



**NOVEMBER-DECEMBER  
2014**



## **THE 11TH ANNUAL CATAWBA RIVERFEST RECAP**

A cooperative weather forecast and a host of enthusiastic supporters made this year's Catawba Riverfest a smashing success.

Held, Sept. 20 in the lower parking lot at Lake James State Park's Paddy's Creek Area, the 11th annual Riverfest was a celebration of the Catawba River Basin and recognition of its economic and recreational value to the community. Approximately 750 visitors came to the event, which is sponsored by Lake James State Park, Catawba Valley Heritage Alliance and the Friends of Lake James State Park.

"Riverfest is our signature fall event," explained park superintendent Nora Coffey. "And we look forward to hosting all of the organizations that work so hard to keep the Catawba

River Basin clean and beautiful for wildlife and humans. Lake James State Park is a cornerstone to those efforts and we are grateful that so many of our friends and neighbors want to celebrate and support us."

Of course, first and foremost among those with a vested interest in the health of Lake James and the park is the Friends of Lake James State Park and the group showed its support at this year's event in style. Thanks to many volunteer hours and a lot of hard work, the Friends group was able to deliver its message from under the canopy of a stunning new display. The rustic-themed, wooden and tin "shed" was a big hit at Riverfest and the volunteers who manned the display reported heavy foot traffic throughout the day.

"Our new display is a real head-turner," said Friends president Eric Jenkins. "We are very lucky to have members within our ranks who have the skills and resources to donate to make it possible. The display is portable and will serve the group well into the future as we spread our message on the importance of Lake James State Park to the region's quality of life."

With live music, great food, ranger-led boat tours and the release of a rehabilitated red-tailed hawk back into the wild, there was a great vibe throughout the day under the beautiful September sunshine; and lots to look forward to in future Catawba Riverfest celebrations.

If you would like to receive our monthly events list, contact Nora Coffey at [nora.coffey@ncparks.gov](mailto: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.

### **SEARCHING FOR SPARROWS - Sunday, Nov. 2**

Sparrows are often dismissed as “little brown jobs” and left unidentified by all but the most ardent birdwatchers. Ranger Jamie Cameron will try to unlock the secrets to identifying and enjoying these charming little birds. Meet him at the Canal Bridge Boat Access parking lot at 10 a.m. before a short drive the park’s “River Section” a perfect location for seeing many types of sparrows and other birds during winter. Dress appropriately and bring your binoculars.

Note - there are no trails in this area so wear your hiking boots.



### **BALD EAGLE QUEST - Saturday, Nov. 8**

One of the nation’s most iconic and easily identifiable birds, the bald eagle is a symbol of this great country, but how much do we really know about it? What does it eat? Sure it’s big, but how big? Where do they go in the winter? Can you see them at Lake James? All your questions and more will be discussed during this program. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof at the basement classroom at the Catawba River Area at 10 a.m. to learn about the majestic bald eagle.

### **NATURE THROUGH INDIAN EYES - Saturday, Nov. 8**

Centuries ago, the lands around modern day Lake James were home to Native Americans. In order to survive the challenging climate, they had to become masters of all their senses. In this activity for youngsters, Ranger Jamie Cameron will teach how the six senses we all have can enhance your appreciation of Nature. Meet at the Paddy’s Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 2 p.m.

### **TROT AROUND FOX DEN LOOP - Sunday, Nov. 9**

Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this moderate, 2-1/4-mile hike along one of Lake James State Park’s oldest and most beloved trails. See the actual fox den that gave the trail its name. Search for wildlife, both in the trees and on the ground. Learn about the plants and trees that grow in this undulating terrain. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather and comfortable hiking boots. We’ll meet at the Catawba River Area breezeway at 2 p.m.

### **FALL FOLIAGE BOAT TOUR - Saturday, Nov. 15**

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

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**FALL FOLIAGE BOAT TOUR - Sunday, Nov. 16**

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

**LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR - Sunday, Nov. 16**

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 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2 p.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.

**HIKE PADDY'S CREEK TRAIL WITH A RANGER - Sunday, Nov. 23**

Thanksgiving is almost here so why not take an invigorating hike to stretch your legs and remove some of the guilt of overindulging. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your guide on this moderate, 2-mile trek along the lakeshore. On the journey, he'll point out all types of plants, trees, mammals and birds, and review the history of Lake James and its surroundings. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m.

**TURKEY DAY CRAFTS - Thanksgiving Day, Nov. 27**

Before the family comes over and the food is ready, visit Lake James State Park to learn about the bird that was nearly our national icon, the wild turkey. Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at 10 a.m. in the Catawba River Area basement classroom as he discusses some natural history of the turkey as the kids make their very own turkeys out of supplies provided by Lake James itself. There is no age limit so bring the whole family!

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**FALL STROLL ALONG THE LAKE - Saturday, Nov. 29**

What better way to enjoy the holiday weekend than with a hike along the shoreline of beautiful Lake James? Don't worry about all the food you ate on Thanksgiving, come join Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike along the Paddy's Creek Trail to help burn off all of all those Thanksgiving calories. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 2 p.m. Please bring appropriate clothing for the weather and be prepared to walk approximately 2 miles.

**WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE - Saturday, Dec. 6**

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

**OLD HOMESITES TOUR - Sunday, Dec. 7**

Before there was Lake James, the Catawba River and Paddy's Creek were home to communities of farmers. Their legacy remains along the lakeshore in the homesite ruins they left behind and we can learn a lot about life during those times if we consider the structures they built. Join Ranger Clay Veasey on a hike to some of the homesites along park trails. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. for this popular and informative trip back in time.

**WINTER HIKE - Saturday, Dec. 13**

The air is cool and the leaves have fallen from the trees, and what better time of year to enjoy a walk in the woods. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a group of hikers along the Mill's Creek Trail in search of Lake James' winter residents. The hike starts at the Paddy's Creek bathhouse breezeway at 2 p.m. Please bring appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather.



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**WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE - Saturday, Dec. 20**

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.

**CHRISTMAS CRAFTS FOR KIDS -  
Tuesday, Dec. 23**

With the holidays fast-approaching, why not turn to Nature for some inspiration and decorating materials? Ranger Jamie Cameron will have an array of crafts projects prepared for the young ones to immerse themselves in the holiday spirit. Meet at the Catawba River Area basement classroom at 4 p.m. and let's get messy!

**CHRISTMAS EVE HIKE -  
Wednesday, Dec. 24**

If you need a little extra holiday spirit before the big day, join Ranger Jamie Cameron for a peaceful walk through the woods. We'll see holly and mistletoe and a whole lot more on this easy, .75-mile hike around the Holly Discovery Trail. Meet in the Holly Discovery Trail parking area at 2 p.m. before we go merrily along.

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**DAY AFTER CHRISTMAS HIKE FOR KIDS - Friday, Dec. 26**

Too many candy canes and sugar plums yesterday? Let's burn off some of those holiday calories with an invigorating hike along the Holly Discovery Trail. Bring the kids and let them blow off some steam from yesterday's excitement. We'll let them determine our pace. Meet at the Holly Discovery Trail parking lot at 2 p.m.

**WINTER BIRD HIKE - Saturday, Dec. 27**

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



## NATURE NOTES

The changing seasons are as inevitable as the sunrise and sunset, and here at Lake James, Nature is transitioning from autumn to winter. For humans, that means bundling up in heavy clothes before hitting the trails and maybe a warm thermos of apple cider or coffee waiting back in the vehicle for the end of the trek. For wildlife, it means finding new sources of food and shifting periods of activity to allow for the shortening of daylight and cooler temperatures.

There has been a dramatic shift in the bird populations at the park following the fall migration. Gone are the wood thrushes, red-eyed vireos, summer tanagers and ruby-throated hummingbirds of the breeding season. They have all left for warmer climes. Those migrants have been replaced by dark-eyed juncos, golden-crowned kinglets, yellow-bellied sapsuckers and hermit thrushes; all in from the North and perfectly adapted to handle our southern Appalachian winters.

For those critters unable to migrate to escape the cold, other strategies are required. Cold-blooded reptiles and amphibians must weather the season by hibernation underground. It is possible to see some of the heartier species like eastern box turtle, black rat snake and Spring peeper during those few warm and sunny days scattered throughout the season, but for the most part, this is a long stretch of inactivity.

Mammals change their ways during winter too. Some, like white-tailed deer, foxes and coyotes have shed their light summer coats for thicker fur to help them keep warm. Food is at a premium this time of year, so it's a great time to see animals on the move during daylight hours.

For the most part, trees have lost their leaves and understory plants have gone dormant. This makes it easier to observe wildlife because it can no longer hide behind a screen of green. Additionally, any vegetation with remaining fruits, nuts or berries will be in high demand and excellent spots to look for birds and mammals as they take advantage of these high-energy foods.

Late fall and winter see less human traffic at the park, but for those who dress for the weather, the rewards can be great. Hope to see you out on the trail.

### WHO WE ARE

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

### BOARD MEMBERS

**Eric Jenkins** - President

**Robert Hunter** - Vice President

**Mike Sewell** - Secretary

**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

**Alan Scholl** - Member at Large

**Wendell Shelton** - Member at Large

**Jim Williams** - Member at Large

**Ashley Wooten** - Member at Large

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



## MEET THE CAMPGROUND HOSTS



Last year, Lake James State Park instituted a volunteer host program to oversee its 20 primitive campsites at the Catawba River Area. As we come to the end of another successful camping season (the campground closes Nov. 30), park rangers and maintenance staff alike point to the team of dedicated hosts, who have been on duty since March, for making the camping experience at Lake James State Park better than ever.

More than any other hosting team, Art and Tammy Fletcher deserve a nod of gratitude from the park's staff and visitors. With this November marking their second, late-season tour of duty at Lake James State Park, the Fletchers are without doubt the most dedicated members of the volunteer corps.

Hailing from Thorntown, IN, the Fletchers have been camping, in everything from pop-up tents to their current fifth-wheel, for 32 years. Tammy, a retired EMT and medical assistant, and Art, a retired U.S. postmaster, bring a wide range of valuable experience to the Lake James State Park campground.

"We love getting to see the country and we have met so many great people doing this," said Tammy of the couple's nearly full-time campground hosting odyssey across the U.S. "We've come back to Lake James State Park because it's such a peaceful, serene setting. We love the trails and everyone is just so nice to us here."

Ranger Jamie Cameron, the park's volunteer coordinator, praised the Fletchers and all of the other campground hosts for their service. "Tammy and Art are great ambassadors for Lake James State Park," he said. "They are available to answer our campers' questions and concerns, can handle any minor issues that come up and, most-importantly, act as the eyes and ears of the ranger staff when we are elsewhere. The campground host program has been a tremendous asset to the park."



## PRESCRIBED FIRE UPDATE

Regular park visitors are already well-aware of the prescribed fires conducted last season at the Catawba River Area. From February 25 through April 18, Lake James State Park and North Carolina Forestry Service applied low-intensity fires to five separate units totaling 256 acres on park lands in McDowell County.

With stated goals of reducing the threat of catastrophic wildfires and improving wildlife habitat, these first-ever prescribed burns at Lake James State Park were an overall success, especially in the category of restoring historically fire-adapted habitat to the landscape. After experiencing their first significant fire effects in many decades, the response by native vegetation was extremely positive. Plant species that had not been recorded in the units that were burned sprung up from the recently-scorched ground and delighted amateur botanists and the park's natural resources managers.



As the traditional season for prescribed fire approaches, the park is preparing to expand on last year's efforts by reintroducing fire to some sections of the Paddy's Creek Area in Burke County. Within carefully chosen weather parameters, park staff and partners from other state and federal agencies will light off a 109-acre unit that encompasses the southern interior of the Mill's Creek Loop Trail and are also identifying other potential units on Long Arm Peninsula.

Park neighbors and visitors will be notified of impending fire activities that could disrupt usage through media outlets, including radio, print and online. To see the effects of last year's fires, take a hike around Fox Den Loop Trail, Sandy Cliff Overlook and Lake Channel Overlook.



## MAKING A REQUEST



Anyone who reads the Friends of Lake James State Park newsletter knows about the robust schedule of ranger-led programs offered at the park, but did you know you can request your own, tailor-made educational excursion with a ranger?

In addition to their regular, monthly offerings, the rangers at Lake James are also available to lead hikes, visit schools and civic organizations, speak at community meetings and offer their expertise on a variety of environmental and outdoor skills topics. All North Carolina state rangers are certified environmental educators, with 240 hours of classroom instruction, community partnership projects and training in lesson planning. Additionally, each of our rangers at Lake James brings a unique passion for the outdoors that they love to share.

If you teach at a school in McDowell or Burke county, are part of a home-school cooperative, or simply want to learn more about the park and its environment, call the park office at 828-584-7728 to plan your own program with a ranger.



## 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)

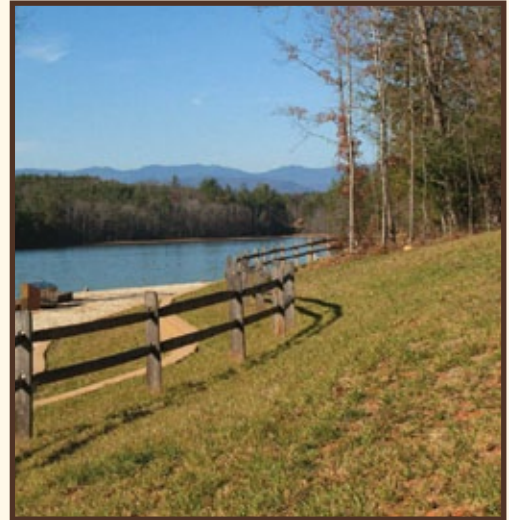
Mill's Creek Trail (3.6 miles, moderate)

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)



# 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

- Gate hours during November are 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. for day use areas (8 p.m. for campground and Hidden Cove Boat Access)
- Gate hours for December are 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.
- The campground closes for the season Nov. 30
- The swimming area and concession stand are closed for the season. Canoe, paddleboard and kayak rentals have ended for the season.
- Hidden Cove Boat Access will be closed Dec. 1 until February 28
- The park will be closed Christmas Day (Dec. 25)

## 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.*