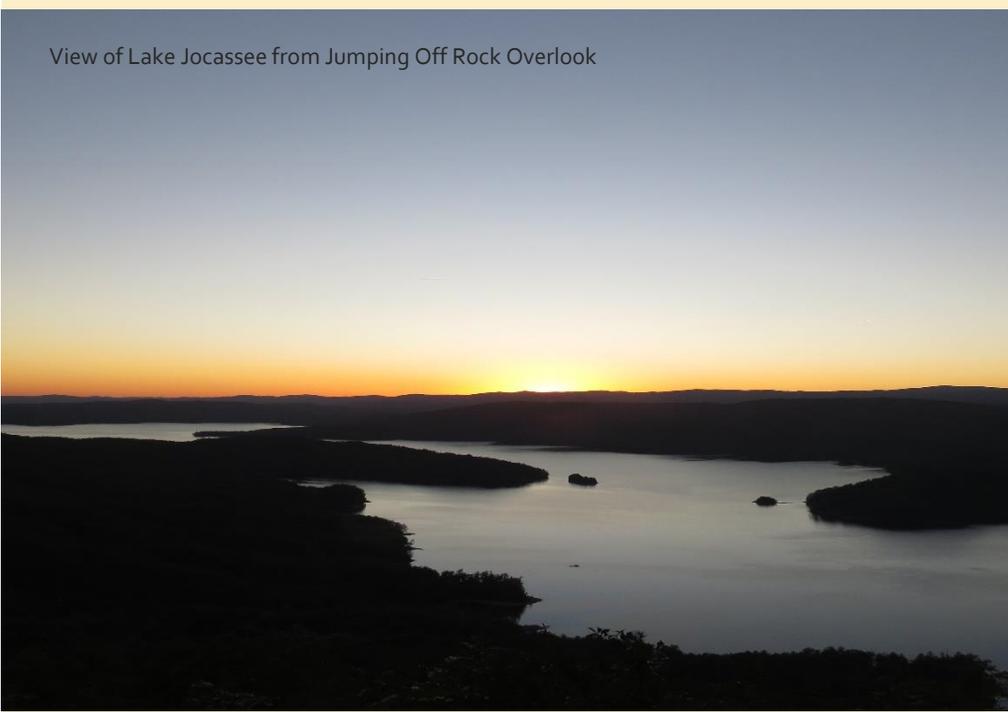


View of Lake Jocassee from Jumping Off Rock Overlook



FRIENDS OF JOCASSEE

FALL 2017

VIP DAY 2017 REVIEW

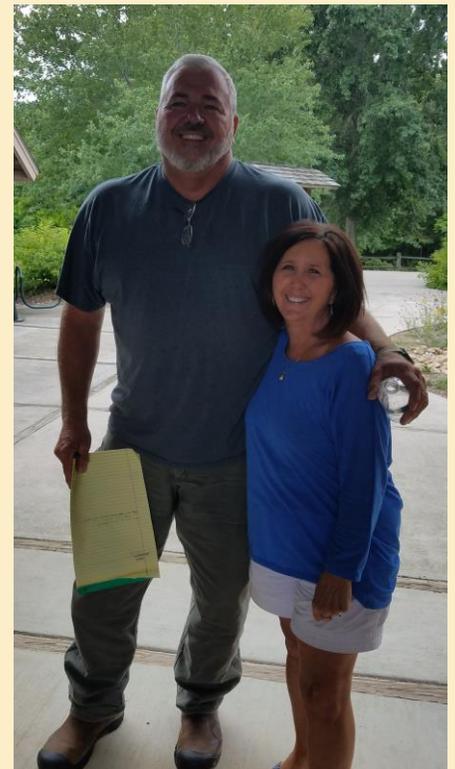
2017 VIP Day at Devils Fork State Park focused on improvements to the Oconee Bell Trail, planting a new pollinator garden at the entrance to the Day Use / Picnic Area of the park, and litter cleanup. All missions were accomplished, with participants reporting that there was noticeably less trash in certain areas of the park this year. Hurray for that!

Thanks in large part to the efforts of Mike Atkins, FOJ Board Member and owner of Spartanburg Scuba Shop, almost three-fifths of the participants this year came from the close-knit scuba diving community. Seventy-five divers scoured the bottom of Lake Jocassee, making an extra effort to find and bring up underwater inorganic debris. Boats for the divers were provided by Mike, Reese Davis, owner of Bermuda Triangle Dive Shop in Greenville, and Bill Routh, owner of Lake Jocassee Dive Shop. These

businesses donated free tanks of air for divers participating in the cleanup, and FOJ thanks them for their generosity!

While the divers worked on the bottom of the lake, approximately 45 volunteers completed the rest of the work onshore, planting, improving the Oconee Bell Trail, and picking up litter around the shore and along the roads, as well as around the DFSP campground.

All volunteers were treated to healthy snacks and bottled water from local company Crystal Geyser, and each volunteer was given a choice of taking home a nice PABA-free water bottle with the FOJ logo, or a mesh litter bag. **FOJ THANKS ALL VIP DAY VOLUNTEERS FOR THEIR SERVICE!**



Two FOJ giants! Past president Allan Boggs (L) and current president Sherrie Whitten (R)

COMING EVENTS

**November 11: First light
‘til 3pm: Fall Fish Off
Bass Tournament at
Devils Fork State Park**

**November 11: 1 – 3pm:
Water & Wildlife Day
work day at Keowee-
Toxaway State Park**

**January 1, 2018: First
Day Hike, 5K and Loon
Lunge at DFSP**

**March 17, 2018: BellFest
at DFSP**

FALL FISHOFF BASS TOURNAMENT!

On November 11, 2017, FOJ will host our second fishing tournament. In this tournament each boat will consist of one team. Anglers will fish throughout the day for Large mouth, Small mouth, Red Eye, and Spotted Bass. Once a team has caught five fish (14” minimum for this tournament), they can begin to cull their additional catches. When a fish that is larger than the teams smallest fish is caught. The smallest fish is released, and the larger fish is kept. Every boat must be equipped with a live well that can keep every fish alive. There are weight penalties for fish that are weighed in dead. If a team has multiple dead fish, they will be disqualified. The entry fee for the tournament is \$40 per team and an additional \$10 can be paid for entry into the Big Fish Pot. The \$40 entry fee is divided among first (50%), Second (30%) and third place (20%). 100% of the big fish pot goes to the team with the single largest fish.

Every team will receive 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 any wild life that eat them. In recent years tungsten and steel weights have been a great alternative. These weights are also great fish attractors, as they make louder sounds when used in conjunction with glass beads.

WATER & WILDLIFE DAY, 2017, TAKE TWO!

Water & Wildlife Day is a day for Friends of Jocassee to volunteer for work projects selected by park management at our area state parks. After a couple of years at Devils Fork, the event’s focus has shifted to Keowee-Toxaway SP. Work projects have included trail maintenance, storm water mitigation, painting, litter pickup, and landscaping to enhance wildlife food and cover. This year, FOJ board members decided to move the date from May to November. This decision was made primarily because newly planted shrubs and groundcovers have a better chance of establishing a hardy root system when planted in the fall. Plus, cool weather is easier on the person doing the planting!



Thanks to Boy Scout Troop 134 from Six Mile, trail walkers at K-TSP have a nice bench for sitting to enjoy beautiful Lake Keowee!

Water & Wildlife Day



Saturday, November 11th
Keowee-Toxaway State Park
1:00-3:00 pm

Come out and help with these projects:

- Litter Pick-Up
- Hiking Trails Upkeep
- Rain Garden
- Pollinator Garden

Partners:



FALL QUARTERLY TALK & FOJ ANNUAL MEETING AT BAD CREEK

FOJ held its Fall Quarterly Talk and Annual Meeting at the Duke Energy Bad Creek Outdoor Classroom on Oct 19. About 40 Friends of Jocassee began the day with a tour of the Bad Creek Reservoir and Hydroelectric Facility, led by Allan Boggs, past president of FOJ and an important representative of Duke Energy. The group returned for a delicious lunch and an interesting Quarterly Talk by guest speaker Laura Blake-Orr from the South Carolina Wildlife Federation. Her talk was an overview of the importance of pollinators in our landscape. Many thanks to all who came out on this beautiful fall day!

QUARTERLY TALKS – JOCASSEE UNDER WATER!

FOJ board member Mike Atkins gave a Quarterly Talk which presented Lake Jocassee as most people have never seen it... underwater!

Mike is the owner of The Scuba Shop in Spartanburg SC, and he has been leading dive trips on Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee for over 32 years. He gave an insider's insight into what happens as you slip beneath the surface of these beautiful lakes.

Thousands of divers have gone out with Mike, and he presented a video of some of the underwater sites found on our lakes, and took everyone on a virtual reality dive for 30 minutes, with shots of classes, wrecks, wall dives and events held underwater. We also saw some of the other destinations divers travel to, thanks to training on Lake Jocassee. The 12,000 or so divers in the Upstate have access to safe, clean, clear water at Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee, where they can become more comfortable with diving before venturing into other waters. The underwater tour was enough to make us desire an excursion into the depths of local waters to see what this land was like in times past.

DFSP SEEKS FUNDING FOR OCONEE BELL CONSERVATION PROJECT

Being loved to death... that is what is happening to the colony of Oconee Bells (*Shortia galacifolia*) alongside the Oconee Bell Trail at Devils Fork State Park. Over the past decade, there has been an alarming trend of visitors leaving the trail to photograph the Bells when they are blooming. In doing so, compaction of the soil - along with the trampling of the Bells - has affected their growth. Park Management has made efforts to educate visitors to stay on the trail and out of the creek. The question of how to protect the Oconee Bells, while giving the public access to them, has been an ongoing concern for the park, and for Friends of Jocassee. One solution is a raised boardwalk that will allow the Oconee Bells to flourish but also allow access for visitors and photographers to get views and photos of the beautiful little flowers. Park Management has received official approval for the boardwalk, and with the help of Friends of Jocassee and other external sources, hopes to have the boardwalk in place by the end of 2018.

A SINCERE NOTE OF THANKS-FOR-THE-GIVING

FROM FOJ PRESIDENT SHERRIE WHITTEN

As 2017 comes to a close, **we are very thankful for the community that makes Friends of Jocassee's** combined efforts come to life! At the risk of missing multiple, vital thank yous, or over simplifying someone's contribution, I would like to express our gratitude and illustrate how diverse and supportive a community we have.

I want to thank Allan Boggs for his years of service to our mission. As a founder of FOJ, Allan gave life to the mission and we are forever grateful. His passion and skills brought structure to the formation of FOJ as a non-profit.

To the current FOJ Executive Board for their personal drive to make our organization better. To Brooks Wade, our Vice-President, for bringing vibrancy and energy to our programming and who has a passion for all things Jocassee. To Kay Wade, our newsletter editor and email queen, whose kind spirit has also been at the core of FOJ since the beginning. To Heyward Douglas, who holds the truest nature of FOJ in his heart alongside the Foothills Trail Conservancy. To Cathy Foster, grant writer extraordinaire, who also helped lay the groundwork for FOJ to grow into a bright future and works behind the scenes to pull off many of our events. To Mallory Dalley, our Secretary, whose youthful dedication to our organization is bar none. To Debbie Laughridge, our Treasurer, who handles our books and finances while continuing to infuse the inspiration of FOJ within her own business. To Beth Clark, who **is the best "worker bee" around and** champions our volunteer efforts. To Ken Sloan, who joined the crew, bringing experience and knowledge of Oconee County to FOJ. To Dan Whitten, who has been there from day one and helps guide our future with a steady hand and invaluable nature experience. To Mike Atkins, whose dedication to instructing divers, and preserving and protecting the lake has inspired us all. To Kevin Evans, who as a founder of FOJ and DFSP park manager has set us on a visionary path and who continues to be a vital reflective component and guide for the organization. To Ray Felton, who brings both support and conscientiousness in helping us get to the next stage of impact on many projects involving DFSP. To Ken Forrester, whose work keeps him away from our round table, but whom we admire for his tireless work in the Jocassee Gorges. To Jennifer Bausman, who has been there for several years as a volunteer but now champions our mission as our newest board member. To Previous board members, Richard Bellmore, Steve Zahn, Jeff Atkins, Jim Stanton and Patricia Whitener for birthing non-profit organizational challenges and helping see us through the early years.

To our members who are truly here because of their love and passion for our mission. They continue to put in the extra effort in all that we do. Also to volunteer efforts that amount to countless impact hours. Without their drive and gifts, FOJ would not be where it is today.

To our financial donors, specifically, Duke Energy, who support us year after year, bringing inspiration combined with big picture vision. To silent auction donors, who have bestowed gifts on us for many years. To Vendors, Exhibitors & Guest Speakers who graced us with your own passions and gladly educated our participants at BellFest. To the Diving Community, who support our cleanup efforts at VIP day. To the Upstate Native Plant Society for providing plants and man hours for our plant projects. To the Upstate Master Naturalist Association for partnering and supporting FOJ in many ways through volunteer hours. To the Foothills Trail Conservancy for help on trail projects. To multiple Boy Scout Troops who have allowed young minds to be out in nature & catch the volunteer bug. To Eclectic Sun, whose employees give of their time and resources. To Jocassee Lake Tours, who back us with the donation of their boats. To FOLKS, who have partnered with us on events involving KTSP. To Devils Fork State Park and Keowee State Park, who allow us to infuse our project ideas of beautification and protection on your property.

I would like to also thank the FOJ Executive Board for having the confidence in me to oversee the group as president.

To ALL we thank you for a wonderful 2017 and we look forward to an exciting 2018!

Sincerely,

Sherrie Whitten, FOJ President

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY UPDATE

Cooler months are perfect for getting our roadsides back in good shape. Members are encouraged to monitor the sections of roadway they have adopted, and clean up as necessary.

FOJ's next Adopt-a-Highway cleanup will be on December 11 following the monthly board meeting at Devils Fork State Park. Join us... please!

ADOPT-A-HIGHWAY CLEANUP

Monday, December 11: 12:00 – 1:30 PM

Jocassee Lake Road

Boone Creek Road

FISH ATTRACTORS

FOJ has applied to put fish attractors in Lake Jocassee. The lower portion of the lake has very little structure for fish habitat. Fish need structure in shallow water, for habitat. When the lake was built, all trees near the shore line were cut down. This eliminated navigational hazards for boaters. Adding more structure to key areas of the lake should help reverse the decline of species such as crappie, one population which has drastically declined in Lake Jocassee. Increased habitat will give them additional bedding habitat. Adding structure would be beneficial for all fish species. This application process is ongoing.

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: _____
