



PARK CELEBRATES 30 YEARS

Thirty years ago, McDowell and Burke counties joined together to have a state park created on Lake James. In a team effort between both chambers of commerce and county commissions, the counties lobbied their state representatives for funding for a park. The park was dedicated in 1987. The original Catawba River Area that features Fox Den Loop, walk-in tent camping sites and Sandy Cliff Overlook is now complemented by the larger Paddy's Creek area, which hosts the Long Arm Peninsula with boat-in camping, drive-in tent camping area, a large day-use area, beach and bathhouse, and several trails.

On Oct. 6, the community came together to celebrate three decades of the park. Elected and appointed local, state and federal government officials attended alongside volunteers, staff, supporters, and business leaders. Park Superintendent Nora Coffey

hosted tours of both the Catawba and Paddy's Creek sides of the property.

Nearly 50 guests gathered at Paddy's Creek picnic area for the bar-b-que lunch and a program from state and local officials and Friends of Lake James State Park. Bob Hunter, vice president of Friends of Lake James State Park, spoke about the outstanding partnership between Burke and McDowell Counties that made the park possible. Hunter, who served in the legislature at the time, was instrumental in passing the authorizing legislation as well as the State Parks Act during the 1987 session. Eric Jenkins, president of Friends of Lake James State Park, spoke about the important Paddy's Creek acquisition in 2004, which added nearly 3,000 acres to Lake James State Park. That acquisition expanded the park to six times its former size and allowed the

conservation of more than 30 miles of shoreline on the 6,500-acre lake in Burke and McDowell counties.

State Parks Director Mike Murphy talked about the State Parks Act, established the same year as the authorization of Lake James State Park, and the funding allotted to the new park upon its authorization that allowed it to be operational far faster than its predecessors in the system. He also thanked everyone who has supported the park through the years, many of whom were in attendance. "Lake James State Park is a special place. When I walk in here, I feel like I am home. So many local community citizens came together to establish this incredible state park, and we are all very thankful for their efforts," he said.

By Katie Hall, Public information Officer, North Carolina Department of Parks and Recreation



FALL COLORS BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, NOV. 5

This might be one of your best chances 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 Earl Weaver 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 12:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 1 o'clock departure.

FALL COLORS BOAT TOUR – FRIDAY, NOV. 10

This might be one of your best chances 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.



WATERFOWL HIKE – SATURDAY, NOV. 11

Many species of waterfowl, including ducks, grebes, loons and cormorants spend the winter months on Lake James and now is a great opportunity to observe them. Ranger Clay Veasey will be your guide as we search for birds from the Paddy's Creek Trail. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly and bring binoculars if you have them. This hike starts from the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. and will be approximately 2 miles in length.

FALL COLORS HIKE – SUNDAY, NOV. 12

There is no better time to hike in the mountains of North Carolina than the fall and with that, arguably no better time to hike at Lake James State Park. So come out and do it! Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at the Catawba River Area to enjoy the park in all its fall glory. Along the way you will discover how the leaves got those beautiful fall colors and what happened to the summer green we grew used to seeing for the last six months. If you wonder what types of trees bring your favorite autumn reds, or which trees bring brown and yellow to the color wheel, this is a hike you won't want to miss. In addition to the color change, tree ID will be discussed along the hike. Meet at the office of the Catawba River Area at 1 p.m.

Continued Next Page

WATERFOWL WATCH BOAT TOUR – TUESDAY, NOV. 14

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 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 1 o'clock.

FALL BIRDWATCHING HIKE – SATURDAY, NOV. 18

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. 19

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 10 a.m.



Continued Next Page



100 MILE CHALLENGE HIKE – TUESDAY, NOV. 28

100 miles ... can you do it? Many park visitors are trying to do just that; hike 100 miles in 2017 to celebrate the centennial of the parks system in North Carolina. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike in late Fall to study the leaves after they have fallen for the year. The 4-mile, moderate hike will trek around the Mill's Creek Trail and return on the Paddy's Creek Trail. Meet at 1 p.m. in the Paddy's Creek Area, near the East Picnic Shelter.

LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR – FRIDAY, DEC. 1

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 Clay Veasey 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 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 a.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.

LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, DEC. 2

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 Clay Veasey 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 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 a.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.

LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, DEC. 6

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 12:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 1 p.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.

Continued Next Page

WINTER PLANT HIKE – SATURDAY, DEC. 16

The holiday season is upon us and the leaves have fallen off the trees. Many folks think there isn't a lot of green left to see when they hike in the winter landscape, but they're in for a surprise. Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he hikes along the Holly Discovery Trail in search of the plants that hold their green coloration even through winter. The hike is approximately .75 miles in length. Please meet at the Holly Discovery Trailhead located in the Paddy's Creek Area at 11 a.m.

ANIMAL TRACK ORNAMENTS – SUNDAY, DEC. 17

Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof to learn about different animal tracks and other signs that can be found around Lake James and make your own animal track ornaments to take home. Come prepared for both indoor and outdoor activities. Meet at the Catawba River Area office at 10 a.m. Please call the park office at (828) 584-7728 for program registration

HOLIDAYS ON THE HOLLY DISCOVERY TRAIL – SATURDAY, DEC. 30

The Holly Discovery Trail is a national award-winning interpretive experience geared for young folks and parents who are seeking outdoor opportunities for their children. The trail also wends its way through a beautiful riparian forest near Paddy's Creek that's full of wildlife. Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead the way around the .75-mile loop trail to point out birds, trees and anything else of interest. Meet at the Holly Discovery Trail parking lot in the Paddy's Creek Area at 10 a.m.



Continued Next Page

LAST CHANCE BIRD HIKE – SUNDAY, DEC. 31

It's the last day of 2017. Are you missing any birds on your annual list? Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this ornithological expedition around the Paddy's Creek Area to see and identify winter birds. Hermit thrushes, brown creepers, hairy woodpeckers and blue-headed vireos will be among our target species. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them and be sure to dress for the weather on the New Year's Eve adventure. We'll meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 9 a.m.

FIRST DAY HIKE – MONDAY, JAN. 1

There is no better way to start off a new year than with a hike at Lake James. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof 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.



NATURE NOTES

The holiday season is upon us, but don't forget to visit Lake James State Park in the midst of all the hustle and bustle. Late fall and early winter are fantastic seasons to hike the trails in search of flora and fauna. The leaves on the deciduous trees have fallen to the ground, opening up the forest to reveal birds and animals that would otherwise remain hidden.

For the first couple of weeks in November, the fall foliage will be more colorful than usual, as the changing colors seem to be late this season.

Food is the driving force dictating when and where animals are active. A poor acorn crop means it will take more time and effort to find food for some animals around the park. White-tailed deer and wild turkeys are acorn lovers, as are gray squirrels, blue jays, wood ducks and black bears. All of these critters will need to find other sources of food to get them through the winter.

The lake's ospreys have moved South for the winter, but this is the season when birders spot more bald eagles using the area. Eagles that are iced out of their summertime fishing grounds fly south until they find open water and the fish that make up 90-percent of their diet. Many species of ducks, as well as loons, grebes, coots and gulls will also take refuge at Lake James.



Land birds like Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice, white-breasted nuthatches, hermit thrushes, eastern towhees and a host of others will form roving flocks that flit through the woods in search of nuts and seeds. The cooperative groups help individual members survive by keeping an eye out for predators. This is also the season of hawks. Sharp-shinned and Cooper's hawks specialize in capturing small birds for food. When a feeding flock of songbirds discovers one of these predators, members of the group team up to create enough of a ruckus to drive the hawk away.

While everyone looks forward to making preparations for the holidays, it's also a good idea to step away for a few hours or even a day to reconnect to the natural world. 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

Alan Scholl - 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 SPIDER: TRAPDOOR SPIDERS

Concluding N.C. State Parks' Year of the Spider, the last group of spiders we will explore are the trapdoor spiders. These members of the Ctenizidae family get their name from the "doors" they construct to cover their burrows.

Female trapdoor spiders, like other spider species, are larger than their male counterparts. Ranging from 1-inch to nearly 3 inches in size, trapdoor spiders are heavy-bodied, with relatively short, robust legs. Trapdoor spiders are not brightly marked like our crab or jumping spiders. They are typically black and hairless, which makes them appear more like a shiny plastic toy than a live animal.

What they lack in colorful appearance, trapdoor spiders make up for in the way they hunt. Imagine walking through the forest around Lake James, searching for food, or a place to hide. You're a forest floor cruising insect, like a beetle, or a cricket. Suddenly, a flash from the corner of your eye and something grabs you. As quickly as you were grabbed, a small door shuts and you're plunged into darkness. You've been grabbed by a trapdoor spider and while you're invited for dinner, you aren't a guest, you're dinner. Female trapdoor spiders construct vertical burrows in which they



Trapdoor Spider

lay in wait for their next meal. The trick to catching their prey off-guard is a small, 1-inch round door, camouflaged with surrounding ground litter. Under this trapdoor, the spider waits for its next meal to walk close enough to pounce on.

*What they lack in
colorful appearance,
trapdoor spiders
make up for in the
way they hunt.*

Traditional, large web-building spiders can be easy to find as you walk the trails at Lake James. Trapdoor spiders are much harder to see. They hide underground in burrows with

camouflage trapdoors after all. With that said, trapdoor spiders can be observed if you look for them at the right time. The male spiders spend most of their time hunting on the forest floor for various insects. The females are best searched for after a hard rain. Being burrow-dwellers, the females are often driven from hiding when the burrow fills up with water.

Little is known about the life-cycle of the trapdoor spider. Most spider species in North Carolina live less than a year. They become sexually mature in the first half of the warm season, breeding in mid- to late summer and then dying as temperatures cool in late fall. It is theorized that because of their robust size, trapdoor spiders can live multiple years, like tarantulas.

Trapdoor spiders are arguably one of the most fascinating spiders found in North Carolina. They aren't commonly encountered, but when they are, they are a fantastic addition to any hike. So, the next time you find yourself hiking in the park after a rain, keep an eye out on the forest floor, you may see one of these impressive spiders.

ASTRONOMY EQUIPMENT DONATED TO PARK

There's no denying the popularity of astronomy programs at Lake James State Park. Throughout the year, Superintendent Nora Coffey hosts evenings in the upper parking lot at the Paddy's Creek Area for participants to gaze at the moon, planets, stars and other heavenly bodies. Oftentimes the crowd of star-gazers swells to more than 50. Coffey is grateful for the expert help from members of several area astronomy clubs. Along with their priceless knowledge, these volunteer educators bring with them sophisticated commercial and homemade telescopes to share the wonders of the night sky with people.

Spurred by the huge public interest in last summer's total solar eclipse, Cleveland County Astronomy Club member, Steve Davis, has donated a state of the art Coronado solar viewing telescope, as well as a previously-owned refracting telescope with an equatorial mount.

Davis, who has been assisting Coffey with her astronomy nights since 2009, donated the equipment in memory of his late friend and astrophotographer Frank Barrett.

Most recently, Davis manned a gem and mineral display at the 14th annual Catawba RiverFest last September.



PARK CELEBRATES ANOTHER SUCCESSFUL RIVERFEST

The 14th annual Catawba RiverFest, Lake James State Park's signature event, enjoyed enthusiastic crowds, new activities and exhibitors, expanded entertainment and food options and perfect weather.

The crowds at RiverFest were bigger than usual for the event which is sponsored by Lake James State Park, Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance and the Friends of Lake James State Park. Part of that enthusiasm may have had to do with the realization of the park's 30-year anniversary (see related story).

"It's very gratifying to see folks come out and celebrate with us," said Park Ranger Kevin Bischof, who coordinates the festival. "The Catawba River and Lake James play such an important role in peoples'

lives here. It's nice to set aside a day to acknowledge that and recommit ourselves to protecting it."

Since 2010, the Friends of Lake James State Park has been there to support the park every step of the way. Friends group volunteers manned the iconic "tin shed" display, encouraging folks to take advantage of the wide variety of outdoor activities available and get involved with the park. "We anticipate this event all year long," said Friends president Eric Jenkins. "RiverFest is our opportunity to get out in front of the public and spread our message on the importance of Lake James State Park to the quality of life of this region. As an organization, we are convinced of the potential this place has to drive regional economic prosperity and outdoor recreation. We

encourage anyone who feels the same way to join us in this effort." With live music, great food, ranger-led boat tours and kayak demos, there was a great vibe throughout the day under the beautiful September sunshine; and lots to look forward to in future Catawba RiverFest celebrations.

Special thanks to all of the event sponsors and partners who donated time, money, goods and/or services, including RiverKeeper Foundation, Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance, Duke Energy, Crescent Communities, Burke County, McDowell Early College, CBS Sports, Codex Sound, Overmountain Cycles, and musical acts: Piedmont Natural Grass and Alan Darveaux with Slight Departure. Also, a big thanks to all of our exhibitors park staff and volunteers.



FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

SAVE THE DATE

2ND ANNUAL LAKE JAMES DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL

If you missed the 2nd annual Lake James Dragonboat Festival, Sept. 30, do yourself a favor and mark your calendar now for 2018. This year 14 teams participated in the event, hosted by the Lake James Healing Dragons club. Hundreds of spectators lined the beach at the Paddy's Creek Area to cheer each of the 20-person teams to the finish line. The big winners were those who will benefit from the proceeds, which were donated to the patient services program at Blue Ridge Cancer Center.



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 Dec. 1 the gate hours change to 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- The Paddy's Creek Area swim beach is closed for the season.
- The Paddy's Creek Area concessions stand and canoe and kayak rentals are closed for the season.
- Lake James State Park is OPEN Thanksgiving Day. The park is CLOSED Christmas Day.

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
- Funded "high volume" concession stand employee for select weekends and holidays

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.