



WINTER CHORES: A PARK NEVER SLEEPS

People who only visit Lake James State Park during summer might stare in wide-eyed disbelief at the empty parking lots and quiet waterfront picnic areas of winter. Of the estimated 600,000 visitors the park receives annually, the vast majority come during the months of June, July and August.

With a permanent staff of five rangers, two maintenance mechanics and an office assistant, one might wonder what there is to do for everyone during the relative solitude of winter. It's an abrupt reorganization of priorities – going from managing the crowds to giving some much-needed attention to the park facilities.

State Park rangers use the winter months to conduct boundary patrols and maintenance. With approximately 10 linear miles of marked boundary, often across steep and rugged terrain, water crossings and rhododendron thickets, it's a major effort when one considers the



Ranger Clay Veasey works along the park's boundary.

lines must be cleared of encroaching vegetation and treefalls, with boundary signs and paint occasionally needing to be replaced.

Another 25 miles of hiking and mountain biking trails must be

inspected on foot for downed trees and potentially hazardous snags. The winter months also afford time to attend the annual in-service law enforcement refresher training for rangers, inspect patrol vehicles and complete annual reports.

For the maintenance crew, there's time to make much-needed repairs on vehicles, buildings, landscaping and utilities and improve existing facilities and trails. One can easily imagine the wear-and-tear that occurs with several hundred thousand visitors over the course of a few months.

During the short days and long months of winter it may seem like it will never return to those fun-filled days of summer at Lake

James. Rest assured they will come and when they do, the park staff will have used the time wisely to make sure everything is ready to welcome people back with open arms and facilities they can be proud of.

FIRST DAY HIKE – MONDAY, JAN. 1

There is no better way to start off a new year than with a hike at Lake James. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof for what has become a cherished holiday tradition at Lake James State Park – the First Day Hike. Whether you're interested in starting a resolution of fitness, nature appreciation or learning about the environment, make a visit to Lake James State Park part of your family's holiday tradition. The hike will start at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 10:00 a.m. Bring warm clothing and be prepared to walk two miles.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – FRIDAY, JAN. 5

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 12:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 1:00 p.m. departure.

LAKE CHANNEL OVERLOOK EXPEDITION – SATURDAY, JAN. 6

Check out one of the best views on the lake with Park Ranger Kevin Bischof. The Lake Channel Overlook Trail is a moderate, 1.5-mile route through a section of the park that has been under prescription for fire. Come see for yourself the amazing habitat improvement that can be achieved through a thoughtful prescribed burning program and bring your camera to record the awesome overlook view of Lake James. Meet at the Catawba River Area parking lot at 12:00 p.m.



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WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JAN. 13

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 9:45 a.m. for a briefing and prompt 10:00 a.m. departure.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, JAN. 14

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2:00 p.m. departure.



DISCOVER THE HOLLY DISCOVERY TRAIL – MONDAY, JAN. 15

The Holly Discovery Trail is an award-winning trail that offers 18 interactive stations, specifically designed for young people. Meet Park Ranger Jamie Cameron as he leads a hike along this $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile trek and introduces the wonders of Lake James to the next generation of nature lovers. The hike starts at 10:00 a.m. from the Holly Discovery Trailhead, located in the Paddy's Creek Area of the park. Bring warm clothes and your imagination and be prepared to discover the Holly Discovery.

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OWL PELLETS – SATURDAY, JAN. 20

Often the subject of intrigue and myth, owls are one of the most popular birds that inhabit Lake James. But what do they eat? Spend the morning at Lake James dissecting owl pellets and you can find out exactly what owls eat. Meet Ranger Kevin Bischof at 10:00 a.m. to discover what an owl pellet it is and why owls can't digest all their food. The program will be held indoors at the Catawba River Area office. Owl pellets are limited, so registration for this program is required. To register please contact the park office at 828-584-7728.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JAN. 20

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. Ranger Jamie Cameron 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2:00 p.m. departure.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – SATURDAY, JAN. 27

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2:00 p.m. departure.

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WINTER BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, FEB. 4

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 12:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 1:00 p.m. departure.

WHO WAS HERE? – SATURDAY, FEB. 10

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 who has been in the woods. Meet at the Paddy's Creek Area bathhouse breezeway at 2:00 p.m. Please bring appropriate clothing for the weather and be prepared to walk approximately 2 miles.

WINTER BOAT TOUR – SUNDAY, FEB. 18

Lake James hosts many species of waterfowl during the winter months, as well as the critters that stay here year-round. As an added bonus, winter offers some of the most majestic views of the Linville Gorge and the Black Mountain Range of the year. 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, 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 at the Paddy's Creek Area East Picnic Shelter at 1:45 p.m. for a briefing and prompt 2:00 p.m. departure.



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ASTRONOMY FOR EVERYONE – FRIDAY, FEB. 23

February evenings can be cold, but if you bundle up to brave the frigid air you will be rewarded with the sparkling gems in the sky. 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. Sunset will be at 6:16 p.m. but we will meet in the upper parking lot of the Paddy's Creek Area at 6:00 p.m. to get oriented and cover some tips for the evening's events before it gets dark. Register by calling the park office at 828-584-7728.

PREDATORS OF LAKE JAMES – SUNDAY, FEB. 25

Predators come in all shapes and sizes; those with feathers, those with scales and those with fur – each is unique. Meet Park Ranger Kevin Bischof to learn about some of the predators of Lake James and their adaptations that make them so effective in the hunt for prey. This will be an indoor program and includes a craft activity to design and create your very own predator. Bring your creativity and enthusiasm to the Catawba River Area basement classroom at 11:00 a.m.



FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

WINTER WEATHER WARNINGS

Winter weather can create a beautiful landscape but icy roads, trails, and trees can be dangerous so use extreme caution when visiting the park. It's also a good idea to call ahead or visit our website at www.ncparks.gov/lake-james-state-park for up to date information on park closures due to hazardous conditions.



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

SEASONAL JOBS

It's not too early to consider a summer seasonal position at Lake James State Park. Applications are being accepted to lifeguards, general utility workers and concessions stand attendants. Download a State Government Application for Employment (PD-107) by going online to www.ncparks.gov and clicking on the "Get Involved" banner near the top of the page. Follow the prompts to "Seasonal Employment." Once you've printed out an application and filled it out, mail it to Lake James State Park, P.O. Box 340, Nebo, NC 28761 or call ahead to hand-deliver to one of the park offices.



NATURE NOTE: YEAR OF THE FISH

As we enter the new year, we leave behind 2017's Year of the Spider and welcome our new annual theme. North Carolina State Parks will celebrate 2018 by celebrating the Year of the Fish.

North Carolina is unique in that it has not one, but two state fish. The first on record was a saltwater species, the red drum, designated by the General Assembly in 1971. More pertinent to the mountains, the brook trout was designated in 2005 as the state freshwater fish. Although Lake James doesn't have either of them, the fish that do reside here come in all shapes and sizes, colors and patterns. Besides the well-known gamefish that inhabit the lake, the park also includes several streams that are home to species not commonly seen by the average park visitor. Brightly decorated shiners, chubs, and dace rival the beauty of any exotic aquarium fish and can be seen throughout Paddy's Creek and other park streams. These species can be difficult to discover, so be on the lookout for upcoming ranger-lead programs that will guide park visitors in search of these colorful fish.

The clear waters of Lake James are widely known for fishing. Anglers come



Largemouth Bass

from across the state in attempt to catch game species such as largemouth and smallmouth bass, catfish and crappie. While the smallmouth bass is restricted to the mountain region of North Carolina, largemouth, catfish and crappie are landed throughout the state. Lake James offers angling opportunities that aren't available in most places of the state. Muskellunge, or muskie for short, are large predatory fish found mostly in northern states such as Minnesota, Michigan, Wisconsin, New York, and even parts of Canada. This long, torpedo-shaped sportfish can also be found in limited numbers through Kentucky and parts of Tennessee, but if you are interested in catching them in North Carolina, one of the only places to catch them is in Lake James. These

muskie, along with another treasured northern species, the walleye, are not naturally occurring in Lake James. They were stocked in the lake as an effort to increase sport fishing opportunities for anglers. Unlike muskie, walleyes are not only targeted by anglers merely for sport, but are also prized as table fare.

In support of our 2018 annual theme, park staff will be offering more fish-related programs. These programs will include angling workshops, crafts, fish natural history, seining

and various other fishy topics. These programs will be listed on the park's calendar of events, as well as our bimonthly newsletters, which will also include a new fish feature for each issue.

As the winter temperatures keep visitation down, fishermen are also less frequent in the park. But, that doesn't mean the fish aren't biting. With a little bit of work, fish can still be seen and caught in the lake. So, don't let the cool, short days scare you away from wetting a line. Enjoy the winter and let's look forward to helping Lake James State Park celebrate the Year of the Fish. See you at the lake!

PRESCRIBED BURN SEASON

A new year provides a new opportunity to advance the long-term habitat management goals for the nearly 4,000 acres of forested land that currently make up Lake James State Park. An important tool in meeting those goals is the use of prescribed fire to consume dead plant materials like leaves, pine needles, branches and logs on the ground and create openings in the canopy that allow sunlight to reach the forest floor and promote seed germination of woodland plants.

During 2014, park staff assisted North Carolina Forestry Service personnel to conduct the first prescribed fires in the park's 27-year history. In the years following, more than 1,000 additional acres within park boundaries have been deliberately burned.

This year, the resource management plan enters a new phase; re-burning the Catawba River Area units that were initially treated four years ago. This will be done to further reduce combustible fuels and reinforce the natural cycle of fire on the landscape.

In order to conduct prescribed fires in a safe and controllable environment, burn bosses adhere to specific guidelines that designate when they can and cannot proceed. These critical factors include, relative humidity, wind speed and wind direction, air temperature and ground moisture – all of which have an important influence on fire behavior and intensity.

With the understanding that conditions must be just right in order to burn, it's hard to plan prescribed fire more

than 48 hours in advance (18 hours is typical) and sometimes weather forecasts change enough so that a scheduled burn must be cancelled. When the decision to burn is made, the information is made public through the park web site, local radio and television news broadcasts and printed news when its practical. Visitors and Lake James State Park neighbors should be aware that parts of the park may be closed for a day or more to conduct a prescribed fire and to drive slowly through areas of heavy smoke.

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation is committed to the regular and judicious use of prescribed fire where it's appropriate to protect the natural resources contained within state parks and adjacent private interests.



MTN. BIKE TRAIL VOLUNTEER PROJECT

Mountain bikers are a dedicated group when it comes to taking full advantage of the opportunities given to them. The Tindo and Wimba trails at Lake James State Park are a popular venue for area cyclists and have gained a reputation as being a top-notch destination for mountain biking.

The cycling community at Lake James is also dedicated to protecting and improving these trails, as evidenced by the recent work day for members of the Northwest NC Mountain Bike Alliance. On Dec. 16, 32 Alliance volunteers took to the trails to trim back encroaching branches and vines, clean out drainages, smooth over cupped areas and cover exposed roots.

The group put in 96 man hours of work on the upper and lower Tindo Trails in zones 10-12 and 17-19 on the West



Wimba Trail. During 2017, Alliance members put in 172 volunteer hours on the bike trails.

“The mountain bike trail system at Lake James is a cooperative effort between the state park staff and the Alliance,” said Andrew Carswell, maintenance mechanic and trails manager for Lake James State Park. “With careful management and people who are willing to get a little dirty to maintain them, the Tindo and Wimba loops will be kept in top condition for years to come.”

The next volunteer work day is scheduled for Feb. 24. Anybody with an interest in helping out is encouraged to attend. Information will be posted on the park web site, www.ncparks.gov, or call the office at 828-584-7728. Learn more about the Alliance at www.ridewnctrails.com.



FRIENDS OF LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

SAVE THE DATE

- The annual Lake James Clean Up is scheduled for March 17. Volunteers are needed to help with this comprehensive effort to remove trash for the Burke County shoreline of Lake James and areas within the state park. Information will soon be available at the Community of Lake James Facebook page.
- The inaugural SwimRun Lake James endurance race will be April 7. Two-person teams traverse 3.5 miles of swimming and 13 miles of running, with 26 land-to-water transition points along the way. Find out more at www.runsignup.com/Race/NC/Nebo/SwimRunNCLakeJames.
- Distance runners should check out the Fonta Flora Half-marathon and 50K races, April 14 and 15. Learn more at www.ultrasignup.com.
- The Lake James International is part of the NC Triathlon Series and will take place at the Paddy's Creek area on April 28. This race will consist of a 1500 meter swim, a 40K bike race and a 10K run. For more information visit www.setupevents.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 January and February are 7:00 a.m. until 7:00 p.m.
- The Paddy's Creek Area swim beach is closed for the season.
- The Paddy's Creek Area concessions stand and canoe and kayak rentals are closed for the season.
- Park offices/gift shops are operating on limited hours in January and February so please call ahead, (828) 584-7728.

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
- Funded "high volume" concession stand employee for select weekends and holidays

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.