenance mechanic Justin Allen assists a successful fisherwoman who has landed a feisty bluegill.



REBUILDING PROJECTS TAKE SHAPE

Members of the Lake James State Park maintenance staff got right to work on some important infrastructure projects once the busy summer season ended. Here Maintenance Mechanics Keith Harris, Justin Allen and Chris Sigmon are shown at the newly rebuilt Sandy Cliff Overlook platform. The guys also replaced the overlook platform at Lake Channel. The fishing pier at the Catawba River Area will be next on the list, with work being completed by the end of the year.



FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

SAVE THE DATE

- There is no better way to start off a new year than with a hike at Lake James on Jan. 1. Meet Park Ranger Jamie Cameron for what has become a cherished holiday tradition at Lake James State Park – the First Day Hike. Whether you're interested in starting a resolution of fitness, nature appreciation or learning about the environment, make a visit to Lake James State Park part of your family's holiday tradition. The hike will start at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. Bring warm clothing and be prepared to walk two miles.
- It may seem crazy to start planning so far in advance, but no crazier than actually participating in the 2nd annual SwimRun Lake James on April 20. This endurance race pits teams of two competitors against the rest of the field and, more importantly, whatever weather is on tap for race day. Racers will navigate 2-3 miles of open water swimming and 13-14 miles of trail running (depending on final course layout). Athletes will be vetted for experience in endurance events and registrations must be received by April 1, 2019. For more information, go to <https://runsignup.com/Race/NC/Nebo/SwimRunNCLakeJames>
- The 17th annual Catawba RiverFest will be held Sept. 21. There'll be something for everyone at the Paddy's Creek Area, with dozens of interactive and information booths representing area conservation, outdoor recreation and historic organizations. Admission to RiverFest is free. For more information, check out the Friends of Lake James State Park page on Facebook, or call the park at 828-584-7728.



LJSP TRAILS



CATAWBA RIVER AREA:

Fishing Pier Trail (0.3 mile, easy)
Fox Den Loop Trail (2.25 miles, moderate)
Lake Channel Overlook Trail (1.5 miles, moderate)
Sandy Cliff Overlook Trail (0.5 mile, easy)

PADDY'S CREEK AREA:

Holly Discovery Trail (0.75 mile, easy)
Mill's Creek Trail (3.6 miles, moderate)
Overmountain Victory Trail (2.0 mile, moderate)
Paddy's Creek Trail (2.0 miles, moderate)
Tindo beginners' mountain bike trail (4.0 miles)
Wimba intermediate mountain bike trail (11.25 miles)

PARK GENERAL INFO

- Gate hours during November are 7 a.m. until 8 p.m. Starting December 1 the gate hours change to 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- The park will be closed on Dec. 25, Christmas Day.
- The Hidden Cove Boat Access will be closed Dec. 1 through Feb. 28.
- The swim beach and concessions stand are closed for the season, which includes canoe and kayak rentals.

FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Do you have an interest in Lake James State Park? Whether you enjoy hiking the trails, swimming at the beach or just picnicking with your family, there is some part of the park for everyone.

Join the Friends of Lake James State Park group and learn about all the opportunities to help make the park a better place for everyone to enjoy. The Friends of Lake James State Park focus on working together to help Lake James State Park meet its mission of providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education while still protecting the natural beauty and historic integrity of the State Park.

There are a variety of opportunities to get involved from trail work days, to volunteering at RiverFest and other festivals. Become a member of Friends of Lake James State Park, and know that you are helping to preserve the natural beauty and historic resources of Lake James for generations to come.

FRIENDS CONTRIBUTIONS

The Friends of Lake James State Park is proud to support the hardworking staff at Lake James State Park and contribute wherever we can to help improve park operations and offer new recreational opportunities to visitors. If you think these efforts are meaningful, please consider joining our group using the form at the bottom of this page.

- Boat Camping Project; partially funded, purchased equipment including rebar driver and auger
- Stand-up Paddleboards; purchased two for rental fleet and one for lifeguard use
- Funded instructor for Waterfront Safety training for lifeguards
- Linville Overlook picnic area
- Assisted with Overmountain Victory Trail 2 construction
- Holly Discovery Trail; partially funded and dedicated, annual funding for upkeep
- Park of the Year celebration
- Sponsored night rides on mountain bike trails
- RiverFest Sponsor

HOW TO JOIN THE FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK GROUP

Become a member of Friends of Lake James State Park, and know that you are helping to preserve the natural beauty and historic resources of Lake James for generations to come.

For more information please visit www.lakejamesstatepark.org or email info@lakejamesstatepark.org.

FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK - MEMBERSHIP INFORMATION

Be a Friend of Lake James State Park

Select class of annual membership:

- ☐ Individual \$10
☐ Family \$25
☐ Corporate \$50
☐ Patron/Industry \$100 - \$999 \$_____
☐ Lifetime \$1000 (or more) \$_____
☐ I would like to be contacted about volunteer opportunities with the Friends of Lake James State Park

Where did you hear about us? _____

Name _____
Address _____
City _____ State _____ Zip _____
Email _____
Phone _____

Return to:
Friends of Lake James State Park, Inc.
P.O. Box 1327
Nebo, NC 28761

Friends of Lake James State Park, Inc. is a registered 501(c)3 charitable organization. Receipt of membership will be supplied upon request.