



## PLANNING UNDERWAY FOR PADDY'S CREEK AREA VISITOR CENTER

Design for a 6,500 square-foot visitor center is well underway, thanks to North Carolina voters, who overwhelmingly supported the Connect NC bond referendum last November. Aimed at infusing \$2 billion into upgrading education in science and math, the state university system, zoo and parks, the bond allotment for Lake James State Park is \$3 million to construct a visitor center that reflects the beauty and diversity of the area. Completion of the project – expected sometime during 2019 – will fulfill a critical component of the park's Master Plan.

The building site will boast commanding views of the lake and the Linville Gorge, along with convenient access to the planned pedestrian bridge across

Mills Creek and yet-to-be-completed Fonta Flora Trail. Once inside, visitors will be able to enhance their park experience through an exhibit hall, retail area, classrooms and public

restrooms. The building will also house staff offices and storage area.

"It's very exciting to have reached the point where ideas are turned

into draft designs," said Park Superintendent Nora Coffey. "We're taking input from a wide range of sources, including the Friends of Lake James State Park and public comments that were collected back in 2006 when the Master Plan was developed. The design phase will run through the end of the year and construction is planned to start sometime in early 2018."

Once completed, the new visitor center will be just another reason Lake James State Park continues to be one of the premier outdoor destinations in the mountain region.



*Lake James State Park Superintendent Nora Coffey (left) and Cynthia Turner of PFA Architects look over potential locations for the future Paddy's Creek Area Visitors Center.*

**LET'S GO BIRDWATCHING – WEDNESDAY, MAY 3**

Spring migrants are still trickling through the Piedmont while many nesters are already on territory. It's a great time to go birding at Lake James State Park. Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will start the hike around the Paddy's Creek day use area at 8:30 a.m. to catch the morning chorus and see the greatest variety, including northern parulas, Louisiana waterthrushes, red-eyed vireos and scarlet tanagers. Bring binoculars and a field guide if you have them and be prepared to hike 1 mile over relatively easy terrain. We will start from the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway.

**SPRING BOAT TOUR – FRIDAY, MAY 5**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are 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, ospreys, 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.

**TINDO 100-MILE CHALLENGE HIKE – FRIDAY, MAY 5**

100 miles ... can you do it? Many North Carolina Park visitors are trying to do just that; hike 100 miles in 2017. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike along the Tindo Loops, which will lead us around the Upper and Lower loops of the trail. Along the way we will discover the early-successional forest that make up that part of Lake James State Park. The hike will be a 3.4-mile, moderate hike so bring sturdy footwear and water and be prepared to walk for about two hours. Meet at 2 p.m. at the mountain bike trail parking area in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park.

**TREE ID HIKE – THURSDAY, MAY 11**

Ever wondered what the different types of trees were as you hiked the trails at Lake James State Park? Armed with field guides and curiosity, Park Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this program along the Fox Den Loop trail to learn more about identifying our native and introduced tree species. The trail is a moderate, 2.25-mile trek so come prepared with comfortable hiking shoes, water and maybe a snack. We'll begin our adventure at the picnic shelter at the Catawba River Area at 10 a.m.

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### **ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE – SATURDAY, MAY 13**

Lake James State Park Superintendent Nora Coffey will be co-hosting with the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club for a night of star gazing. Learn some basic star gazing tips and take home your own star chart. There will be telescopes and binoculars set up for viewing the night sky, 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.

### **SPRING BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, MAY 14**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are bursting with life 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, ospreys, 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.

### **SPRING BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, MAY 17**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are 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, ospreys, 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.



### **APRIL SHOWERS BRING MAY FLOWERS – THURSDAY, MAY 18**

Come experience nature in a new way, a magnified way! Undoubtedly, you've strolled along the park trails 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 wildflower species 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 we have 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 credit and will meet at 1 p.m. at the park office parking lot in the Catawba River Area.

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**SPRING BOAT TOUR – FRIDAY, MAY 26**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are bursting with life 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, ospreys, 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.

**CANOE EXCURSION – WEDNESDAY, MAY 31**

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 swim beach. You must pre-register with a head-count of how many people will be in each boat (sorry, no singles). Please call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.

**JUNIOR RANGER BOOT CAMP – SUNDAY, JUNE 4**

Do you think you have what it takes to join the prestigious ranks of the North Carolina State Park Junior Rangers? If you do, the rangers at Lake James State Park want you! The Junior Ranger program is for kids ages 6-12 who have an interest in nature and stewardship. Join Park Ranger Jamie Cameron to receive your Junior Ranger workbook and participate in several activities that will put you well on your way towards earning your Junior Ranger certificate at patch. We'll meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 4 p.m. You must pre-register for this program by calling the park office at 828-584-7728.

**SPRING BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are bursting with life 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, ospreys, 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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## **SPRING BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 7**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are 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, ospreys, 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.

## **SPRING BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, JUNE 11**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are 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, ospreys, 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.

## **SPIDER STROLL – TUESDAY, JUNE 13**

2017 is the Year of the Spider. Come out to Lake James and celebrate our eight-legged park residents and discover the species that live in the park across a diversity of habitats. As we discover what kinds of spiders live in the park, we will discuss their natural history and the importance they play in the natural world. These interesting critters can be found throughout the park so bring your walking shoes and an open mind as we stroll into the woods on our search. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof at the Holly Discovery trail parking lot at 11 a.m.

## **ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE – SATURDAY, JUNE 17**

Lake James State Park Superintendent Nora Coffey will be co-hosting with the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club for a night of star gazing. Learn some basic star gazing tips and take home your own star chart. There will be telescopes and binoculars set up for viewing the night sky, 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.



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**SUMMER BOAT TOUR – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21**

The waters and shoreline of Lake James are 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, ospreys, 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.

**FOX DEN LOOP HIKE – WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21**

It's early summer and there's no better time or place to enjoy the cooler mornings than the Fox Den Loop Trail. We'll be looking at wildflowers, trees, insects, 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 9 a.m. Wear clothing and footwear that will be appropriate for the weather forecast.

**CANOE EXCURSION – THURSDAY, JUNE 29**

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 swim beach. You must pre-register with a head-count of how many people will be in each boat (sorry, no singles). Please call 828-584-7728 and sign-up today.



## NATURE NOTES



The frantic business of raising babies is evident everywhere you look this time of year. From fish to salamanders to birds to bears; all energy is focused on propagating the species.

From mid-May through the end of June, white-tailed deer will be dropping their fawns. During the first months of life, baby deer are covered with white spots on a reddish-brown background. When they are standing in the middle of a green field, it's hard to understand why Nature would

favor such a color scheme, but what's obvious against green grass becomes invisible in the dappled sunlight and organic shades of brown within the forest.

Wild turkey hens are shepherding their broods around the park. The first few weeks are a dangerous time for a baby turkey; nearly every predator in the forest wants to make them a snack and the possibility of a cold, hard rain can easily wipe out a whole generation of birds. As they quickly grow and develop hard feathers, young turkeys (called poults) become less vulnerable and more likely to survive and perpetuate the species. Later in the summer, hens will consolidate their remaining poults into large nursery flocks with several moms keeping watch and teaching the youngsters how to find food, avoid predators, find shelter and do other turkey-like things.

Songbirds of many colors and stripes have hatched out babies of their own and though it's very difficult to find the nests of these musical migrants, the parents are easy to spot as they zip around the forest in search of insects and spiders to feed their hungry nestlings.

Walking quietly along the lakeshore, you might look down into the clear water and spot a round divot of sand or small stone and a single fish treading in the middle. These are the nests of bluegills and bass, with the females protecting their eggs or young fry.

Early morning and early evening hikes are best to see the most animal activity during the months of May and June so be sure to make time to come see the show. 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

**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](mailto:info@lakejamesstatepark.org)

## YEAR OF THE SPIDER

Spinning on to our next group of spiders for the Year of the Spider is the orbweavers. From their physical characteristics to their webs, orbweavers are some of the most recognizable spiders in the woods. As the temperatures warm up, orbweavers become more active and begin building their characteristic orb-shaped webs, which can be seen around the house, garden and forest. Typically, questions and fears involving spiders are centered around two iconic species; the brown recluse and the black widow. However, neither of these are found in the orbweaver family.

Physically, orbweavers can be daunting spiders. Some of the of the smallest orbweavers can fit on a nickel, but some of the largest can have a leg span the size of baseball. The most notable part of an orbweaver is its abdomen. It can be stripped, spotted or mottled, with colors ranging from red, yellow, green,

brown, white and orange, in combinations that help camouflage them against leaves, lichen, bark and even bird droppings. This diversity of coloration isn't the only thing that makes orbweavers unique; the shape of their abdomen can range from a simple sphere to triangular and may even include spiny projections.

Orbweavers get their name from webs they construct. These webs are constructed for trapping prey such as flies, moths, butterflies, mosquitos and any other insect that happens to land or fly into them. Unfortunately, if you are the first hiker of the morning down any given trail, you've inevitably experienced an orbweaver's masterful work on your face and hair. But don't fret, you aren't on their menu.



Arrow-Shaped *Micrathena* – *Micrathena Sagittata*

around or nearby to catch insects that are attracted to the light. It is important to understand that while orbweavers commonly build webs around the outside of houses, they rarely do so inside a house. There isn't any food to catch inside a house.

The next time you find a web in the wood, take the time to see who made it. Spend some time watching and observing. If you're lucky you will witness the architect hard at work. If you are very lucky, you may see an unfortunate insect fly into an orbweaver's web and witness exactly why these spiders are so neat.



Yellow Garden Spider – *Argiope Aurantia*

Orbweavers inhabit wooded areas, meadows, fields, buildings and gardens. Because orbweavers construct their webs to catch flying insects, one of the best spots to do so is where flying insects are abundant; porch lights. If you have a porch or security light at your house, an orbweaver has inevitably built its trademark web



## 2016 CITATIONS REPORT

During 2016, rangers at Lake James State Park and other law enforcement agencies issued 20 citations for violations within the park boundary, including;

- Driving without a license - 5
- Possession of alcohol in a state park - 1
- Littering - 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.

“Overall, we were very pleased with the way visitors conducted themselves last year. We ask that folks continue to 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,” said Veasey. “We are looking forward to ensuring everyone has a safe and enjoyable time at the park in 2017.”



## STORYWALK COMES TO LAKE JAMES

**StoryWalk** is a book and a walking path combined. The idea started in 2007 to help people enjoy reading while getting exercise in the great outdoors. Enjoy *Diary of a Spider* along the Sandy Cliff Overlook trail in the Catawba River Area of the park. StoryWalk will be on display May 15-31, so don't miss out.



## STATEWIDE STAR PARTY

Lake James State Park hosted the **Statewide Star Party** on Saturday, April 22. Even with though the skies were gray a crowd showed up to hear Jeff Whisnant, of the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club (CVAC), give a talk on meteorites, which included actual space rocks for folks to see. The Catawba Valley Astronomy Club has been assisting Lake James State Park with its astronomy program for eight years now and the club just celebrated its 40th anniversary. Happy anniversary and a big thank you to the CVAC for all that they do!



## MTA TRIATHLON

Don't forget to register for the 8th annual **McDowell Trails Association Triathlon**, originating at the Paddy's Creek Area swim beach, May 20th. Whether you're a first-timer or a multi-sport event veteran, this 750-meter swim, 22-mile bike and 5-kilometer run is a fantastic event. To register online, go to [www.mtatriathlon.com](http://www.mtatriathlon.com).





# FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

## SAVE THE DATE

Volunteer to help clean up the lakeshore on Saturday, May 6 during the **Keep McDowell Beautiful Catawba Side Lake James Clean Up**. Enjoy a day at the lake and feel good about helping to keep it clean. All supplies will be provided at the Black Bear Public Boat Access from 8 a.m. until 1 p.m. Pre-register by with Matt Burneisen by calling him at 828-652-7172 ext. 352 or email [mrburnei@ncsu.edu](mailto:mrburnei@ncsu.edu).

The **14th Annual Catawba RiverFest** will be Sept. 16. The Friends of Lake James State Park is seeking volunteers to serve on the festival planning committee. Vendors and exhibitors are also being sought for this family-friendly event. Consideration will be given to those with a connection to the Catawba River Basin and/or Lake James. To inquire about these opportunities and other with the Friends group, email [info@lakejamesstatepark.org](mailto:info@lakejamesstatepark.org).

On Sept. 30, the second annual **Lake James Dragon Boat Festival** will take place. Stay tuned for more information on this fun and inspiring event. For more information, call 813-426-3544 or visit [lakejamesdragonboat.com](http://lakejamesdragonboat.com).



## 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 May and June are 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.
- The Paddy's Creek Area swim beach opens May 1, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. – swim at your own risk. Lifeguards will be on duty starting May 26 (swimming fees will apply).
- The Paddy's Creek Area concessions stand, including canoe and kayak rentals will be open weekends only, beginning May 6 – 21. Starting May 26, the concessions stand/canoe and kayak rentals will be open seven days a week, beginning at 10 a.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.*