



## POSTER CONTEST

Students at McDowell High School competed in a poster contest to publicize one of Lake James State Park's signature events – the 2016 First Day Hike.

Mindy Hutchins teaches a course in hospitality and tourism to high school upper classmen, focusing on the economic impact of tourism, careers in hospitality and tourism and marketing strategies. For several years, Ms. Hutchins

has directed her students to design a poster to advertise a park event. The park staff examines the entries and selects a winner. Copies of the poster are distributed throughout the community and advertise the January 1st hike.

This year's winning entry was designed by Alexis Effler. Her poster is a horizontal layout, featuring an attractive photograph

of a pair of hiking boots on a moss-covered stump. Within the design elements, Ms. Effler incorporated all of the pertinent information in an easy-to-read layout.

If the 2016 First Day Hike follows in the steps of previous events, it will have been a great success, thanks in part to Ms. Effler's hard work and excellent design instincts.

If you would like to receive our monthly programs list, contact us at [lake.james@ncparks.gov](mailto:lake.james@ncparks.gov). In an effort to reduce idle waiting time before programs begin, please make an effort to arrive a few minutes before the start times listed. Thank you.

### **FIRST DAY HIKE – FRIDAY, JAN. 1**

Make sure you keep your New Year's Eve celebrations tame enough to be bright-eyed and bushy-tailed for what has become a cherished family holiday tradition at Lake James State Park – the First Day Hike. Park Ranger Clay Veasey will shepherd this year's event and 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 holiday tradition. The hike will start at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m.

### **WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JAN. 2**

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 Clay Veasey 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 EXPEDITION – SATURDAY, JAN. 9**

Check out one of the best views on the lake with Park Ranger Kevin Bischof. The Lake Channel Overlook Trail is a moderate, 1.5-mile route through a section of the park that received a restorative prescribed fire in late 2014. 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 10 a.m.

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**LEAVES MAGNIFIED – SUNDAY, JANUARY 10**

Come experience nature in a new way, a magnified way! Nature Magnified is a new program series at Lake James that will be introducing kids to the natural world in a different way. Undoubtedly you've strolled along the trails of lake and experienced the beauty Lake James has to offer, but have you ever seen the natural world magnified? Come join Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a group along the trails of Lake James to explore the leaves of the forest at a different level. The park will supply the magnifying loupes, all you have to do is bring the kids and a sense of exploration. Magnification will turn your walk in the woods into a whole new experience. Because the park has a limited number of magnifying loupes, please call ahead of time to reserve your spot. Reservations can be made by calling the park office at 828-584-7728. This program can be used for the Junior Ranger program and will meet at 1:00 pm at the Holly Discovery Trail parking lot in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park.

**WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JAN. 16**

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.

**FOX DEN LOOP TRAIL HIKE – MONDAY, JAN. 18**

Winter's solitude is deceiving and there's no better place to prove it than the Fox Den Loop Trail. We'll be looking at trees, fungus, birds and anything else that may be out and about. If we're lucky, we might even catch a glimpse of the red foxes that gave the trail its name. Meet Ranger Jamie Cameron for this moderate, 2-1/4-mile hike at the Catawba River Area picnic shelter at 10 a.m. Wear clothing and footwear that will be appropriate for the weather forecast.

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**DISCOVER THE HOLLY DISCOVERY TRAIL – SATURDAY, JAN. 23**

The Holly Discovery Trail is an award-winning trail that offers 18 interactive stations, specifically designed for young people. Meet Park Ranger Jamie Cameron as he leads a hike along this ¾-mile trek and introduces the wonders of Lake James to the next generation of nature lovers. The hike starts at 10 a.m. from the Holly Discovery Trailhead, located in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Bring warm clothes and your imagination and be prepared to discover the Holly Discovery.

**WINTER BIRD HIKE – SUNDAY, JAN. 24**

Hermit thrushes, cedar waxwings, American goldfinches and brown creepers are among the many species of birds that spend the winter at Lake James. Ranger Jamie Cameron will be on hand to lead the hike, spot and identify birds along the way. The hike will take place on the ¾-mile Holly Discovery Trail. Dress appropriately for the weather and meet at the Paddy's Creek Area, Holly Discovery Trail parking lot at 9 a.m.



**SANDY CLIFF OVERLOOK HIKE – FRIDAY, FEB. 5**

Check out one of the best views on the lake with Park Ranger Clay Veasey. The Sandy Cliff Overlook Trail is an easy, 1/2-mile route through a section of the park that received a restorative prescribed fire in late 2014. 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 10 a.m.

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### **WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, FEB. 6**

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 Clay Veasey 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.

### **AFTER THE BURN – SATURDAY, FEB. 13**

It's been two years since Lake James State Park reintroduced fire to the landscape after decades of well-intentioned, but ill-informed suppression. The first prescribed fire in the park's 30-year history took place in February, 2014 in the area traversed by the Fox Den Loop trail and it's a great time to revisit the site to weigh the consequences, both good and bad. We may also assess a more-recent burn unit if the 2016 prescribed fire season goes according to plan. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead the way on this moderate, 2.25-mile hike in search of plants and animals that were affected by the fire. Meet at the Catawba River Area breezeway at 2 p.m.



### **WINTER BIRD HIKE – SUNDAY, FEB. 14**

Looking for a unique way to spend quality time with your Valentine? Hermit thrushes, cedar waxwings, American goldfinches and brown creepers are among the many species of birds that spend the winter at Lake James. Ranger Jamie Cameron will be on hand to lead the hike, spot and identify birds along the way. The hike will take place on the 2.25-mile Fox Den Loop Trail. Dress appropriately for the weather and meet at the Catawba River Area breezeway at 10 a.m.

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**PREDATORS OF LAKE JAMES – SATURDAY, FEB. 20**

Predators come in all shapes and sizes; those with feathers, those with scales and those with fur – each is unique in its own way. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof to learn about some of the predators of Lake James and their adaptations that make them so effective in the hunt for prey. This will be an indoor program and includes a craft activity to design and create your very own predator. Bring your creativity and enthusiasm to the Catawba River Area basement classroom at 10 a.m.

**TREES MAGNIFIED – SUNDAY, FEB. 21**

Come experience nature in a new way, a magnified way! Nature Magnified is a new program series at Lake James that will be introducing kids to the natural world in a different way. Undoubtedly you've strolled along the trails of lake and experienced the beauty Lake James has to offer, but have you ever seen the natural world magnified? Come join Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a group along the trails of Lake James to explore the trees of the forest at a different level. The park will supply the magnifying loupes, all you have to do is bring the kids and a sense of exploration. Magnification will turn your walk in the woods into a whole new experience. Because the park has a limited number of magnifying loupes, please call ahead of time to reserve your spot. Reservations can be made by calling the park office at 828-584-7728. This program can be used for the Junior Ranger program and will meet at 1:00 pm near the East Shelter in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park.

**WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, FEB. 27**

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.



## NATURE NOTES

Like it or not, the middle of winter is upon us. So far the season has been kind, with mild temperatures and plenty of precipitation.

Plants and animals in the park have responded in kind. Many organisms that would otherwise be dormant have been active during this temperate period. Spring peepers have been calling in the mornings and evenings. It's never too early for these tiny frogs to voice their breeding chorus when the conditions are suitable. In fact, spring peepers have been heard at the park every month of the year.



Another surprising critter you might encounter during warm winter nights is the red bat. Red bats are migratory to the Southeast this time of year and start their nightly work shift earlier than most bat species. Sometimes they even fly during daylight hours and their reddish orange fur makes them a familiar species to most folks, whether they know it or not. Red bats are members of the “tree bats” – meaning they roost in dense foliage and under loose bark instead of caves, so they are not susceptible to the “White Nose” fungus that is decimating many other bat species across the eastern half of the country.

Our winter birds have moved in and made themselves comfortable for the season. Eastern bluebirds hang around field edges with mixed flocks of dark-eyed juncos, chipping sparrows and tufted titmice. The lake's nesting pair of bald eagles has already started the courtship process. A recent boat tour on the lake saw the male eagle chasing the female back in Mills Creek. It won't be long before the female lays her eggs and starts the breeding cycle anew.

There's still a lot of green in the woods. Everyone knows about pine trees and their allies keeping their color, but a hike along a trail at Lake James State Park reveals so much more. American holly, dog hobble, mistletoe and ferns and mosses all add a shock of green to the stark winter landscape.

It's beautiful and quiet at the park in winter, so bundle up and do yourself a favor. 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

**Bob Bielitz** - Treasurer

**Paul Braun** - Member at Large

**Annette Bryant** - Membership Coordinator

**Brock Hall** - Member at Large

**George Milner** - Member at Large

**Greg Norell** - Member at Large

**Molly Sandfoss** - Member at Large

**Alan Scholl** - Member at Large

**Jim Williams** - Member at Large

To contact the Friends of Lake James State Park Group please email [info@lakejamesstatepark.org](mailto:info@lakejamesstatepark.org)

# FAMILIAR FACE



It's been more than a year since Chris Sigmon accepted a Maintenance Mechanic I position at Lake James State Park, but the facilities and grounds here have already benefitted many times what one would have thought possible during his first 13 months.

On any given day, Chris might be found building campsites, upgrading facilities, maintaining the roadside landscaping or cutting fallen or hazard trees from the many miles of trails within the park. Additionally, Chris is in charge of supervising the large general utility worker seasonal staff that keeps the park running during the busy summer months. North Carolina State Parks maintenance mechanics must be proficient in a wide variety of fields including carpentry, operating heavy machinery, trail-building and wildland firefighting. They must also be trained to deliver first responder aid and participate in search and rescue missions should the need arise. To say Chris and the rest of the Lake James maintenance mechanics are Jacks-of-all-trades would be an understatement.

Chris was born and raised in Burke County and continues to live there to this day. He has spent the last seven years working for the state; first as a Department of Corrections officer and then with the N.C. Forest Service B.R.I.D.G.E. program, which teaches young criminal offenders skills in forestry services.

"It's pretty awesome to be able to work outside most of the time and use your skills to give park visitors the best experience possible," Chris said. "There are challenges that come with every new project, but we put our heads together and come up with a solution most of the time that everyone can be proud of."



# RANGERS ON PATROL

During 2015, rangers at Lake James State Park issued 20 citations for violations within the park boundary, including;

- Exceeding safe speed - 3
- Driving without a license - 7
- Driving while license revoked – 3
- Driving left of center – 1
- Driving a vehicle in an undesignated area - 2
- Child seat belt violation – 1
- Launching a boat where prohibited - 1
- Fire in an undesignated area – 1
- Unlawful camping – 1

Lead law enforcement ranger Clay Veasey said the purpose for enforcing park rules and state laws is to make Lake James State Park as safe as it can be for the many hundreds of thousands of people who visit each year.

“Considering our most charged offenses were exceeding a safe speed and driving without a license, we ask that folks pay special attention to the 25 miles-per-hour speed limit on all park roads and to make sure they have a valid operator’s license before they get behind the wheel,” continued Veasey. “We are looking forward to ensuring everyone has a safe and enjoyable time at the park in 2016.”

## CATAWBA RIVER AREA CAMPGROUND DELAYED OPENING



It may be winter, but plenty of folks are already making plans for the upcoming camping season at Lake James State Park. There’s a lot to be excited about; the Long Arm Peninsula boat-in campsites will be in the midst of their first full year of availability and a new, 33-site, drive-in campground will open this spring in the Paddy’s Creek Area.

The tried-and-true walk-in campsites at the Catawba River Area will be on a delayed schedule this spring however, as much-needed renovations to the 32-year-old men’s and women’s shower houses are slated to continue through the month of March.

In anticipation of the ongoing construction, the Catawba River Area campground opening will be delayed until April 1st, with the possibility of an earlier or later date depending on how the repair work progresses. For information on campsite availability, call 1-877-7-CAMP-NC or go online to [ncparks.gov](http://ncparks.gov).

# FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

## PREScribed BURNS PLANNED AT PADDY'S CREEK AREA AND LONG ARM PENINSULA



The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and the N.C. Forest Service plan to conduct multiple prescribed burns at Lake James State Park from late-December through April. According to Park Superintendent Nora Coffey, the specific dates of the burns will depend on local weather conditions.

The prescribed burns will be conducted on sections totaling approximately 1,000 acres at the park's Paddy's Creek Area, including on Long Arm Peninsula. Some visitor areas and trails may be temporarily closed during the prescribed burns, and aerial ignition may be used in some instances.

A public discussion about the use of prescribed fire at Lake James State Park was held December 18th.

Prescribed burns are used as a resource management tool in many locations by the state parks system. Some plant communities and animal species rely on periodic fire for their existence. The prescribed burns also reduce the amount of potential wildfire fuel and help protect a park's resources and neighboring landowners if lightning, arson or carelessness sparks a wildfire.

In order to minimize smoke and assure the fire is controlled, the low-intensity, prescribed burn will only be carried out under strictly defined weather conditions of a fire management plan. On the selected day, the burn will begin in the late morning and will likely end by mid-afternoon.



## 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 January and February are 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.
- The Hidden Cove Boat Access is closed.
- The Paddy's Creek Area concessions stand and canoe and kayak rentals are closed for the season.

## EAGLE RELEASED BACK INTO THE WILD



A 4-year-old bald eagle named Stephens was returned back to the wild at Lake James State Park on Nov. 20, 2015. The bird had been discovered two months earlier by a passing boater as it struggled to stay upright along the lakeshore. A local wildlife rehabilitator took the bird in and then sent it on to the Carolina Raptor Center in Charlotte for tests and treatment. There, it was discovered the eagle was infected with West Nile Virus and immediately put on a course of treatment and rehabilitation. When Stephens was fully recovered and ready for release, the ceremony took place at the Paddy's Creek Area swim beach in front of a crowd of well-wishers. Stephens was last seen flying towards Linville Gorge.

## SEASONAL JOBS



It's not too early to consider a summer seasonal position at Lake James State Park. Applications are being accepted to lifeguards, general utility workers and concessions stand attendants. Download a State Government Application for Employment (PD-107) by going online to [www.ncparks.gov](http://www.ncparks.gov) and clicking on the "Get Involved" banner near the top of the page. Follow the prompts to "Seasonal Employment." Once you've printed out an application and filled it out, mail it to Lake James State Park, P.O. Box 340, Nebo, NC 28761 or hand-deliver it to the Catawba River Area office (open Mon-Fri from 9 a.m. until 5 p.m.).

# 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](http://www.lakejamesstatepark.org) or email [info@lakejamesstatepark.org](mailto: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.*