



FRIENDS GROUP MOVES TO IMPROVE BEACH ACCESS FOR ALL

It's no secret Lake James State Park is the place to beat the heat during summer. Folks from all over the Piedmont and mountains of North Carolina spend weekends at the park to enjoy the 800-foot beach and swimming area; a WNC Riviera if you will.

A gap in equal access to the beachfront has now been addressed, with the recent delivery of a "beach wheelchair," purchased with funds provided by Friends of State Parks and Friends of Lake James State Park. The unit will be made available on loan to anyone physically unable to navigate the soft beach sand and the cooling waters beyond.

The Friends of State Parks group donated \$1,000 of the unit's \$1,500 price tag and the Friends of Lake James donated \$500. Plans are in the works to have a second beach wheelchair by the start of next year's swim season. The park also hopes to install a wheelchair accessible beach mat/walkway to make life easier for anyone with a conventional wheelchair, baby stroller, wagon, etc.

Individuals wishing to use the wheelchair will need to leave a photo ID with the concessions stand staff, to be held there until its return.

"We've been wanting to provide this service for awhile, so I'm happy we are finally able to," said Park Superintendent Nora Coffey. "I'm grateful to FLJSP and FSP for making it possible."

It will be made available as a loaner to anyone who needs it. Individuals wishing to borrow it will need to leave a photo ID. The park hopes to add a second beach wheelchair by next season along with an accessible beach mat/walkway to make it easier for



NATURE NOTE

What could be better than summer at Lake James? Sunny skies, emerald forests, clear, cool streams and a lake full of recreational possibilities. For those who take the time to look beyond the beach, sand, and waves, the natural world is overflowing in abundance.

A short hike along any of the park's trails will reveal a seemingly endless list of plants, insects, reptiles and amphibians, birds and mammals.

Nesting season for birds has moved into the fledgling phase. Parent birds that have successfully hatched and reared their broods to the point of leaving the nest must try to provide food and shelter to their now independent-minded and adventurous offspring. That fledglings have achieved at least a rudimentary mastery of flight only adds to the similarities to teenagers with a new driver's license. Leaving the nest and being functionally able to get around does not translate into full independence (see again human teenagers) and adult birds spend all of their waking hours foraging food and delivering it to their scattered offspring. Are you familiar with the phrase "herding cats"?



All this activity is even more remarkable when you consider that the vast majority of nesting attempts end up in failure. Breeding success studies on wild turkeys, which nest on the ground and lay large clutches of up to 12 eggs, prove the struggle is real. A staggering 70% of eggs do not survive to hatching. Bad weather events, inexperienced parents and egg-eating predators keep success rates low. For those that do hatch, another 70% will not make it to their first birthday. Annual brood surveys in western North Carolina have averaged between 1 and 2 poults per hen turkey that are still around by the end of August. It ain't easy being a turkey.

All that to say, appreciate the life around you as you enjoy the outdoors. The fact there is so much of it here for us to enjoy is a testament to how special the protected areas around Lake James are and how critical they are to biodiversity and a healthy environment.

Until next time, see you out on the trail.

WHO WE ARE

A group formed in 2010, made up of dedicated people 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.

BOARD MEMBERS

- Eric Jenkins** - President
- Annette Bryant** - Vice President
- Mike Sewell** - Secretary
- Robert Hunter** - Ex Officio Member
- Randall Conley** - Member at Large
- George Milner** - Member at Large
- Greg Norell** - Member at Large
- Molly Sandfoss** - Member at Large
- Jeff Stark** - Member at Large
- Mickey Lewis** - Member at Large
- Bryant Lindsey** - Member at Large
- Teena Fox** - Member at Large
- Pete Colwell** - Member at Large
- Nancy Connelly** - Member at Large

To contact the Friends of Lake James State Park Group please email info@lakejamesstatepark.org

YEAR OF THE TRAIL

Summer hiking in the South requires some forethought if one intends to come off the trail healthy and happy. Heat and bugs are the primary co-conspirators when it comes to ruining your day. Making sure there's an ample supply of drinking water to stay hydrated and wearing lightweight clothes that cover exposed skin, in conjunction with effective insect repellent, are simple ways to stay comfortable during your outdoor forays. Throw in a snack, some binoculars for nature watching and an adventurous companion and you've got the makings of a memorable visit to the park.

Lake James State Park has myriad hiking trails and everyone has a favorite.



Photo Credit: Annette Bryant

CAMP INFERNO



North Carolina State Parks participated in Marion Fire Department's weeklong Camp Inferno for McDowell County middle and high schoolers. On Aug. 2 the Visitor Center parking area turning into a temporary landing zone, as N.C. Forest Service brought in its district helicopter and a dozer equipped for wildland firefighting for a day of education on wildfire and controlled burning in western North Carolina.

CAMP INFERNO

***“We showed them some of the tools we use and had the kids run through activities with the engine and talked about the helo and dozer,”
“I talked to the kids about some of the fire ecology and why we light fire on purpose in parks when and where it’s appropriate.”***

- Andrew Slack

Ecological Burn Coordinator for N.C. State Parks



INTRODUCING PARK NATURALIST HERIBERTO IRIZARRY

Hola a todos. Mi nombre es Heriberto Irizarry Camacho. Tengo 39 años. Soy de Lajas, Puerto Rico. Poseo un Bachillerato en Ciencias en Biología de la Universidad de Puerto Rico Recinto Universitario de Mayagüez. Trabajé por nueve años como supervisor, coordinador de guías, guía y biólogo para el Comité Caborrojeños Pro-Salud y Ambiente Inc., una organización sin fines de lucro. Estuve a cargo por ese periodo de tiempo de su proyecto más importante el Centro Interpretativo Las Salinas de Cabo Rojo el cual se encuentra en los terrenos del Refugio Nacional de Vida Silvestre de Cabo Rojo. Este refugio cual administrado por el Servicio de Vida Silvestre de los Estados Unidos.

Mi trabajo allí fue realizar recorridos interpretativos al público local e internacional que visita el área, ya que esta es de gran valor histórico y ecológico. En estos recorridos mi misión era educar al público visitante sobre la importancia histórica del lugar ya que allí se encuentran las salinas más antiguas en uso continuo de Puerto Rico y el Caribe las cuales llevan 512 años de producción de sal ininterrumpido. Además, el área es una parada importante de aves migratorias en su recorrido a nivel mundial y es hábitat de especies en peligro de extinción. Otra parte de mi misión era explicarle al público visitante la importancia de la conservación de áreas como éstas para el disfrute del público visitante y futuras generaciones.

En la actualidad me encuentro trabajando como el Naturalista del Parque Estatal Lago James en el condado de Burke. Mi misión allí es educar a las personas de Carolina del Norte y visitantes sobre la importancia ecológica e histórica del área a través de la realización de programas educativos interpretativos e interpretación. Espero verlos y conocerlos personalmente.



Hello everyone. My name is Heriberto Irizarry Camacho. I am 39 years old. I am from Lajas, Puerto Rico. I have a Bachelor of Science in Biology from the University of Puerto Rico, Mayagüez Campus. I worked for nine years as a supervisor, guide coordinator, guide and biologist for the Caborrojeños Pro Salud y Ambiente Inc Committee, a non-profit organization. I was in charge for that period of their most important project, the Cabo Rojo Salt Flats Interpretive Center, which is located on the grounds of the Cabo Rojo National Wildlife Refuge. This refuge is administered by the United States Fish Wildlife Service.

My job there was to conduct interpretive tours for the local and international public visiting the area, since this is a place of great historical and ecological value. In these tours my mission was to educate the visiting public about

the historical importance of the place since they are the oldest salt flats in continuous use in Puerto Rico and the Caribbean, producing salt uninterrupted for 512 years. In addition, the area is an important stopover for migratory birds on their journey around the world and is the habitat of endangered species. Another part of my mission was to explain to the visiting public the importance of conserving areas like these for the enjoyment of the visiting public and future generations.

I am currently working as the Naturalist for Lake James State Park in Burke County. My mission there is to educate North Carolinians and visitors about the ecological and historical importance of the area through of interpretive educational programs and interpretation. I hope to see and meet you personally.

WELCOME RANGER JENNY HUGHES



Change is inevitable. Here at Lake James State Park, visitors have gotten used to seeing several familiar faces amongst the ranger staff for much of the last decade. Promotions and new opportunities have some of our rangers on the move to other state parks. Those opportunities beget other opportunities and the arrival of Jenny Hughes as the park's newest ranger is one to celebrate.

Ranger Hughes spent most of her childhood growing up in Lenoir, NC and remembers visiting Lake James with her family as a child. She's been an enthusiastic nature lover from an early age. "I've always loved looking for bugs, catching minnows and climbing trees," she said with a smile. That curiosity led Hughes to pursue a degree in Environmental Science at the University of North Carolina – Chapel Hill.

Following her graduation, Ranger Hughes moved West to Washington state where she worked as a naturalist and manager of a summer camp program for several years.

Hughes and her husband recently returned to North Carolina and as luck would have it, a ranger position came available shortly thereafter.

Ranger Hughes spent just three days at the park back in December, 2022 and then started her 16-week Basic Law Enforcement Training at Western Piedmont Community College. She recently graduated with flying colors and has taken up her duties at the state park. Her training is far from over – Ranger Hughes will also get certifications in wildland firefighting, emergency medical response, search and rescue and environmental education.

"I'm most excited about educating the public about how to be good stewards of the natural spaces in their communities," she said. "I'm also very excited about being outdoors every day."

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)
- South Wimba Hike/Bike Trail (1 mile, easy)

PARK GENERAL INFO

- Gate hours for August and September are 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.
- The public swimming season continues through September 30th without lifeguards.
- Call the park office for concessions and boat rental hours during the month of September.
- The Visitor Center is open seven-days-a-week, from 9:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m.

FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Do you have an interest in Lake James State Park? Whether you enjoy hiking the trails, swimming at the beach or just picnicking with your family, there is some part of the park for everyone.

Join the Friends of Lake James State Park group and learn about all the opportunities to help make the park a better place for everyone to enjoy. The Friends of Lake James State Park focus on working together to help Lake James State Park meet its mission of providing opportunities for public enjoyment and education while still protecting the natural beauty and historic integrity of the State Park.

There are a variety of opportunities to get involved from trail work days, to volunteering at RiverFest and other festivals. Become a member of Friends of Lake James State Park, and know that you are helping to preserve the natural beauty and historic resources of Lake James for generations to come.

FRIENDS CONTRIBUTIONS

The Friends of Lake James State Park is proud to support the hardworking staff at Lake James State Park and contribute wherever we can to help improve park operations and offer new recreational opportunities to visitors. If you think these efforts are meaningful, please consider joining our group using the form at the bottom of this page.

- Boat Camping Project; partially funded, purchased equipment including rebar driver and auger
- Stand-up Paddleboards; purchased two for rental fleet and one for lifeguard use
- Funded instructor for Waterfront Safety training for lifeguards
- Linville Overlook picnic area
- Assisted with Overmountain Victory Trail 2 construction
- Holly Discovery Trail; partially funded and dedicated, annual funding for upkeep
- Park of the Year celebration
- Sponsored night rides on mountain bike trails
- RiverFest Sponsor

HOW TO JOIN THE FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK GROUP

Become a member of Friends of Lake James State Park, and know that you are helping to preserve the natural beauty and historic resources of Lake James for generations to come.

For more information please visit www.lakejamesstatepark.org, email info@lakejamesstatepark.org or Scan the QR Code to the right!



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.