



MARCH-APRIL 2014



LAKE JAMES LOOP TRAIL UPDATE (Part 2)

Last month's newsletter gave some basic information on the proposed Lake James Loop Trail. Each newsletter we will continue to provide information on this project. This month we focus on the proposed design of the trail. The proposed trail will be an easy to moderate hiking and mountain biking trail with a natural mineral soil surface. The trail will be sustainable, designed and constructed to minimize erosion and require minimal maintenance. It will also provide a better experience for the trail user while protecting the natural resources through which it traverses.

The trail will be approximately six feet wide and the overall average trail

grade (steepness) will be 10 percent or less. This width will allow multiple uses of the trail and management access by off-highway vehicles. The trail design will incorporate characteristics of a typical rolling contour trail that has a gentle grade, follows the contours of the terrain, is slightly out-sloped, and meanders and undulates frequently to remove water from the trail surface and provide an interesting journey for the user. The trail should appear as narrow as possible while still maintaining the required tread width.

The trail design will utilize essentials of sustainable trails as outlined in the International Mountain Bicycling

Association's (IMBA) publication "Trail Solutions." These recommendations promote sheet flow of water across the trail, as opposed to flow of water down the trail, and limit the volume and velocity of water on the trail tread. This will minimize the amount of erosion that occurs in and around the trail. The trail will approach stream crossings in a manner that minimizes the grade entering and exiting the riparian corridor. Crossing will be as perpendicular to the stream as possible and bridged from high ground to high ground.

For more information contact the Burke County Community Development Department at 828-764-9030.

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.

LATE WINTER ON THE MILL'S CREEK TRAIL - Saturday, Mar. 1

One of the longest trails in Lake James State Park, the Mill's Creek Trail winds along the banks of the lake, offering ample opportunities to view wildlife. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof for a hike which will explore the wildlife that lives in and around Lake James. Bring proper footwear, as the 3.6 mile hike may be muddy and will spend time along the banks of the lake. The hike begins at 10 a.m. and meets at the West Shelter near the bathhouse in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park.

SPRING IS IN THE AIR - Sunday, Mar. 2

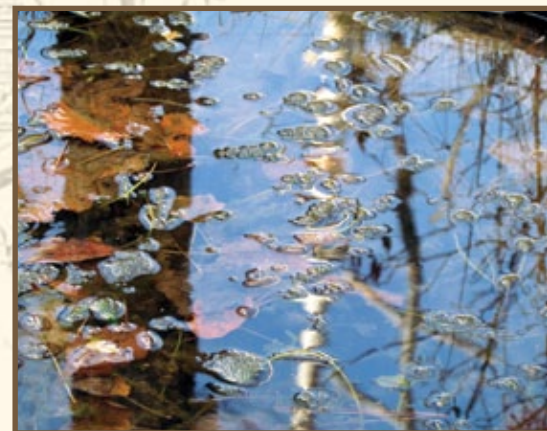
With Spring only a couple of weeks away, park visitors are anxious to see the cold Winter temperatures succumb to the warming promise of Spring. As the temperatures change, so do the behaviors of the resident plants and animals. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof for a hike along the Fox Den Loop trail to discover the early Spring activity of the park. The 2.25 mile hike will leave at 3 p.m. from the park office located in the Catawba River Area of the park.

TREE ID - Saturday, Mar. 8

When the leaves have fallen off the trees for the year, tree identification can be the difficult. If you have ever wondered how to identify trees without their leaves, this hike is a perfect time to learn. Meet Park Ranger Clay Veasey at the Paddy's Creek concession area as he leads hikers into the wonderful world of tree identification. The hike leaves at 10 a.m. and lasts for about an hour. Please bring appropriate clothing for the weather and don't be late!

WETLANDS HIKE - Saturday, Mar. 15

What is a wetland? Come discover what makes a wetland, and what types of animals thrive in this type of environment. Meet Park Ranger Earl Weaver as he leads a hike to some of the wetlands within Lake James State Park. The hike starts at the park office located in the Catawba River Area. Bring appropriate hiking gear and be prepared to start at 10 a.m.



WATERFOWL ON THEIR WAY NORTH – BOAT TOUR - Sunday Mar. 16

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 as Spring arrives. Pre-registration is required, as there are only 7 spots 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 p.m. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter several minutes prior to the program starting. To register, please call 828-584-7728.

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EARLY SPRING PHOTO SAFARI - Saturday, March 22

Capture the moment Mother Nature shakes off the blankets of winter through the lens of a camera. Join Park Ranger Jamie Cameron, an award-winning photographer and former newspaper editor, on a woodland hike in search of compelling images that evoke emotion and tell a story. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather and bring whatever photography equipment you think you'll need to help you in your quest. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area breezeway at 9 a.m.



EARLY ARRIVALS – MIGRATION - Sunday, March 23

Late March is the time when the first migrating birds of spring move through the Lake James area on their way to the northern breeding grounds. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead the group in search of northern parula, blue-gray gnatcatcher, black-and-white warbler and a host of other early migrants. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather and bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Meet at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area at 9 a.m.

WETLANDS HIKE - Sunday, Mar 30

What is a wetland? Come discover what makes a wetland, and what types of animals thrive in this type of environment. Meet Park Ranger Clay Veasey as he leads a hike to some of the wetlands within Lake James State Park. The hike starts at the park office located in the Catawba River Area. Bring appropriate hiking gear and be prepared to start at 2 p.m.

HOLLY DISCOVERY HIKE - Saturday, Apr. 5

The Holly Discovery Trail is an award-winning nature trail which offers 18 interactive stations, fun for young and old explorers alike. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike along this .75-mile trail and introduces Lake James State Park through a different view from any other trail located within the park. The hike starts at 10 a.m. from the Holly Discovery Trailhead, located in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park, so bring your imagination, a pair of sturdy sneakers and be prepared to discover the Holly Discovery.

AMPHIBIAN HIKE - Sunday, Apr. 6

Spring is a fantastic time of year to see some of the Lake James cold-blooded residents. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he explores the Holly Discovery Trail in attempt to discover some of the amphibians that live in the park. The hike is approximately .75 miles in length and starts from the Holly Discovery Trailhead in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. The hike starts at 10 a.m.

SPRING BIRD HIKE - Saturday, Apr. 12

The migration is in full swing and there's no better time to greet the weary travelers as they pass through the Carolinas on their way to the northern breeding grounds. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this informative program on identifying migratory species, including warblers, tanagers and vireos. Meet at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area at 8 a.m. Bring binoculars and comfortable hiking shoes for this .75-mile trail.

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SPRING BIRD HIKE - Sunday, Apr. 13

The migration is in full swing and there's no better time to greet the weary travelers as they pass through the Carolinas on their way to the northern breeding grounds. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this informative program on identifying migratory species, including warblers, tanagers and vireos. Meet at the Catawba River Area office breezeway at 8:30 a.m. Bring binoculars and comfortable hiking shoes for a trip around the Fox Den Loop Trail.

OVERMOUNTAIN VICTORY TRAIL HIKE - Saturday, Apr. 19

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 less than 2 miles in length. Please meet at the Holly Discovery Trailhead, located in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Bring appropriate hiking gear and be prepared to start at 10 a.m.

BIRD HIKE - Saturday, Apr. 19

As Old Man Winter fades into the past, the trees and plants start to come alive. What better time to set out on a park trail to see the birds in the park? Meet Park Ranger Earl Weaver as he leads a hike along the Holly Discovery Trail to search for the birds that call Lake James home during the spring months. The hike starts at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area at 10 a.m. Please bring appropriate footwear and be prepared to hike approximately .75 miles.

TURKEY TALK - Sunday, Apr. 20

As Lake James transitions into Spring, the echo of an interesting bird can be heard throughout the park. Spring is the breeding season for many animals and the wild turkey is no exception. Gobble, Gobble, calls a Tom. But who is Tom? Meet Park Ranger Clay Veasey at the East Shelter to discover the fascinating world of the Turkey. The program starts at 10 a.m. so don't miss out!

LOON BOAT TOUR - Sunday, Apr. 20

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 majestic common loons that call Lake James home in the months of Winter and Spring. 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 parking lot promptly at 2 p.m. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter several minutes prior to the program starting. To register, please call 828-584-7728.



EARTH DAY HIKE - Tuesday, Apr. 22

Celebrate Earth Day at Lake James State Park. Spring is in the air and there's no better way to enjoy it than a hike in the woods. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this 2-mile hike along the Paddy's Creek Trail in search of the wonders of nature. Along the way, he will point out amazing facts and tell stories about the plants, trees, insects and animals we see. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 4 p.m.

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**EMERGE & FLY - Saturday, Apr. 26**

Butterflies and moths are the focus of the 2014 North Carolina State Park's interpretation theme. Every spring, butterflies and moths start to emerge and can be seen fluttering around forest floors and porch lights. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he delves into the wonderful world of Lepidoptera in a program focusing on butterfly and moth life cycles. The program begins at 10 a.m. at the park office in the Catawba River Area of the park.

NATURE THROUGH INDIAN EYES - Saturday, Apr. 26

The native Americans that lived along the Catawba River needed to use all of their senses to survive. Learn how to experience Nature in an entirely new way with Park Ranger Jamie Cameron. This exciting and interactive program is geared towards youngsters, ages 4-12. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area office breezeway at 3 p.m.

BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES - Sunday, Apr. 27

In celebration of the North Carolina State Park's yearly theme, this program will discover the intricate world of butterflies. During this short program we will hike along the Mill's Creek Trail in hopes of seeing some of Lake James' early season butterflies. The program starts at the East Picnic Shelter in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Please meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at 11 a.m. and be prepared to walk approximately 1.5 miles.

JUNIOR RANGER BOOT CAMP - Sunday, Apr. 27

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation is looking for a few good young women and men to join the ranks of the Junior Ranger Corps. Get a jump start on earning your Junior Ranger badge with Park Ranger Jamie Cameron. You will receive a Junior Ranger workbook and complete several of the requirements towards taking the oath of service to North Carolina State Parks. This program is suitable for youngsters ages 5-12. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area office breezeway at 3 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Call the park office at 828-584-7728.

LAKE JAMES TRIATHLON

Lace up your running shoes, pump up your bicycle tires and dig out your swim suit – it's time to start training for the 5th annual Lake James Triathlon.

Organized by the McDowell Trails Association, the triathlon will be held May 17 and originates in the Paddy's Creek Area at Lake James State Park. Last year, more than 100 racers participated in the event to raise money for the MTA and its goals of increasing and enhancing unpaved recreational trails in McDowell County. Another 25 road warriors entered the first-ever duathlon, held simultaneously with the triathlon.



The triathlon begins with a 750-meter swim in the clean, clear waters of Lake James, followed by a 22-mile trip around the lake on two wheels and finally a 5-kilometer run for the finish. The duathlon, on the other hand, is perfect for those multisport athletes who want to skip the swimming leg of the race. This year's duathlon starts with a 3.1-mile run along the park's trail system, moving to the 22-mile bicycling leg and ends with another 5-kilometer run.

The Lake James Triathlon and duathlon are “must-do” events for veteran multisport athletes and newcomers alike, thanks to the constant, breath-taking scenery along the race course and comfortable water temperatures during the swimming portion. Last year, the water was around 72 degrees Fahrenheit as the triathletes sprinted down the beach.

Are you a great road runner, but can't swim a stroke? A dedicated cyclist with shin splints? You can still compete in the team event for both the triathlon and duathlon. Just find a couple of friends whose athletic skills compliment yours and go for it!

The races are USA Triathlon sanctioned and all participants must be card carrying members of that organization. For those who want to race, but are not USAT certified, special, 1-day memberships will be available on race day.

Onsite registration begins at 6 a.m., or you can catch a few extra Zs and pre-register online at www.mtatriathlon.blueridgemultisports.com.

SPRING NATURE NOTES

Snow, ice, cold, wind chill, accumulation, freezing rain, sleet ... after a winter like this, many will be happy to see Old Man Winter leave. As the sun starts to climb higher in the sky and the days grow warmer, the plants and animals that have been dormant during the winter months start to spring to life. The sights, smells and sounds of Lake James begin to increase as animal and visitor sightings grow. But what can you expect to see during your spring visit?

During the early spring, the combination of warm weather and increased rain make for ideal conditions for many amphibians. Frogs and toads calling for mates can be heard along creek banks, pond rims, the lakeshore, forest bottoms and even temporary puddles. One of the most common spring time amphibians heard are the Spring Peepers. As their name implies, these tiny frogs have a call that is a short, high-pitched, repetitive “peep,” heard during the spring and occasionally warm winter days and evenings. Like Spring Peepers and other amphibians, reptiles are also cold blooded. With the increasing temperatures, reptile sightings start to increase as well. Black Racers and Northern Water Snakes start to search for their first meal in several months after coming out of hibernation and various aquatic turtles can be seen basking on logs around the lake.



As the reptiles and amphibians start to emerge, so does the flora of the park. The Dogwood Tree decorates the forest understory with beautiful white blooms as the plants of the forest floor start to add their colorful presence. White, purple, yellow, various greens and the beautiful orange blossoms of the native azalea, the Flame Azalea, burst to life accompanied by the insects that use them for food. While summer is the best time to see most moths and butterflies, some species thrive in the spring months. Butterflies such as the Mourning Cloak, Eastern Comma and the Question Mark can be seen fluttering around the park by day, while stray moths hang near building lights after the sun sets, sparking their nocturnal activity.

The sights, smells, and sounds of nature transform Lake James from the dormant winter season into a time that is full of life. So, what can you see during your spring visit to Lake James State Park? Come to the park and find out for yourself, you just never know.

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
Annette Bryant - Membership Coordinator
Bob Bielitz - Treasurer
Paul Braun - Member at Large
Greg Norell - Member at Large
Jim Williams - Member at Large
George Milner - Member at Large
Brock Hall - Member at Large
Ashley Wooten - Member at Large
Alan Scholl - Member at Large

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

BIO BLITZ 2014

What happens when a group of scientists and field biologists spend 24 hours within the boundaries of a North Carolina state park trying to identify as many species as they can? It's a "bioblitz" and it's happening at Lake James State Park, May 13-14.

Starting around 8 a.m., May 13, the team of researchers will spread out across the park's 3,514 acres and document every swimming, crawling, flying, burrowing, climbing, photosynthesizing, metabolizing life form they encounter. No one expects to find and put a name to all the thousands of organisms that live in the park. That task would take a lifetime, not a mere 24 hours. It is expected, however, that the bioblitz will triple the park's list of known species, maybe more. Currently, that list totals 543, including 185 vascular plant species, 153 different types of bird and 129 kinds of insect.

In addition to expanding the database on Lake James State Park's biodiversity, the bioblitz will also be a tremendous opportunity for budding scientists, backyard enthusiasts and amateur naturalists to get hands-on instruction from some of the most highly regarded biologists in the state.

Visitors can participate in the event by attending programs and guided hikes put on by the experts themselves. Want to learn more about moths? There will be a program on that. Always wondered about amphibians? There will be a program covering that topic too, as well as many others; Mollusks anyone? A schedule of these educational opportunities will be available in the May issue of the Friends of Lake James State Park newsletter and at the Paddy's Creek Area picnic shelters, bioblitz headquarters, on the day of the event.

Come join in on the fun for what promises to be a festival of learning. For more information, call the park office at 828-584-7728.



FRIENDLY FACES

Judge Robert C. Hunter has served on the North Carolina Court of Appeals since his appointment and then election in 1998. In 2006, he was re-elected to an eight year term. While serving on the Court of Appeals, he has decided over 4,500 cases and authored more than 1,500 opinions. He is not seeking re-election and will be retiring from the Court of Appeals on Dec. 31, 2014.

Bob's election to the Court of Appeals capped two distinguished careers - one as a practicing lawyer and another as a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives. Upon receiving his law degree in 1969 from the University of North Carolina, he returned home to McDowell County and began his legal career as an Assistant District Attorney. The following year, he started the law firm of Hunter & Evans in Marion and, while in private practice, served for 24 years as McDowell County Attorney.



Judge Robert C. Hunter

In 1980, he was elected to the North Carolina House of Representatives, and represented the 49th House District until 1998. Among Judge Hunter's proudest achievements were his securing passage of the Highway Trust Fund, Natural Gas Expansion Act, Crime Victims Compensation Fund and Lake James State Park.

Along with his position of vice president of the Friends of Lake James State Park board of directors, Judge Hunter also serves on the board for Southmountain Children and Family Services. He previously served on the N.C. Healthy Start Foundation board of directors and was its treasurer. He has long been active in The Rotary Club of Raleigh and has served as president of the Marion Club.

Judge Hunter has been honored as Outstanding Public Official by the National Association of County Park and Recreational Officials, McDowell County Citizen of the Year and with awards from Family Services of McDowell County, McDowell Council on Aging, and McDowell County Schools. He has received North Carolina's highest honor, The Order of The Long Leaf Pine.

Bob was educated in the McDowell County Public schools and received his undergraduate and law degrees from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He has been married to his wife, Nancy, for 43 years. They have two daughters, Megan Entriken, and Claire Hunter, and two granddaughters, Elle and Lucy Entriken.

FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

LAKE JAMES STATE PARK SEASONAL OPPORTUNITIES

The busy season at Lake James State Park is about to begin and with it, the park employs dozens of seasonal workers to help keep the park looking great, make sure swimmers are safe and assist the permanent staff with administrative duties. While most positions will have been filled at the time of this publication, potential employees are encouraged to submit an application at any time, which will be reviewed as jobs become available. To find out more, go online to www.ncparks.gov/Jobs/seasonal.php.



LOW LAKE LEVELS

You may have noticed a difference in the scenery during your last visit to Lake James. Perhaps you couldn't put your finger on it, or maybe it stuck out at you like a sore thumb.

Lake James is a lot smaller than usual these days, but fear not, it's all part of Duke Energy's plan to support work being done at the Linville Dam. The power company has lowered the water level in the lake and expects to continue doing so until around the middle of March, depending on how the necessary work progresses. After that, the lake will be allowed to fill itself back up at a natural pace with rainfall and water flow from rivers and creeks.



In the meantime, the low water level will result in the closure of public boat ramps, including the one at Hidden Cove Boat Access.

To get up-to-date information on lake water levels, go to www.duke-energy.com/lakes/levels.asp or call 800-829-5253.

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)

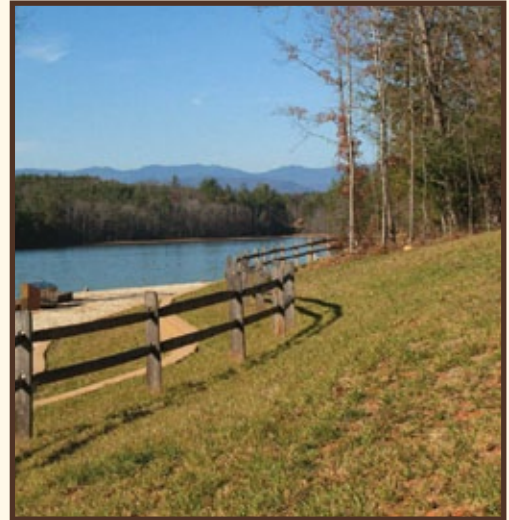
PADDY'S CREEK AREA:

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)



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

- March and April gate hours are 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.
- The campground opens March 1st
- The swimming area opens May 1st
- The concession stand opens in May
- Hidden Cove Boat Access Area will remain closed until water levels are returned to normal

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.