



Colorized Photo of Lake James, Circa 1930

FRIENDS GROUP SCHEDULES PARK OF THE YEAR CELEBRATION

The Friends of Lake James State Park (FLJSP) will host a celebration in honor of our park and its great staff being named North Carolina State Park of the Year for 2014.

On Saturday, June 6, the first 50 people to check in at the Paddy's Creek Area concession stand (opens at 10 a.m.) will receive a free swimming band for the day. In addition, free cake and refreshments will be served at the West Picnic Shelter from 10 a.m. until noon.

"You don't have to be a member of the Friends group to participate in this event," said FLJSP president

Eric Jenkins. "But we sure hope that folks who are as proud of our park as we are will consider joining and supporting the best park in the state."

The date of the celebration also happens to be National Trails Day and visitors are invited to participate in a salamander hike with Ranger Kevin, starting at 9 a.m. at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area. Other ranger-led hikes and boat tours will be scheduled throughout the day. There will be a sign-up sheet for these at the West Picnic Shelter, as well as a variety of activities and crafts for all to enjoy.

The McDowell County Chamber of Commerce and Burke County Tourism Development Authority have shown their support for the park and its role in the community by donating a portion of the refreshments that will be served.

"It's so gratifying to see the overwhelming response from the FLJSP and all of our neighbors regarding the Park of the Year award," said Superintendent Nora Coffey. "We cannot wait to celebrate with everyone on June 6 and show why Lake James State Park is such a special place."

CANOE EXCURSION – SUNDAY, MAY 3

Picture yourself paddling a canoe on a beautiful spring afternoon. Discover the beauty of Lake James State Park from the water with Park Superintendent Nora Coffey. Whether you're an expert paddler or you don't know the difference between starboard and port, we'll provide the equipment and instruction to make it a memorable afternoon. Six park canoes are set aside for this free program and each is capable of carrying two adults and one child. The program starts at 1 p.m. and meets at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. You must pre-register and be prepared to share your journey with a new friend if you are a single and space dictates. Call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.



SPRING HAS SPRUNG! BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, MAY 3

The waters and shoreline of Lake James is bursting with life after the long winter and there's no better way to explore than by boat. Park 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 or it could be sultry, so be sure to watch the forecast and dress appropriately for the day (remember it's always cooler out on the water) 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.

CANOE EXCURSION – MONDAY, MAY 4

The tranquility of paddling a canoe on a quiet morning is one of life's simple pleasures. Discover the beauty of Lake James State Park from the water with Park Ranger Jamie Cameron. Whether you're an expert paddler or you don't know the difference between starboard and port, we'll provide the equipment and instruction to make it a memorable morning. Six park canoes are set aside for this free program and each is capable of carrying two adults and one child. The program starts at 8 a.m. and meets at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. You must pre-register and be prepared to share your journey with a new friend if you are a single and space dictates. Call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.

SPRING BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, MAY 17

The waters and shoreline of Lake James is bursting with life and there's no better way to explore than by boat. Park 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 or it could be sultry, so be sure to watch the forecast and dress appropriately for the day (remember it's always cooler out on the water) 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 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 a.m. departure.

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BEAUTIFUL BUTTERFLIES – SUNDAY, MAY 17

This program will explore the intricate and wonderful world of butterflies. This will be a fun- and fact-filled hike along the Mill Creek Trail in hopes of seeing some of Lake James' early season butterflies. The program starts at the East Shelter in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Please meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at 3 p.m. and be prepared to walk approximately 1.5 miles.

**BREEDING SEASON BIRD HIKE – MONDAY, MAY 18**

Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this hike around the Paddy's Creek Area in search of some of the many nesting birds at Lake James State Park. We'll be looking for Eastern kingbirds, tree swallows, song sparrows, broad-winged hawks, killdeer and many, many more. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them. Reference books and a spotting scope will also be available. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 7:30 a.m.

CANOE EXCURSION – SATURDAY, MAY 23

The tranquility of paddling a canoe on a quiet morning is one of life's simple pleasures. Discover the beauty of Lake James State Park from the water with Park Ranger Kevin Bischof. Whether you're an expert paddler or you don't know the difference between starboard and port, we'll provide the equipment and instruction to make it a memorable morning. Six park canoes are set aside for this free program and each is capable of carrying two adults and one child. The program starts at 9 a.m. and meets at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. You must pre-register and be prepared to share your journey with a new friend if you are a single and space dictates. Call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.

PADDY'S CREEK TRAIL HIKE – SATURDAY, MAY 30

When most folks on their way to the park have their minds on swimming in the refreshing waters of Lake James, let's take a morning stroll along one of the park's most-popular trails – the Paddy's Creek Trail. Park Ranger Earl Weaver, and expert in plant and animal identification, as well as the resident park historian, will guide you on this easy, 2-mile trek. Dress appropriately for the forecast and bring your curiosity for the wonders of Nature. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 9 a.m.

EAGLE/OSPREY CRUISE – SUNDAY, MAY 31

The fish-filled waters of Lake James host nesting pairs of both bald eagles and ospreys and there's no better way to observe them than by boat. Ranger Jamie Cameron will be your captain and guide for this afternoon cruise aboard the park patrol boat as we search for these amazing fish-eating raptors, other types of waterfowl and scenic vistas. The weather could be warm and sunny, so be sure to dress appropriately and wear sunscreen 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 2:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 3 p.m. departure.

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NATIONAL TRAILS DAY/SALAMANDER HIKE – SATURDAY, JUNE 6

June 6th is National Trails Day and there's no better day to hit the trails in search of these little amphibious treasures. The amazing world of salamanders will be discovered as Park Ranger Kevin Bischof leads a hike along different types of salamander habitat, in search of these small, elusive amphibians. Meet at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area and come prepared to journey through woodlands, seeps, streams and pools. Bring appropriate footwear and keep in mind some of these areas may be a little muddy, so keep the new sneakers at home. The hike will begin promptly at 9 a.m.

**FISHING 101 – SUNDAY, JUNE 7**

One of the great attractions of Lake James State Park is the quality fishing opportunities that can be found in the lake. Have you ever wanted to fish, but didn't know where to start? Here is a great opportunity. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway and be prepared to wet a line! All of the fishing gear will be supplied so all you need to do is show up. Since gear will be provided, participation is limited to 8. Our expedition starts at 9 a.m. Please call 828-584-7728 to sign-up for this program.

SUMMER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JUNE 13

The waters and shoreline of Lake James is bursting with life and there's no better way to explore than by boat. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for otters, eagles and scenic vistas. The weather could be blustery or it could be sultry, so be sure to watch the forecast and dress appropriately for the day (remember it's always cooler out on the water) 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 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 a.m. departure.

WHAT'S IN THE NIGHT SKY? ASTRONOMY – SATURDAY, JUNE 13

Back by popular demand, Lake James State Park will be hosting a night of star gazing. Learn some basic star gazing tips and fascinating facts about the night sky. There will be telescopes and binoculars set up for viewing celestial bodies, but feel free to bring your own if you have them. Folding chairs are also recommended. We will meet in the upper parking lot of the Paddy's Creek Area at 8:30 p.m. Register by calling the park office at 828-584-7728.

SUMMER BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, JUNE 14

The waters and shoreline of Lake James is bursting with life and there's no better way to explore than by boat. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for otters, eagles and scenic vistas. The weather could be blustery or it could be sultry, so be sure to watch the forecast and dress appropriately for the day (remember it's always cooler out on the water) 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 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10 a.m. departure.

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RETURN TO THE BURN – SUNDAY, JUNE 14

It's been nearly a year and a half 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. 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 4 p.m.

BIRDING AROUND FOX DEN LOOP – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17

The habitat around the Fox Den Loop is dense forest with plenty of places for breeding birds to nest and raise their young. Join Park Ranger Jamie Cameron for a morning hike along the trail in search of the dozens of species that call it home. Meet at the Catawba River Area breezeway at 8 a.m. with binoculars and a field guide if you have them.

CANOE EXCURSION – MONDAY, JUNE 22

The tranquility of paddling a canoe on a quiet morning is one of life's simple pleasures. Discover the beauty of Lake James State Park from the water with Park Ranger Jamie Cameron. Whether you're an expert paddler or you don't know the difference between starboard and port, we'll provide the equipment and instruction to make it a memorable morning. Six park canoes are set aside for this free program and each is capable of carrying two adults and one child. The program starts at 8 a.m. and meets at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. You must pre-register and be prepared to share your journey with a new friend if you are a single and space dictates. Call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.

CANOE EXCURSION – SATURDAY, JUNE 27

The tranquility of paddling a canoe on a quiet morning is one of life's simple pleasures. Discover the beauty of Lake James State Park from the water with Park Superintendent Nora Coffey. Whether you're an expert paddler or you don't know the difference between starboard and port, we'll provide the equipment and instruction to make it a memorable morning. Six park canoes are set aside for this free program and each is capable of carrying two adults and one child. The program starts at 9 a.m. and meets at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway. You must pre-register and be prepared to share your journey with a new friend if you are a single and space dictates. Call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.

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SNAKES! YESSSSSS – SATURDAY, JUNE 27

“The only good snake is a dead snake”... or so the saying goes. One of the most feared, hated, and misunderstood animals in nature; snakes are found throughout the landscape at Lake James State Park. While there are two venomous and potentially dangerous species, most snakes here are harmless. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof at the Holly Discovery Trail parking area for a hike along the Overmountain Victory Trail. Along the way we'll go through prime snake habitat, discuss the natural history of these legless park residents and, with any luck, see one for ourselves. Please wear sturdy hiking shoes, bring water and be prepared to walk for about an hour. The program starts at 3 p.m.

EDIBLE PLANTS HIKE – SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Ever wonder how Native Americans survived on a diet of meat and fish? They didn't! A deep knowledge of the edible wild plants growing all around them gave aboriginal tribe members and the early explorers that came after them a fighting chance in the harsh, unforgiving mountain environment. Park Ranger Clay Veasey has made it his hobby to learn some of the wild plants of this area that can sustain human life and he wants to share some of his knowledge with you. Meet him at 10 a.m. at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway for an informative hike that could save your life during the Zombie Apocalypse.

NOCTURNAL ANIMALS – SUNDAY, JUNE 28

Late evening is one of the best times to see animals. Diurnal animals can be seen just before they bed down for the night and nocturnal animals can be seen as they start to emerge from their daily slumber. Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof on a hike to the Lake Channel Overlook to discover what animals can be seen and heard as the day leads into night. Meet at the Catawba River Area Office at 8 p.m. and be ready to walk approximately 1.5 miles.



NATURE NOTES

As we near the busiest season of the year at Lake James State Park, it's a good time to soak up the last few days of spring before diving into summer. The last two months have been kind to the plants and animals living in the park. The trees leafed out on schedule with the songbird migration, providing those weary feathered travelers with the caterpillars and spiders they need to fuel the rest of their journey north. Not all neotropical migrants continued onward. Several species stayed behind to nest and rear their young within the boundaries of the park. A morning hike will reveal them singing their territorial songs and though they are harder to find now that the canopy has leafed out, it's still possible, with some persistence and keen eyes, to spot northern parulas, hooded warblers, Louisiana waterthrush, wood thrush and great-crested flycatchers.

White-tailed deer will begin dropping their fawns by mid-May, so motorists inside the park need to be especially careful driving the winding roads. Where there are does, there will be fawns so be equally aware of the deer you don't see when a doe crosses the road. Hikers should also keep baby birds and animals in mind during their treks through the woods. Fawns, turkey hatchlings, baby birds and froglets are out and about, learning how to walk, fly, hop, feed themselves and everything else that goes into being a wild critter. Every year, well-intentioned folks pick up unsuspecting babies with the idea they've been abandoned by their natural mothers or fallen from their nests. In some rare instances that may actually be true, but the majority of the time these babies are perfectly fine and simply waiting for Mom to come back with some food or emerge from hiding after the humans leave. It is always better to leave these babies in their natural environment where they belong, and it is in fact illegal to disturb, move or harm any rock, plant or animal within a state park.

Reptiles and amphibians are active this time of year and it's not uncommon to cross paths with a black rat snake, eastern box turtle or toad when you're out hiking the trails. These animals are living proof of the healthy environment we all enjoy at Lake James State Park. Make sure you're being a good steward of the land and animals by packing out your trash, staying on the established trails and keeping your dog on a leash. Enjoy the season everyone. Hope to see you out on the trails.



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

PARK READIES FOR RESTORATION HARVEST



Travelers on NC 126 in McDowell County can expect to see a big change to the landscape as they pass by Lake James State Park's Catawba River Area in the coming months. Approximately 100 acres of park property on the south side of the highway are slated for a select cut timber harvest.

This will be the third such project for North Carolina State Parks and the first in the West District.

Regional natural resources advisor Marshall Ellis said the location is a prime candidate for thinning out existing white pine and loblolly pine plantations to allow for a more natural landscape to flourish. "The area at Lake James is currently an aging pine plantation with very little biodiversity to speak of," said Ellis. "There are, however, some remnants of the native ecosystem that could benefit greatly if they are freed from competition with the white and loblolly pines that dominate now."

Among those, short-leaf, pitch and Table Mountain pines, white, chestnut and post oaks and a variety of native shrubs, forbs and grasses are expected to reclaim their rightful place in the ecosystem after the timber harvest takes place. To prepare for the logging operation, Lake James State Park staffers have been marking desirable species that are to be spared from being cut. After the pines have been removed, the site will be slated for several prescribed burns in the coming years to discourage pine regrowth and invasive species and stimulate the native, fire-adapted vegetation.

"We are continuing to take a proactive approach in managing the forest at Lake James State Park," said Park Ranger Jamie Cameron, who is the natural resources officer at the park. "The area where the timber harvest will take place does not have any public access points or recreational features to be disrupted, so everything people are used to seeing and doing at the park will remain unchanged. This project will set the stage for a transformation of the ecosystem back to its natural make-up. It's going to look a little rough at the beginning, but it's incredibly exciting to think about what the future may hold."

TAASC TRASH PICKUP



On March 22, more than 25 volunteers, both young and old, with The American Adventure Service Corps made a significant dent in the trash in Lake James State Park along Rock Hill Road. Though this area of the park is not open to day use, the environment is in much better shape now thanks to these dedicated individuals.

FRIENDS AT THE LAKE 5K



Jake Walker



Friends of Lake James State Park board members: George Milner, Robert Hunter, and Alan Scholl

On April 25, area high schooler and Eagle Scout candidate, Jake Walker, organized a 5-kilometer race around the Mills Creek Loop Trail he dubbed the “Friends at the Lake 5K.” Despite cool, rainy conditions, nearly 26 runners braved the elements to support Jake and the Friends of Lake James State Park. Friends group volunteers were on hand to sign up new members and gratefully accept the proceeds from the event, which Jake graciously donated. Thanks Jake and congratulations on a fine event!

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)



2015 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 16 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.com.

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 May and June are 7 a.m. until 9 p.m. (10 p.m. for campground and Hidden Cove boat access)
- * The Paddy's Creek Area swim beach and concessions stand are now open from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. daily
- * Canoe, kayak and paddleboard rentals are now available from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. daily

SAVE THE DATE

2015 Catawba RiverFest
Saturday, September 19, 2015

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.