

NEW TRAIL RECEIVES HIGH HONORS

The staff at Lake James State Park has recently been awarded state and national honors for the Holly Discovery Trail. Officially opened back in June, the HDT is a .75-mile loop in the area of Paddy's Creek. Originally known as the Paddy's Creek Loop Trail when the Paddy's Creek Area of the park opened in the fall of 2010, the HDT has been repurposed into an exciting, self-guided interpretive

experience that is unique within the North Carolina State Parks system.

Lake James rangers and maintenance personnel worked closely with NC Parks and Recreation exhibits and education experts to design and build the one-of-a-kind trail. In doing so, they saved the state more than \$150,000 it would

have cost if the project were to have been awarded to professional contractors. As it stands, the HDT is a shining example of ingenuity and frugality – costing around \$15,000 to develop and construct “in-house.”

Over the course of its easy ramble through the riparian zone along Paddy's Creek, the trail has 18 wayside stations that interpret

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NEW TRAIL RECEIVES HIGH HONORS (continued)

the surrounding environment by encouraging hikers to experience nature through their senses of sight, sound, smell and touch. There is a place to build a “fairy house” with natural materials and a blind from which to observe wildlife undetected.

In recognition of their efforts, Superintendent Nora Coffey, Ranger Jamie Cameron, Maintenance Mechanic IV Mike Carriker and MMI Andrew Carswell each received The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation “Special Achievement Award” from Director Lewis Ledford during last month’s annual Superintendent’s Conference at Haw River State Park.

In his letter to the award winners, Ledford thanked them for their “creativity in the creation of the Holly Discovery Trail (which) saved the division thousands of dollars.” Ledford went on to write, “The Holly Discovery Trail will serve as invaluable interpretive tool for the park staff in their efforts to educate and interpret the wonderful resources at Lake James State Park.”

The trail was also recognized earlier in November at the National Association for

Interpretation annual conference in Reno, NV, as the first-place recipient in the “Waysides” category of the Media Awards competition.

Headquartered in Fort Collins, CO, the NAI is a professional association for individuals and organizations involved in the interpretation of natural and cultural resources. Lake James State Park beat out 2nd place winner; Rohuer Japanese American Relocation Center Exhibit by Arkansas State University and the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and 3rd place winner; Corn Creek Interpretive Trail Waysides by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the Nuwuvu Working Group.

“I could not be more proud of the effort, creativity and enthusiasm the staff at Lake James State Park put into creating and constructing the Holly Discovery Trail,” said Park Superintendent Nora Coffey. “Everyone who works at the park had a hand in the project and everyone deserves to share in these accolades. The HDT is a result of the incredible talent we have at the park. We are excited to offer the HDT to the public as a fun and exciting way to educate young people on the topics of the environment and conservation.”

The Friends of Lake James State Park was invaluable in providing funds to complete the trail in time for its debut and have pledged ongoing financial support to maintain and improve the trail through the years.

“The commitments made by the Friends group to the HDT are exactly the type of support we were created to provide Lake James State Park,” said FOLJSP president Eric Jenkins. “This project is an example of the incredible resource the park provides to the community and to visitors who come from far away. We congratulate the park staff for these well-deserved awards and for a truly outstanding job.”



If you would like to receive our monthly events list, contact Nora Coffey at nora.coffey@ncparks.gov. Please note: In an effort to reduce idle time, please make a reasonable effort to arrive a few minutes before the times set for programs.

WINTER TREE ID - Saturday, December 7

Join Park Ranger Clay Veasey as he leads a hike to explore the identification of trees during the winter months. The hike is a moderate hike under 1 mile in length and will journey out to the Sandy Cliff Overlook. Bring appropriate hiking gear and come ready to identify some of the trees that inhabit Lake James State Park. Meet at the Office located in the Catawba River Area of the park. The hike starts at 10:00 a.m..



OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY TRAIL HIKE - Sunday, December 8

Come meet Park Ranger Clay Veasey as he leads a hike along the nationally recognized Overmountain Victory Trail. The hike is rated as easy and will be under 2 miles in length. Please meet at the Paddy's Creek bridge located in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Bring appropriate hiking gear and be prepared to start at 10:00 a.m.



WINTERGREEN NATURE HIKE - Saturday, December 14

As the holidays approach and the leaves have fallen off the trees many don't think there is a lot of green left to see as they hike. Join Park Ranger Earl Weaver as he hikes along the Holly Discovery Nature Trail in search of the plants that hold their green coloration even through the winter. The hike is approximately .75 miles in length. Please meet at the Holly Discovery Trailhead located in the Paddy's Creek Area at 10:00 a.m.

ANIMAL TRACK ORNAMENTS - Saturday, December 14

Join Park Supt. Nora Coffey to learn about different animal tracks and signs that can be found around Lake James and make your own animal track ornaments to take home. Meet at the Catawba River Area office at 2 p.m. Please call the park office at (828) 584-7728 for program registration.

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LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR- Sunday, December 15

What better way to see waterfowl on Lake James than to see the lake by boat? Join Park Ranger Earl Weaver as he guides a boat tour looking for the waterfowl that call Lake James home in the months of fall. Pre-registration is required, as there are only 7 seats available on the boat. Please bring appropriate clothing for an afternoon on the lake. Life jackets will be provided. This programs leaves from the law enforcement boat ramp at the east end of the Paddy's Creek Area promptly at 2:00 p.m. Meet at the east picnic shelter several minutes prior to the program starting. To register please call 828-584-7728.

BIRDS IN WINTER - Saturday, December 21

The environs of Lake James and its surrounding forests are filled with birds no matter what the season. In winter we can find some species that are difficult, if not impossible to spot during any other time of year, like common loon, ruby-crowned kinglet, hermit thrush and many, many more. Join Park Ranger Jamie Cameron on this easy foray along the shoreline, starting at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10:00 a.m. Don't forget your binoculars and a field guide if you have them.



Ruby-Crowned Kinglet



NATURE THROUGH INDIAN EYES - Sunday, December 22

Native Americans relied on all of their senses to survive in the forest. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this exercise of sight, sound, smell, touch and taste as we experience Nature in new ways. The program is geared toward children ages 5-12, but parents are encouraged to participate as well. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Bridge Area bathhouse breezeway at 2:00 p.m.

EARLY WINTER HIKE - Sunday, December 29

What better way to work off all the holiday food then by taking a walk along the shoreline of Lake James? Come discover Lake James in the cold months as we discover what animals inhabit the lake during the cooler times of the year. Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at the swim beach concession building at the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Meet at 2:00 p.m. Be prepared for the weather and to walk approximately 2 miles.

NATURE NOTES

The Fall Frenzy

November's brilliant blaze of colors is a fading memory and now the leaves we waited so long to enjoy are falling to the ground with every cold gust of December air. All is not lost, however, there's still plenty to see and do at Lake James State Park.

December is a time for flocks of birds – be they robins feasting on the ruby red berries of the dogwood trees, or blue jays searching for acorns, or ducks dropping into Paddy's Creek for a brief respite from their journey south. On warm, sunny days you can still find a few butterflies flitting about. Giant cloudless sulfurs, common buckeyes and even a few monarchs will be adding their colors to the falling leaves until the first hard frost ends their season for another year.

The breeding season for whitetail deer occurs this month, with bucks chasing does across the countryside. It pays to be extra vigilant for jaywalking deer with love on their mind when you drive through the park. The deer here seem to think they own the place anyway, and rarely look both ways before jumping out into traffic.

Speaking of driving slowly; park rangers were saddened to find a road-killed wild turkey on the Paddy's Creek Area main road back in October. The bird was a young poult belonging to one of the two successful broods hatched back in the spring. Remember, the park-wide speed limit is 25 miles-per-hour and is designed to protect both hikers and wildlife from such tragedies.

The rangers have scheduled plenty of reasons to get outside this month; from bird hikes, to creek explorations, to photo adventures so toss out your excuses and come out and play. Hope to see you 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
Wendell Shelton - Vice President
Mike Sewell - Secretary
Bob Bielitz - Treasurer
Paul Braun - Member at Large
Joe Carey - Member at Large
Greg Norell - Member at Large
Frank Dean - Member at Large
Jim Williams - Member at Large
George Milner - Member at Large
Brock Hall - Member at Large
Ashley Wooten - Member at Large

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



MEET THE STAFF AT LJSP

Visitors to Lake James State Park rightly assume that the facilities will be working properly when they get there. Nobody wants to deal with leaky faucets or broken light fixtures when they're trying to enjoy the beauty of nature. The park has a dedicated maintenance staff that oversees the day-to-day functioning of the necessities most people take for granted.

Darrin Oliver is one of those behind-the-scenes heroes who keep things running smoothly. His official position title is Maintenance Mechanic II, signifying a level of expertise that rivals professional tradesmen in the fields of electricity and plumbing. In addition, he holds several state certifications, including water testing and pesticide application.



Darrin Oliver

Darrin has worked at Lake James State Park for nearly six years and has lived and worked in Burke County for his entire life.

“The thing that makes me happy to come into work every day is the people I work with; we’re like a family here,” he said. “This job is gratifying in that it’s never the same – every day is different. One day we might be putting in a new picnic site and the next we could be testing the water to make sure it’s safe to drink and shower in. Ironically, that diversity is also the most challenging part of the job. It’s constantly changing.”

So the next time you’re in the park and everything works as it should, think of Darrin and his co-workers in the maintenance shop; their professionalism is the reason for your comfort.

LJSP TRAILS

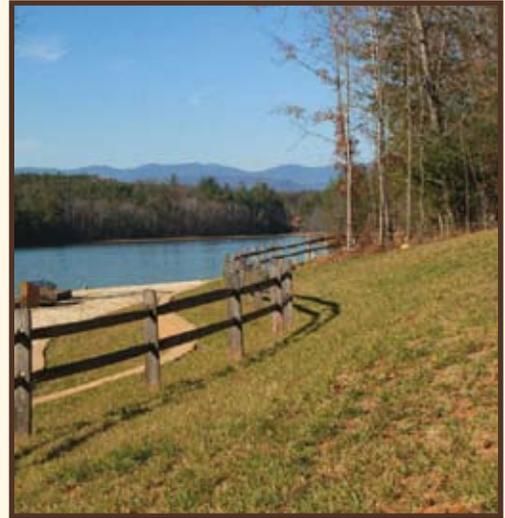


CATAWBA RIVER AREA:

- 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)



NC STATE PARK BLOG ncstateparks.wordpress.com

Looking for the most up to date information about the North Carolina State Parks? If you haven't yet checked out our new NC State Parks blog, you should. It's here: <http://ncstateparks.wordpress.com>

There is much timely news about the division and the state parks system; that gets to you even more quickly than the state parks grapevine or the newsletter. Please check the "Follow our Blog" box on the right hand side of the webpage. You'll get the news shipped directly to your inbox the instant it's published. It's a great way to keep up with what is happening in the state parks.



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.



PARK GENERAL INFO

- December gate hours are 8 a.m. until 6 p.m.
- The campground is closed for season
- The swimming area is closed for season
- The concession stand is closed for season
- Hidden Cove Boat Access Area is closed for season

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 \$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.