



RIVERFEST RECAP

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

Held, Sept. 19 in the lower parking lot at Lake James State Park's Paddy's Creek Area, the 12th annual Riverfest was a celebration of the Catawba River Basin and recognition of its economic and recreational value to the community. Approximately 700 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 once again showed its support at this year's event. The Friends group volunteers manning the iconic, rustic-themed, wooden and tin "shed" reported heavy foot traffic throughout the day.

"Most of the year our group is behind the scenes," 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 our supporting work possible. Riverfest is our opportunity to get out in front and 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 programs list, contact us at lake.james@ncparks.gov. In an effort to reduce idle waiting time at all programs, please make an effort to arrive a few minutes before the times listed. Thank you.

HOLLY DISCOVERY TRAIL HIKE – TUESDAY, NOV. 3

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



GOBBLE! GOBBLE! WILD TURKEY STORY TIME – SATURDAY, NOV. 7

Arrow-shaped footprints lead a young backyard naturalist to a flock of funny-looking birds with big, strong feet: Wild Turkeys! Join Park Supt. Nora Coffey in the basement of the Catawba River Area office at 10 a.m. for story time and crafts. This program is most suitable for families with children ages 3-7. Please register by calling the park office at (828) 584-7728.

GETTING TO KNOW EAGLES – SATURDAY, NOV. 7

One of the most iconic and easily identifiable of North American birds, the Bald Eagle is a symbol of our great nation. But what does it eat? Sure it is big, but how big? Where do they go in the winter? They eat fish, but what else? Can you see them at Lake James? All these questions and more will be discussed during this program. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof at the East Picnic Shelter located in Paddy's Creek Area at 3 p.m. for a short hike and to learn about the beautiful Bald Eagle.

MILL'S CREEK HIKE – SUNDAY, NOV. 8

Early November is a great time to walk through Lake James State Park in search of the park's furry and feathered residents. The leaves have mostly fallen, but their aroma still hangs in the air as many of park's animals are easily seen throughout the day. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike along the Mill's Creek Trail to see what animals can be found during Fall. The hike starts from the East Picnic Shelter in the Paddy's Creek Area at 2 p.m.

FALL COLORS AND TREE ID HIKE – FRIDAY, NOV. 13

There is no better time to hike in the mountains of North Carolina than the fall, and with that, arguably no better time to hike at Lake James State Park. So come out and do it! Meet Park Ranger Clay Veasey at the Paddy's Creek Area to enjoy the park in its fall glory. Along the way you will discover how the leaves got their beautiful fall colors, and what happened to the summer green we grew used to seeing for the last couple of months. Wondering what types of trees bring your favorite autumn reds, or which trees bring brown and yellow to the color wheel so many love about fall? In addition to the color change, tree ID will be discussed along the hike. Meet at the Bathhouse Breezeway of the Paddy's Creek Area at 10 a.m.



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LOONS OF LAKE JAMES BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, NOV. 14

Lake James is a wintering spot for dozens of common loons coming from their northern nesting territories. On quiet, still mornings you can often hear their iconic cries echoing across the water. Join Ranger Clay Veasey aboard the park's patrol boat in search of these graceful waterbirds and others that call Lake James home during the winter. Registration is required and only the first eight respondents will get to enjoy this unique opportunity. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter at Paddy's Creek Area at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2 p.m. departure. To register, call the park office at 828-584-7728.



FALL FOLIAGE BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, NOV. 15



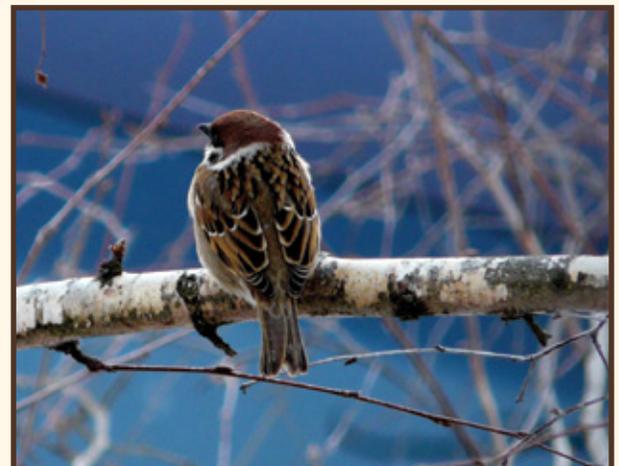
This might be your last chance to experience the fall foliage season before winter takes a firm grip and what better way to enjoy it than by boating around beautiful Lake James. Join Ranger Earl Weaver aboard the park patrol boat as we seek out the reds, golds, purples, and oranges of autumn. Only eight spaces are available and pre-registration is required. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to save your spot. Meet at the East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2 o'clock departure.

SEARCHING FOR SPARROWS – SUNDAY, NOV. 22

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 1 p.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.

AUTUMN HIKE TO THE LAKE – SUNDAY, NOV. 22

The air is cool and the leaves have fallen from the trees; 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 Paddy's Creek Trail in search of Lake James' winter residents. The hike starts at the Holly Discovery Trail parking lot in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Be there at 11 a.m. and please wear appropriate clothing and footwear for the weather.



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CANOE EXCURSION – MONDAY, NOV. 23

Paddling Lake James during this quiet season can be quite rewarding. With less boat traffic on the lake, otters are more confident. It's also a great time to see migrating waterfowl and terrestrial critters on the move at the water's edge. Ranger Jamie Cameron will lead this 1-hour trip to the mouth of Paddy's Creek and back. Bring clothing that's appropriate for the weather and perhaps a snack and a drink. The park will provide everything else. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. This program is limited to the first 8 people to register and you must be 7-years-old or above. Call (828) 584-7728, to save your spot.



WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE – SATURDAY, DEC. 5

Many species of waterfowl, including ducks, grebes, loons and cormorants spend the winter months on Lake James and now you have an opportunity to observe them in their element. Ranger Earl Weaver will be your captain and guide aboard the park patrol boat as we search for birds. The weather could be blustery, so be sure to dress warmly if you are one of the eight lucky participants. Registration is required and available on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 to reserve your spot. Meet your captain at the Paddy's Creek Area, East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing prior to departure promptly at 2 o'clock.

WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE – THURSDAY, DEC. 10

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 Jamie Cameron 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 promptly at 10 o'clock.

WINTER PLANT HIKE – SATURDAY, DEC. 12

The holiday season is upon us and the leaves have fallen off the trees. Many folks think there isn't a lot of green left to see when they hike in the winter landscape, but they're in for a surprise. Join Park Ranger Kevin Bischof as he hikes along the Holly Discovery Trail in search of the plants that hold their green coloration even through the winter. The hike is approximately .75 miles in length. Please meet at the Holly Discovery Trailhead located in the Paddy's Creek Area at 10 a.m.



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WHO WAS HERE? – SUNDAY, DEC. 13

What better way to enjoy a cool afternoon than with a hike along the shoreline of Lake James? Join Ranger Kevin Bischof as he leads a hike along the Paddy's Creek Trail to discover through tracks, scat and other signs, who has been in the woods. 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 – TUESDAY, DEC. 15

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 12:45 p.m. for a briefing prior to departure promptly at 1 o'clock.

LIFE ON LAKE JAMES – SATURDAY, DEC. 19

Bald eagles? Yes. Otters? Sure. Black bears? Yup. Bobcats? You betcha. Lake James and the land surrounding it are a paradise for wildlife. Winter is an excellent time to hit the woods and search for critters that can be easier to see now than any other season. Join Ranger Jamie Cameron for a hike on the Paddy's Creek Trail, with plenty of views of the lake and great habitat for birds and animals. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 9 a.m.



JUNIOR RANGER BOOT CAMP – SUNDAY, DEC. 20

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 2 p.m. You must pre-register for this program by calling the park office at 828-584-7728.

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ANIMAL TRACK ORNAMENTS – MONDAY, DEC. 21

Join Park Supt. Nora Coffey to learn about different animal tracks and signs that can be found around Lake James and make your own animal track ornaments to take home. Meet in the basement of the Catawba River Area office at 10 a.m. Please call the park office at (828) 584-7728 for program registration.



FOX DEN LOOP TRAIL HIKE – SATURDAY, DEC. 26

Learn the difference between Red Fox and Gray Fox on this moderate, 2.2-mile hike. Of course, there'll be lots more to observe and learn about along the way with Park Supt. Nora Coffey leading the way. Be sure to wear comfortable hiking shoes and dress appropriately for the weather. Meet at Catawba River Area office at 2 p.m.

EVERGREENS IN WINTER – SUNDAY, DEC. 27

Evergreen trees offer a sensory overload! Through these experiences, children will touch, smell, see, hear and taste

the season of winter. These activities are most appropriate for families with children ages 3-7. Meet Park Supt. Nora Coffey in the basement of the Catawba River Area office at 2 p.m. and be prepared for both indoor and outdoor activities. Please call the park office at (828) 584-7728 for program registration.

WINTER WATERFOWL CRUISE – TUESDAY, DEC. 29

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 12:45 p.m. for a briefing prior to departure promptly at 1 o'clock.

1ST DAY HIKE – FRIDAY, JAN. 1

Come and take part in the tradition at North Carolina state parks by participating in the annual 1st Day Hike. What better way to start the year than with an invigorating trek along a beautiful trail at Lake James State Park? Join Ranger Clay Veasey on the Paddy's Creek Trail and bring the whole family for what promises to be a morning of camaraderie and learning. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10 a.m. Wear clothing appropriate for the weather and bring a clean slate.

NATURE NOTES

The transition from fall to winter in the park is often one of frantic activity among the feathered and furred residents. These may be the last few days when food is available in abundance for many species.

Depending on the year, acorns can be a significant portion of the fall and winter diet for many critters. White-tailed deer, wood ducks, wild turkeys, gray squirrels, blue jays, mice and black bears all eat oak acorns when given the opportunity. During some years, nearly all the oak trees in a region will produce huge crops of acorns and wildlife flourishes. Other times, only a few select trees will bear any nuts and those become hotbeds of animal activity. During your next hike at the park, try to notice which oaks have acorns and discern the tracks, scat and other evidence of animals foraging under the all-you-can-eat buffet of the woods.



As the leaves drop from the trees visibility improves within the forest interior. Birds that were once hidden amid a wall of foliage are easy to spot. Woodpeckers are especially entertaining to watch during the cooler weather. The area around Lake James has five resident species; downy, hairy, red-bellied, pileated and northern flicker. Red-headed woodpeckers are occasionally seen during fall migration and yellow-bellied sapsucker is a wintertime visitor. Is it possible to see seven different types of woodpecker in one day at Lake James State Park? Yes. Has anyone ever done it? Probably not, but early November would be the best chance to do it if one was so inclined.

Most of the park's reptiles and amphibians will have gone dormant for the season, but some frogs and salamanders remain active through much of the year. Spring peepers will still sing on warm winter nights and fence lizards, skinks and aquatic turtles will take advantage of sunny afternoons to bask on warm rocks and logs.

If you really want to see and know the park and its landscape, this is the time of year to explore it. 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

STATE OF THE PARK



As we come to the end of the year, I would like to thank everyone who visited Lake James State Park in 2015. The past 12 months have been hugely successful, thanks in large part to the hikers, mountain bikers, swimmers and fishermen that love the park and take advantage of the many outdoor recreational opportunities it provides. Without you folks there wouldn't be any incentive to protect and preserve the great outdoors in our little corner of McDowell and Burke counties. Your attendance and participation, day-in and day-out, proves how important Lake James State Park is to the fabric of this community. The staff here takes great pride in that relationship and looks forward to forging even stronger bonds with our neighbors, one-time users and park "regulars" in the year to come.

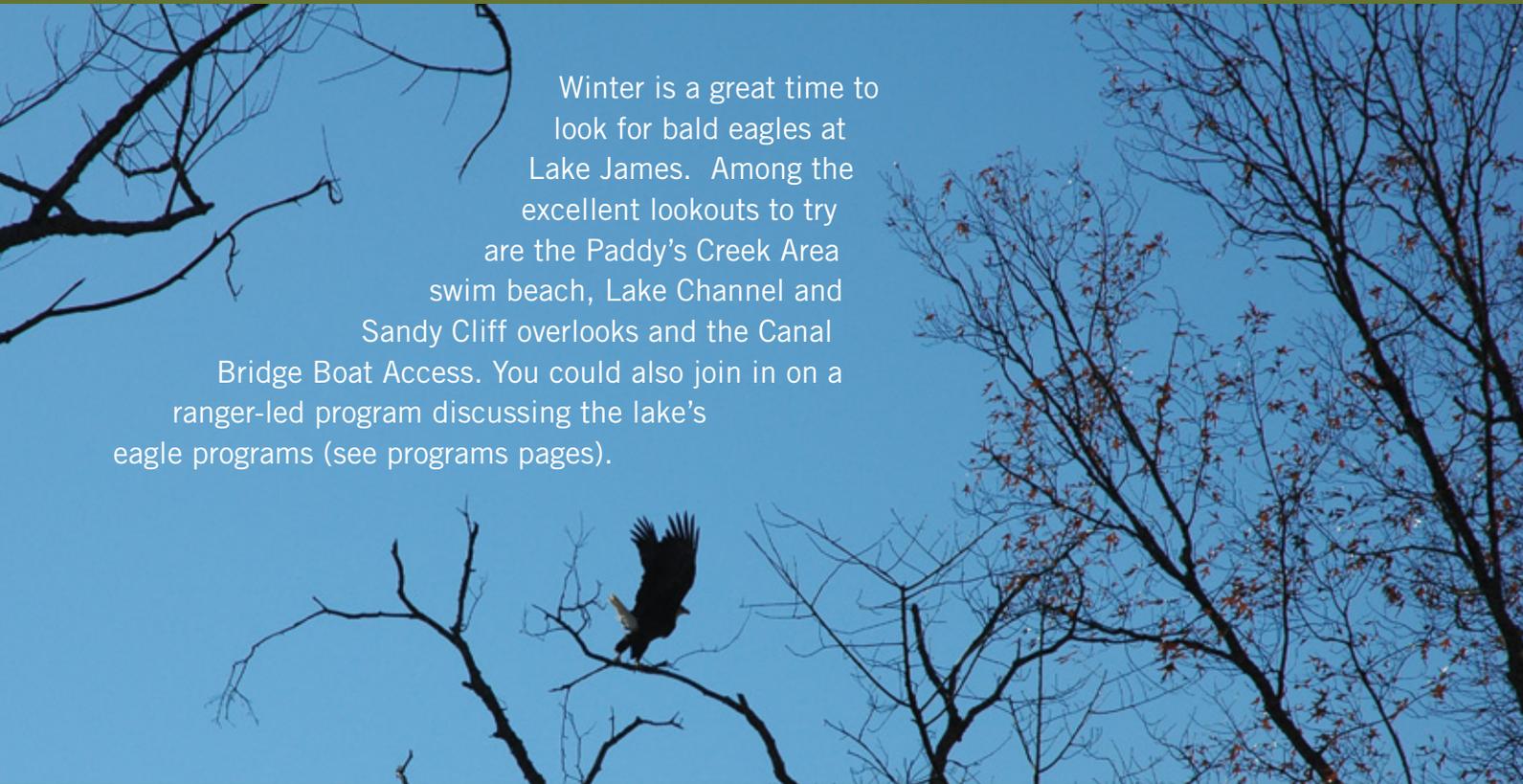
At the upcoming North Carolina State Parks superintendents' meeting I will give up the honorary hiking staff that designates the reigning Park of the Year, which Lake James was awarded at the end of 2014. I know there are other deserving parks among the 41 facilities that make up the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, but I admit to feeling quite partial to these 3,514 acres along the beautiful Lake James shoreline and the incredible staff that has been so dedicated to making the park as enjoyable and safe as it can possibly be for hundreds of thousands of visitors every year. I can't promise we'll win Park of the Year for 2016, but I guarantee we'll always be in the running as long as we have the support of the community and the seemingly tireless maintenance mechanics, rangers and office assistants who work behind the scenes at Lake James. I would be remiss to neglect the wonderful seasonal staff we've been so fortunate to hire in recent years. From general utility workers, to concession stand cashiers, to lifeguards to naturalists; these are the folks who keep this park operating at a high level during the heavy visitation months of summer. Without them, the park would be overwhelmed on weekends like the past Memorial Day, during which we hosted a record-breaking 20,000 people over a three-day span.

Looking forward, I expect 2016 to further expand the park's offerings. We will open a new, drive-in campground at the Paddy's Creek Area to go along with the new boat-in campsites that opened August 1st, we will improve our rental fleet with new paddleboards and we will renovate the Catawba River Area campground shower house. Next year will also mark the beginning of the North Carolina State Parks Centennial Celebration, with special events scheduled at each and every park and recreational area across the state.

With your continuing support and involvement and the help of citizens' groups like the Friends of Lake James State Park, the future is bright. I look forward to seeing you and your families enjoying the great outdoors.

Nora Coffey
Park Superintendent
Lake James State Park

SEASON OF EAGLES



Winter is a great time to look for bald eagles at Lake James. Among the excellent lookouts to try are the Paddy's Creek Area swim beach, Lake Channel and Sandy Cliff overlooks and the Canal Bridge Boat Access. You could also join in on a ranger-led program discussing the lake's eagle programs (see programs pages).

MOWING THE FUTURE



In the hopes of one day converting the overgrown right-of-way south of the Catawba River spillway into a native grasses prairie, Lake James State Park rangers Earl Weaver and Clay Veasey spent two days in October bush-hogging the site. Interest in restoring native grasslands to the North Carolina landscape has grown in recent years as studies suggest how important this now-rare habitat is for wildlife.

FALL FOLIAGE



Muscadine Grape Vine



Red Maple



Red Oak

Sweet Gum



Red Maple



LJSP TRAILS



CATAWBA RIVER AREA:

Fishing Pier Trail (0.3 mile, easy)

Fox Den Loop Trail (2.25 miles, moderate)

Lake Channel Overlook Trail (1.5 miles, moderate)

Sandy Cliff Overlook Trail (0.5 mile, easy)

PADDY'S CREEK AREA:

Holly Discovery Trail (0.75 mile, easy)

Mill's Creek Trail (3.6 miles, moderate)

Overmountain Victory Trail (2.0 mile, moderate)

Paddy's Creek Trail (2.0 miles, moderate)

Tindo beginners' mountain bike trail (4.0 miles)

Wimba intermediate mountain bike trail (11.25 miles)

PARK GENERAL INFO

- Gate hours during November are 7 a.m. until 7 p.m. Hours during December are 7 a.m. until 6 p.m.
- The Hidden Cove Boat Access is closed starting Dec. 1.
- The Paddy's Creek Area concessions stand and canoe and kayak rentals are closed for the season.

SAVE THE DATE

- Jan. 1 – First Day Hike (See programs schedule)



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 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.