



PARK HAS LOTS TO BE GRATEFUL FOR



The staff at Lake James State Park, and all the future visitors to come, have a lot of thank-you cards to send as 2021 comes to a close.



With an annual operating budget of around \$775,000, that doesn't include emergency and new equipment purchases, it takes a significant financial investment to keep the park running at the high standard folks deserve. That doesn't leave a lot leftover to do the extras that can mean so much when it comes to visitor experience.



Luckily, Lake James State Park has a mountain of support from the private community to fill in the gaps, and it has never been more evident than now.

For starters, the Rostan Family Foundation of Valdese gave \$45K in November for the purchase of a new excavator. The machine has been ordered and we are awaiting delivery. The machine will be invaluable to Lake James State Park's multi-use trails and fire management programs. The Foundation has supported the park since it's 2010 expansion into Burke County with the opening of the Paddy's Creek Area. Additionally, it has partially funded the boat-in campsites on Long Arm Peninsula and the outdoor amphitheater at the new Visitor Center.



Longtime support from Duke Energy continued with a recently awarded grant to the Friends of Lake James State Park for \$9,000, which will go towards a variety of educational equipment and partially fund a small picnic shelter near the new Cove Bridge. The park rangers who do interpretive educational programs are looking forward to adding a field microscope, an orienteering kit and an underwater Remote Operated Vehicle to their available assets.

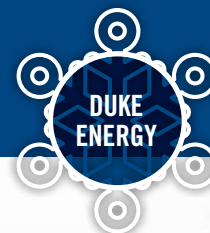


These items will be used with school groups and public programs and will add a new and exciting dimension to learning at the park. Duke also donated \$7,600 for the purchase of two new E-bikes earlier this summer. The bikes will be used by park staff to assist in emergency response and trail inspections and maintenance. Duke has also been a consistent donor to Lake James State Park over the years by awarding annual grants for RiverFest, donating a boat dock and boat house, and a sizable monetary amount towards the exhibits hall in the new Visitor Center.

A host of generous donors stepped up to completely fund the Cove Bridge picnic shelter. In addition to the money set aside by Duke Energy, benefactors include the Cantrells, the Bradleys, the Costellos, the Whitfields, Foothills Conservancy of NC and Brantley Construction.

Continuing at the grassroots level, the Quaker Meadows Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution members have been working tirelessly to restore the Obeth Cemetery. Their efforts to remove trees and brush, and clean and repair numerous headstones have resulted in a rebirth of the historic site. Andrea Kiser has spearheaded the endeavor and has raised more than \$16,000 in just over a year to pay for removal of more than two dozen large trees and have the stumps ground up. She has personally volunteered more than 200 hours. The group as a whole has racked up 865 hours over the last year.

And finally, the landscaping around the park got a fresh dressing of mulch, thanks to our neighbors across NC 126 in the 1780 community. Benthos LLC donated \$600 in locally-sourced mulch for the native plant gardens at the Paddy's Creek day use area.



NATURE NOTES

The kaleidoscope of colors that wowed us throughout the fall has been replaced with winter's subtle palette of grays and browns. There are exceptions of course. Every hike in the woods reveals splashes of green, red and gold.

It's a great time of year to take notice of the American beech trees that dot our forests. Beech trees are majestic, smooth-skinned hardwoods that really shine when other trees

seem to melt into the background. While most fall foliage has turned brown and crunchy and fallen to the ground, beech trees hang onto their yellow leaves during the cold months. As a result, the beeches glow like golden beacons in the otherwise drab landscape.



Holly trees add their influence on the park's winterscape. These mid-story evergreens not only keep their thick, waxy, dark green leaves, they also add bouquets of scarlet berries that practically define the holiday season. In addition to being beautiful, American holly berries (and other holly species for that matter) are important sources of food for birds. Insect activity is low when the temperature drops and so many kinds of birds must focus on fruits and seeds to get the calories they need.

Holly berries often attract cedar

waxwings, American robins and hermit thrushes, to name a few and provide a critical bridge across the coldest stretches until the bugs come back out.

For birdwatchers, winter is an interesting time when hikes through the forest seem like feast or famine. Songbirds tend to flock together in mixed species groups as they forage through the landscape. The reasons for this are twofold: many individuals in the flock means more eyes searching for danger and more eyes searching for limited food sources. It's not unusual to go for long stretches on the trail where it would seem there is nothing alive out there, only to finally stumble across an active feeding flock that's comprised of a dozen or more species.

Bundle up and take advantage of the slow season at Lake James State Park. There's still plenty to see and you won't have to worry about bug bites and sweat. 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

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 Abemathy - Member at Large

Bryant Lindsey - Member at Large

Teena Fox - Member at Large

Pete Colwell - Member at Large

Nancy Connelly - Member at Large

Sarah Costic - Member at Large

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

YEAR OF THE TREE

“Between every two pines is a doorway to another world.”

– John Muir

Here at the start of a new year, the moment we’ve been waiting for has finally arrived: The N.C. State Parks educational theme in 2022 shall be...trees.

Perhaps it is best to start the journey with a definition; what exactly is a tree? The dictionary definition of a tree is a woody, perennial plant typically having a single stem or trunk growing to considerable height and bearing lateral branches at some distance from the ground.

It is safe to say that we all recognize trees, at least in the simplest terms, but the diversity of them across the globe (60,000 – 100,000 species, possibly representing 25% of all plants) is truly astonishing. Compared to tropical regions, the temperate zones of North America are not nearly as bountiful, but still claim more than 1,000 types of trees. When we zoom in to North Carolina, there are 221 native trees and 73 introduced, naturalized species in the Old North State.

Included in all that diversity are some of the largest and oldest organisms on Earth. In North Carolina, the NC Forestry Service identifies a 180-foot Eastern white pine in Jackson County as the tallest and a 2,671-year-old (give or take a century) bald cypress growing on the Black River in Sampson County as the oldest tree in the state. That might seem old unless you know about the 5,061-year-old bristlecone pine growing in the White Mountains in California – the oldest known tree in the world.

Much of Lake James State Park is forested and there is a lot to learn about the trees, both native and non-native, that grow here. Over the course of the coming year, we’ll explore many of those species, how they fit into the ecosystem, how they benefit other organisms, how exotic invasives are threatening our forests and more.

By the end we’ll hopefully be able to see both the forest for the trees and the trees for the forest.

FRESH FACE

Robert Townsend

The ranger ranks at Lake James State Park have grown, thanks to the recent hire of Robert Townsend. While he's excited to join the staff here, Robert only has a short time before he sets off on his 18-week Basic Law Enforcement training and state exam; the first of many "hats" he will earn on his way to becoming a fully functioning member of the team.

Robert is a native of western North Carolina, born and raised in nearby Black Mountain. He remained in Buncombe County for his postsecondary education, earning degrees in biology and ecological forestry at Warren Wilson College.

"I had great experiences visiting the state and national parks as I was growing up," he said. "I've just always wanted to be outside in the woods."



After graduating, Robert found his way to the state parks system by landing employment at Chimney Rock. He worked at Chimney Rock State Park as an assistant ranger before taking a position with the private attraction

LLC as a trail guide. Both experiences showed him a pathway to his dream job growing up of becoming a park ranger. "It combines all of my interests into one job," he explained.

"Getting through the next two years of training to get all of the certifications that are required to be a NC park ranger is going to be a challenge," said Robert. In addition to law enforcement certification, North Carolina park rangers are required to be certified in search and rescue, emergency medical responder, environmental educator and wildland firefighting. "But I'm starting a career that I'm actually really excited about."

CAMPFIRE COOKING



RANGER VICK'S SURE-FIRE SAUSAGE LOG

This recipe can be done with basically anything rolled up into the fatty. Find your own flavors to play around with and enjoy! Smoke the sausage log for the ultimate experience

Mix together the breakfast sausage and Italian sausage. Once the meat has been fully mixed, use a rolling pin to roll the meat mixture flat. You're wanting the meat to be rolled to about a thickness of a half inch.

Directions

1. Once the meat has been rolled out, take the cream cheese and spread a nice even layer.
2. Sprinkle the diced jalapeno evenly on top of the cream cheese.
3. Roll the meat/cheese/jalapeno flatness up into a log.
4. Completely season the outside of the meat log.
5. Place the fatty into the foil and roll it up. Twist the ends of the foil up like a tootsie roll.
6. Place into the refrigerator for an hour to set up.
7. During that time, set up either a campfire with a grill or... a grill. **MAKE SURE TO HEAT ONLY ONE SIDE.**
8. After that hour remove the fatty from the foil.
9. Place the meat onto the "cold" side of the grill. Cook each side for an additional 30 minutes.
10. Once the meat is cooked, remove it from the grill and allow it to rest for 15 minutes before digging in.
11. Leave some leftovers to serve for breakfast with some biscuits and eggs.

That's some sweet Southern living at Lake James State Park!

You Will Need:

- 1 lb ground breakfast sausage
- 1 lb Italian sausage
- 1 package of cream cheese (8 oz.) softened
- Diced pickled jalapenos
- Dry BBQ rub
- Aluminum foil



Dawn breaks over Mills Creek.
Photo credit: Keith Harris

VIP VISIT

I spy with my little eye North Carolina State Parks Director Dwayne Patterson enjoying beautiful Lake James in one of the division's "big" canoes during a recent visit. Patterson was appointed to his post by Governor Roy Cooper and is responsible for guiding all 41 state parks and recreation areas across North Carolina.



ANSWERING THE CALL

Lake James State Park staff spent three days in the Bob's Creek State Natural Area in early December battling the Huntsville Mountain Fire. The 450-acre blaze in McDowell County drew in wildland firefighters from across the western region, including South Mountains, Stone Mountain, Gorges, Crowders Mountain state parks and the North Carolina Forestry Service. Rangers from Lake James also assisted in bringing the Pilot Mountain wildfire under control.



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 December, January and February are 7 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- Paddy's Creek Area swim beach and concessions stand closes for the season on Sept. 30.
- Canoe and kayak rentals have ended for the season.
- Park offices and gift shop at Catawba River Area are open Monday – Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. The Paddy's Creek Area office and gift shop is open seven-days-a-week until Sept. 26. After that, the office and gift shop will be open Wednesday – Sunday, from 9 a.m. until 5:30 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.