



FIRE SEASON SUCCESS

After missing a year due to the pandemic and resulting health protocols, Lake James State Park's Paddy's Creek Area saw more prescribed burning this spring than has ever taken place since the inception of the program during 2014.

In all, a record-breaking 1,231 acres, comprised of six burn units, met the strict parameters that allow for controlled fires to take place. The Long Arm Peninsula, a remote area of the park accessible only by boat, underwent its second prescribed fires; following up on the first, which occurred during 2016. "Second entry" burns, as they are referred to by natural resource managers, are especially significant in shaping habitat and reducing the risk of wildfire because they burn up a lot of the dense, combustible woody vegetation leftover by the initial use of prescribed fire. That is especially the case in areas like Long Arm Peninsula, where forest fires of any type had been actively extinguished for more than a century.



Jennifer Lamb and Keith Suttles of The Nature Conservancy assist with the Homestead Unit prescribed burn.

On the day-use side of the Paddy's Creek Area, park visitors are now able to compare and contrast areas that have never been burned, like the mountain bike trail system and middle section of the Paddy's Creek Trail (that portion bracketed by the intersections with the Mills Creek and Homestead trails), have been burned only once (in

March 2021, that section of the Paddy's Creek Trail starting at the PCA parking area to the Mills Creek Trail intersection) and have undergone second entry burns (the area from the new visitor's center entrance road to the Mills Creek Trail road crossing, 2016 and 2019, and the section of the Mills Creek Trail starting at the east end of the PCA parking area to below the PCA drive-in campground, 2017, 2021).

None of this important natural resource management would have been accomplished without the extraordinary contributions made by N.C. Parks and Recreation partners. The N.C. Forest Service provided their expertise and considerable

resources to accomplish the prescribed burns on Long Arm Peninsula. A big thank you also goes to The Nature Conservancy's burn crew, who helped on three separate burn units in the day use area at Paddy's Creek.

NATURE NOTES

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

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

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

I&E UPDATE

Your park rangers are gearing up to offer a full slate of environmental interpretive and educational programs as soon as health and safety protocols will allow. Please visit the Lake James State Park web site at www.ncparks.gov/lake-james-state-park/home to find out when and where programs will be happening.



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
- Jeff Stark** - Member at Large
- Jim Williams** - Member at Large
- Mickey Lewis** - Member at Large
- Charles Abernathy** - Member at Large
- Bryant Lindsey** - Member at Large
- Blair Melton** - 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 BEETLE



In our last article, we looked at the unprecedented diversity and ecological functions beetles provide to the rest of us living here on Earth. If we consider only natural ecosystems within their proper places, the influence beetles have on the environment is overwhelmingly positive, be it pollinating plants, consuming dead, decaying material, keeping other species in balance through predation or acting as a food source themselves for other organisms.

But the world is constantly changing. Human beings have accelerated ecological change by altering habitats, influencing climate and embracing a system of global trade. We move a lot of stuff around; by land and by air, but mostly by sea. Cargo ships are sailing between continents with tens of thousands of tons of products and materials. History has proven these container ships to be an effective, if unwanted, vehicle for moving plants and animals to distant shores, often with catastrophic results.

Enter the Emerald Ash Borer to your backyard. This metallic green beetle measuring ½-inch in length is native to Asia. It was first discovered in North America in the forests of Michigan in 2002, munching away on native ash trees. Researchers believe the first EAB smuggled themselves in wood packing material from Asia. With no natural predators

and millions of acres of forests that had no natural defenses against it, EAB quickly made itself at home. Today, the beetle has been documented in 35 states, including North Carolina since 2013, and several Canadian provinces. It ranges as far south as Texas and as far west as Colorado and it has wrought destruction wherever it goes.

By disrupting the flow of nutrients and water underneath the bark layer of ash trees, the larval stage of EAB has killed hundreds of millions of trees and cost hundreds of millions of dollars in losses to timber related industries.

For a time it was hoped the spread of EAB could be slowed by prohibiting the transfer of firewood from infected areas of the country to uninfected, but the strategy has proven ineffective and the spread continues. Scientists hope a solution can be found in treating some localized stands of ash trees with pesticides. A tiny, parasitic wasp from EAB's home turf might also slow the spread long enough for North American ash tree species to evolve some defense against the beetle.

Unless that happens, however, the future is bleak for the continuing existence of ash trees in our forests. All thanks to a green beetle that's no bigger than a thumbtack.

F3ST UPDATE



The November-December newsletter told the story of Friends of the Fonta Flora State Trail (F3ST) getting started. Thanks again to FLJSP for having the vision that this group was needed to ensure the Fonta Flora State Trail continues to move forward. To show that we are continuing your vision and will not let you down, here are some of our successes:

Funding from Municipalities – To hire an executive director, we received \$32,000 in support from McDowell County, City of Marion, Town of Black Mountain, Town of Old Fort and Town of Glen Alpine. This allowed a part-time hire of Beth Heile for six months. Burke County and City of Morganton are considering support in their upcoming budgets. If that happens, the position will continue. At the same time, F3ST President Judge Hunter is working with the Great State Trails Coalition for the state to provide funding for this position in the future. This would be funding for all state trails.

Started Membership and Partnership Programs – Our membership program was launched in early February. The annual options are; Individual - \$25, Family - \$50, or \$500 for a Lifetime membership. Thanks to the many FLJSP members who have joined! Members help support our mission by covering operation costs and receive a cool decal! In March, an option for local businesses to support our Trail on the Ground fund was made available. For \$100 or \$500, a business can show they support the trail. For their annual support, they will receive a partnership decal for their window and promotion on our web site, newsletter and social media. The Trail on the Ground fund is used for matching grants when municipalities and counties need it. This will double or triple the donor's investment.

Old Fort Grant – We have made great strides on a new FFST trailhead and park in Old Fort. A Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) grant application is being submitted for \$330K to help in funding. This grant requires an equal match and that will come from \$100K each – McDowell County, Town of Old Fort, an anonymous donor, \$25K from McDowell Trails Association, and \$5K from community donations. In addition to 0.25 mile of tree-lined, paved FFST, the trailhead will include restrooms, parking, a dog park, bike garden, central green, picnic pavilion area and ADA-compliant walkways and access.

Hike and Learn Series – To help people learn where you can hike or bike the FFST, we are hosting these events every other week. In addition to learning about and exploring the trail and local area, participants will learn from a related speaker about each particular trail section.

Strategy – F3ST is in the process of meeting with the municipalities and counties that will host sections of the trail to document the trail status (completed, in the planning, seeking funding and the like) to make sure this trail is finished in 10 years. Burke County, McDowell County, Marion and Morganton officials met at Lake James State Park in March. Black Mountain, Asheville and Buncombe County will be meeting this month.

Fonta Flora State Trail	Status	Miles
Ready to Hike/Push the Pedals	Open	32
Almost Ready to Lace up the Boots	1-5 Years	30
Time to Save up for that New Bike	5-10 Years	38
Total		100

Want to help? Visit FontaFloraStateTrail.com to donate.

CAMPFIRE COOKING

RANGER VICK'S OLD FASHIONED \$200 COOKERY-FILLED CAMP KITCHEN CAPABLE OF FEEDING FAMILIES FULL OF FOOD!



A camp kitchen is like an off-road vehicle. In order for it to be successful, we often feel it necessary to buy tons of gadgets and doodads that we will never learn to use properly, nor really need. Much like a Jeep, a camp kitchen should be basic and simple, yet rugged enough to be up to the task in any situation. A good camp kitchen should never have to be financed, as it can be purchased for a very low cost and will serve in it's duties as the backbone of our home-away-from-homes. Home is where the heart is and camp needs no shiny chrome. Below you will find how to put together a great camp kitchen for a maximum cost of \$200!!!!!!

THE STOVE - Whether it be a single or a double, side-by-side burner is up to the user. A stovetop that uses a 1-pound cylinder of propane can be found for relatively little money and are often very reliable and tough. There are numerous brands out there, ranging in cost from \$14 for a single

burner (which attaches directly on top of a propane bottle) to \$100 for a top of the line side-by-side burner as is pictured. Excellent heat control and affordability make these a "go to"!!!

Portable, foldable, cooking stoves are very lightweight and expensive and suitable mostly for boiling water. For the car camper or long-haul camper it is recommended to not use these type of stoves based upon their limitations, cost and fragility.

POTS AND PANS - There is very little need to buy expensive, lightweight foldable pots and pans made of space-age material that an influencer is pictured using on social media. Instead take \$10 and go to a thrift store and purchase a sauce pan and a saute pan. These items, coupled with aluminum foil and a \$20 8-inch cast iron pan will provide for your cooking needs.

PLATE/BOWLS AND CUPS - A good set of four place settings of enameled plates/bowls and mugs with silverware

can be purchased for around \$40 at most outfitter stores. These are the best for dependability, easy clean-up and long term usage. They are lightweight as well and will serve for years. The mugs that come with these sets are perfect for any beverage you can imagine.

SILVERWARE - Often the enameled plate sets will come with silverware, but what if yours didn't? Go to a local thrift store and purchase a set for around \$5. Stainless steel serves very well in our camp kitchen. Don't forget a set of tongs and a wide spatula. Spatulas are multi-use tools and you never want to leave home with out one

A CAMP KITCHEN IS NO PLACE FOR ONE TIME USE PRODUCTS!!! Bring towels and cloth napkins.

THINK GREEN TO SAVE GREEN!

PARK UNDER CONSTRUCTION



As the park prepares to receive visitors this summer a major septic repair at the Paddy's Creek Area is top priority. After several failures in recent years – sometimes coming at highest visitor volume – the system is being upgraded to handle the demand. While that work continues, the public area around the PCA bathhouse and along the sidewalk to the east will remain in varying stages of disruption. Caution tape and fencing surround the active construction zone, but visitors are urged to be cautious while passing by. It is expected that the new system will be running by Memorial Day weekend, but until then, the four unisex bathrooms in the breezeway, men's and women's locker rooms and outdoor showers will be turned off. Visitors can still use the bathrooms at the east end of the parking area, between the west



and east picnic shelters. We apologize for the inconvenience.

In other park project news; the new visitor center is slowly making its way to the finish line. The most-recent completion date estimate is for the

end of July. Add another two months or so to get the staff moved in and the exhibit hall installed and we hope to be open to the public sometime in September.

While everyone is especially excited about the Cove Bridge, by contract, it's grand opening must wait for the completion of the visitor center. Do not, under any circumstances, attempt to traverse the bridge before it's official open date or risk citation for trespassing in an unauthorized location.

We know everyone is excited to celebrate the summer and to check out the park they know and love so much. Just bear with us and rest assured those amenities, both old and new, will become available as soon as safely possible.

GET READY FOR JUNETEENTH!

N.C. State Parks Celebrates
JUNETEENTH

June 11 thru June 21

Come walk the short 1/2 mile Inspiration Trail and read a story about the Juneteenth American holiday that celebrates freedom. Check participating parks for details

Dismal Swamp ■ Jones Lake ■ Hammocks Beach
Lake James ■ William B. Umstead - Reedy Creek

Please visit the Lake James State Park web site for details. www.ncparks.gov/lake-james-state-park/home

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 for May and June are 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.
- The Paddy's Creek Area swim beach is open for the season as of May 1. The concession stand is expected to open in late May. Please refer to the park web site at www.ncparks.gov/lake-james-state-park/home or call the park office at 828-584-7728 for updated information.
- Canoe and kayak rentals remain suspended at the time of this writing. Schedule and budgeting may allow for limited days of availability this season. Call the park office at 828-584-7728 for the latest information.
- The park offices and gift shops at Catawba River Area are open Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The Paddy's Creek Area office and gift shop is open Thursday through Monday, from 10 a.m. until 6 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 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.