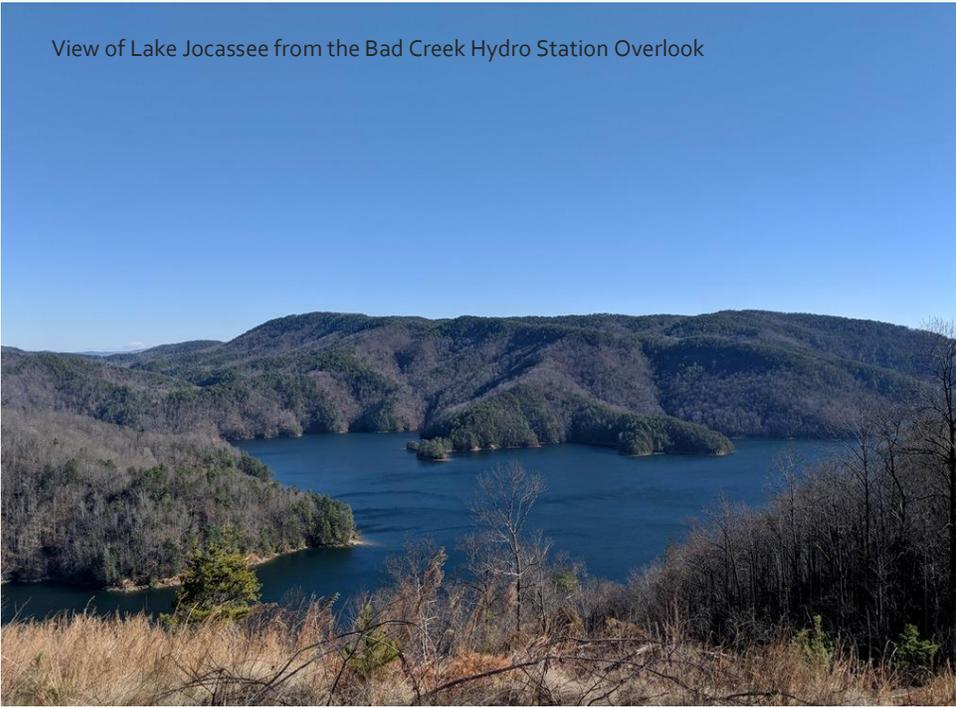


View of Lake Jocassee from the Bad Creek Hydro Station Overlook



FRIENDS OF JOCASSEE

WINTER 2018

Biggest, Best BellFest 2018!

The Oconee Bell flower signals the beginning of spring in the Jocassee Gorges, and Friends of Jocassee will celebrate the time of bloom, and the explosion of spring across the Jocassee Gorges, at the sixth annual BellFest Celebration.

The featured speaker of the day will be Kate Farrah. Many know Kate as an instructor in the Native Plant Certification series at the SC Botanical Garden, but what you might not know is that she wrote her grad school dissertation on the long-term viability of the species, given that individual populations ('stations') of the diminutive plant have been separated by acres of water from the building of Lake Jocassee.

As always, Upstate Master Naturalists will be on hand to guide visitors along the Oconee Bell Trail and tell the unusual story of this elusive wildflower. And as always, new and renewing members of Friends of Jocassee will be treated to a lake tour

into the heart of Oconee Bell's native habitat.

This year, vendors will join exhibitors and offer visitors a chance to buy local handcrafted items available nowhere else, including Native American baskets, woodwork, and herbal soaps and tinctures. Our favorite herbalist Robin McGee will be on hand to give an instructional plant walk-and-talk around the park, and authors with deep roots to Jocassee Valley will be on hand to reminisce about the good ol' days.

Visitors can sit back and enjoy the original tunes from Conservation Theory, an Appalachia Americana folk band who has played for almost every BellFest to date. Then enjoy the award-winning Blue Ridge Mountain Clogging Team from Salem, SC.

BellFest is a rain or shine event, and FOJ thanks Duke Energy for continuing to provide the 'Big Tent' for

this annual Oconee Bell Celebration!



Since 2013, local favorite Conservation Theory has entertained visitors at BellFest.

Devils Fork State Park Ranger Run 5K Winners

COMING EVENTS

Saturday, March 17: 10am - 4pm: BELLFEST! Devils Fork State Park

March 16: 10 - 11am: Spring Quarterly Talk #1 - Loon Migration with Dr. Paul Spitzer, Holcombe Rm., Devils Fork State Park

May 3: 10 - 11am: Spring Quarterly Talk #2 - Spring Songbird Migration with Tim Lee, Holcombe Rm., Devils Fork State Park

May 14: 12am - 2pm: Water n Wildlife Work Day at Keowee-Toxaway State Park

On New Year's Day, 27 hardy runners and walkers braved freezing temperatures to join Devils Fork State Park rangers for the 6th annual First Day 5K Ranger Run. "Moderate hills" made for a challenging course, so afterwards, in defiance of the frigid day, runners and walkers (not all of them though!) cooled off with a New Year's tradition and jumped into Lake Jocassee for the Loon Lunge.

T-shirts, give-away items, prizes and souvenirs were awarded to these winners.

Male, top 3
Jonathan Fenske 19:39
Chris Hamor 22:12
Owen Nurminen 22:44

Female, top 3
Tiffany Barnickel 28:19
Lindsay Brick 28:32
Sarah Brick 32:06

Kids' 1 mile Fun Run-
Reagan Brick 9:41
Riley Brick 10:07
Sahara Felton 10:24



MLK SERVICE DAY AT DEVILS FORK STATE PARK

MLK Day is recognized across the nation as a day of service South Carolina Parks, Recreation, & Tourism has challenged its state parks to offer volunteer opportunities on MLK Day which will provide meaningful, tangible results. This year, Friends of Jocassee helped Devils Fork State Park accomplish this by providing the funding for new wood duck nesting boxes. On a cold January day, FOJ volunteers and DFSP park staff boated out to suitable nesting regions on Lake Jocassee and installed the boxes in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King. A total of six boxes were installed. FOJ purchased both plastic 'duck huts' and more traditional wooden boxes as an experiment to see which type the wood ducks prefer. Here's hoping the new habitats will lead to more nesting birds on Lake Jocassee.



Thanks to FOJ volunteers and DFSP staff who braved a chilly day to help install new habitat boxes for the resident wood ducks on Lake Jocassee.

FALL FISH OFF WINNERS

On November the 11, 2017 FOJ Fall Fish Off was held on Lake Jocassee. 13 boats fished the second bass fishing tournament hosted by the FOJ. Anglers caught Large mouth, Small mouth, and Spotted Bass. Every boat was equipped with a live well to keep fish alive.

The entry fee for the tournament was \$40 per team, with an additional \$10 that could be paid for entry into the Big Fish Pot. The tournament paid back one place for each five boats that entered the tournament. Brent Thornton took first place with a five-fish limit of 17.50 LBS. His big fish was 5.65 LBS. Chuck Harrison finished in second place with a five-fish limit of 16.95 LBS. 100% of the big fish pot also went to Chuck Harris for a 5.85 LB fish. Jimmy Blackwell took home fishing tackle for the third-place finish, with 16.00 LBS.

Of the thirteen boats that fished the tournament two were from North Carolina (Hendersonville and Brevard) 11 of the participants were from SC (Cleveland, Pickens, Greer, Seneca, Landrum, Inman, Piedmont, and Williamston).

Every team received lead free fishing weights for participating in this event. This will assist with efforts to reduce the amount of lead used by fisherman. Lead has traditionally been the primary metal used for fishing weights. Lead weights are poisonous for wild life that ingest them. In recent years tungsten and steel weights have been a great alternative.

WINTER QUARTERLY TALK - Cherokees of the Lower Towns

Dr. Dave LaVere, Cherokee educator and historian, presented to the Friends of Jocassee on Lower Town Cherokee history with a capacity crowd present at Devils Fork State Park. He explained much of what Cherokee life was like with the help of several visual aids, maps and handouts. The response was great as was made evident by the many questions and discussions that followed the presentation. Dr. LaVere supplied answers to all questions.



2 PART SPRING QUARTERLY TALKS

March 16: 10 - 11am: Loon Migration - Paul Spitzer

*Optional boat tour, 11am - 2pm, \$10pp

May 3: 10 - 11am Spring Songbird Migration - Tim Lee

*Optional boat tour, 7 - 9:30am, \$10pp

WHAT'S NEW!

FOJ recently purchased non-slip tread for the ramp leading to the main boat dock on Lake Jocassee. The arched ramp becomes steeper as the reservoir water level is dropped, and during the winter, ice forming on the ramp is hazardous. Devils Fork State Park staff performed the installation.

FOJ purchased and installed metal non-slip grates over the wooden foot bridges on the Oconee Bell Trail. This footing will help prevent accidents during rainy times.

FOJ purchased new baby-changing stations for installation in the men's and women's restrooms in the picnic/day use area of Devils Fork State Park, next to Eclectic Sun. The stations have been installed by DFSP staff.

FOJ will host a fun new event this fall... the Lake Jocassee Paddle Splash! This event is open to paddlers of all abilities and includes the option of a three mile or six-mile loop paddling course. All proceeds go to Friends of Jocassee for the funding of future projects.

Golden Corner Lakes Sail & Power Squadron announces "AMERICA'S BOATING COURSE"

Designed to advance public knowledge and skills for safer boating in the Upstate. Learn about State and local regulations, safety equipment, how to handle emergencies, anchoring, trailering, navigation rules and aids, personal watercraft operation and much more. After completing the course, there is an option to have on the water training if desired.

When: Five Tuesdays: February 27, March 6, 13, 20 and 27, 2018, from 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

Where: Cottingham House, 390 Keowee School Rd. (Rt. 188) Seneca, SC (conference room in back of second building - park in space indicated as "Oconee Palliative Medicine")

Cost: No cost for the course other than \$30 for a manual and supplies. Manual can be shared by family members.

Preregistration requested by February 20th. To sign up call Ron Osburn, 864-972-2434 or email: ozbrn@bellsouth.net

For membership and additional information, visit our website at: gclsaps.com

Friends of Jocassee, 2017 Year in Review

- FOJ Main Events
 - Jan 1 – **First Day 5K Ranger Run & Loon Lunge** @ Devils Fork State Park
 - March 18 – **BellFest 2017 @ DFSP**
 - April 29 – Spring **Water & Wildlife Day** with Friends of Lake Keowee Society @ Keowee-Toxaway State Park
 - Sept 9 – **VIP Day @ DFSP**
 - Nov 11 – **Fish Off** Tournament @ DFSP
 - Nov 11 – Fall **Water & Wildlife Day @ KTSP**
- Adopt-A-Highway x4
 - Quarterly Litter Pick-ups along Jocassee Lake Rd. (www.palmettopride.org)
 - FOJ Quarterly Talks x5
 - Jan 12 – **Dan Rankin, SC DNR** on Fishing @ Oconee State Park
 - May 5 – **Tim Lee, SC State Parks** on Spring Songbird Bird Migration @ DFSP
 - July 20 – **Mike Atkins, Jocassee Adventures** on Diving Jocassee @ DFSP
 - Oct 19 – **Laura Blake-Orr, SC Wildlife Federation** on Pollinators @ Bad Creek
- Annual Meeting
 - Oct 19 – Allan Boggs Bad Creek Hydro Tour + lunch provided
- PROJECTS:
 - Pollinator Gardens at DFSP & KTSP
 - Rain Gardens and Fern Garden at KTSP
 - Baby Changing Tables installed @ DFSP Picnic/Day Use Area
 - Oconee Bell Nature Trail Signs updated
 - Non-Slip Tread on Oconee Bell Trail bridges
 - Non-Slip Tread on main boat ramp at DFSP
 - Trail Maintenance & Litter Pick-ups @ KTSP
 - Park Benches (per local scout troop) @ KTSP
 - Brochures for *Shortia galacifolia* for Oconee Bell trailhead kiosk
 - Pollinator Garden planted @ Bad Creek Outdoor Training Center
- 12 Board Meetings
- 3 Newsletters
- 815 Facebook page Likes & 10,500 FOJ Website Visits
- Joined *Leave No Trace* (www.lnt.org)
- Completed Duke Energy grant-funded Projects
- Ordered new Member Brochures & Thank You Notes
- Added Mesh Bags & FOJ Water Bottles to giveaway inventory

Plans for 2018

- Jan. 15 – Install 10 **Wood Duck boxes** @ Lake Jocassee
- Feb. 2-4 – Partner with Friends of Gorges State Park, The Wilds, Foothills Trail Conservancy to **improve campsites** at the Toxaway River Lake Jocassee
- Oct. 13 - **Paddle Splash** Kayak tournament
- Plan for bamboo **Fish Habitat** enhancement project on Lake Jocassee (date TBA)
- Purchase Signage and Windless Flag for **FOJ events**
- Update Oconee Bell Nature Trail Signs
- Proposed Oconee Bell Education Garden @ DFSP office
- Proposed Boardwalk for viewing Oconee Bells on Oconee Bell Trail

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

Cooler months are perfect for getting our roadsides back in good shape. Members are encouraged to adopt a section of roadway, and clean up as necessary.

FOJ's next Adopt-a-Highway cleanup will be on March 12 following the monthly board meeting at Devils Fork State Park. Join us... please! Contact info@jocasseelaketours.com

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP

Monday, March 12: 11:30 – 1:00 PM

Jocassee Lake Road

Boone's Creek Road

THANK YOU FOR HELPING CLEAN UP

HAVE YOU RENEWED YOUR MEMBERSHIP YET?

SILENT AUCTION DONATIONS NEEDED FOR BELLFEST!

One of the popular attractions of BellFest is the Silent Auction, and we need donations! Who do you know who has an interesting item or gift certificate to donate? Proceeds benefit the many great projects sponsored by Friends of Jocassee!

Contact info@jocasseelaketours.com

SPONSORS WELCOMED FOR FOJ EVENTS!

WANTED: FOJ newsletter help! The current editor is challenged by the effort of getting newsletters out in a timely manner, and is willing to be replaced. Please respond to friendsofjocassee@gmail.com if you are interested!

BECOME A MEMBER OF FRIENDS OF JOCASSEE

Please consider a recurring membership when you sign up
Or, send a completed membership form and donation to join or renew membership to:

Friends of Jocassee, PO Box 621, Salem, SC 29676

Name/s _____

Address _____

City _____

State/Zip _____

Phone _____

Email _____

- Individual = \$20
- Family = \$30 (# in Family _____)

Annual Donor Level

- Eastatoee = \$100
- Toxaway = \$250
- Horsepasture = \$500
- Thompson = \$1000
- Whitewater = \$2000

Please tell us if you have a special volunteer interest: _____
