

The Blue Wall Weekly

Your Source For Outdoor Activities
Along The Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment

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Greetings!

Welcome to the Blue Wall Weekly, your source for what's going on outside along the Southern BlueRidge Escarpment. Feel free to share your own photos, videos, and adventures along the Blue Wall by sending them to the email address at the bottom of the page, and we'll do our best to make you (locally) famous!

Jocassee Wild!

Full of nerves and giggles the kids come to us, strung out through the boat ramp parking lot like a flock of sheep heading to the barn for dinner. They cluster at the top of the dock to be snapped securely into life jackets. For the most part they speak to one another in quiet

murmurs. Teachers organize the groups and off to the boats they go. The anticipation is palpable. All eyes and ears are on the boat captains as they go over the rules for the day. (There aren't many, but the ones we have are important.) And off they go, calling goodbyes to the friends on other boats as if they will never see each other again. A few short hours later, back they come. We hear them almost before we see them. They've had an adventure, for sure... climbing and jumping and swimming and wading and holding tiny creatures with so many legs, and counting butterflies and watching parent geese and tasting flowers and leaves and having themselves the **BEST TIME EVER!** They've learned Cherokee history and geology and where animals live and how plants and animals adapt to where they live, and they may not remember it all but one thing is for sure: they have learned to LOVE Jocassee. And they sing their love in a short song they all learn, at the top of their lungs, over and over and over. If you want to witness a recent group leaving the dock, [click here](#), and if you want to see a recent group returning from their Wild Child Adventure, [click here](#). And if you want to feel part of this by donating to help a child, or a class, or a grade of children come out on a Jocassee Wild Child Adventure, [click here](#). (You can also watch on the DFSP webcam, which is linked at the bottom of this page, and see more on the Jocassee Wild Child facebook page, [here](#).) I promise it will do your heart good to watch kids being kids. ~K



Doesn't this beautiful face say it all?



JLT guides have to be a little wild themselves to stay ahead of all these kids!

**SPECIAL EVENTS
WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS**

Sunset Lake Tours [Book Now!](#)
 May 4: 6:30-8:30 PM
 May 11: 6:30-8:30 PM
 May 18: 6:30-8:30 PM

Happy Mother's Day [Book Now!](#)
 May 12: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM
 May 12: 2:30-5:30 PM

Kayak Tours [Book Now!](#)
 May 19: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

**CALL OR BOOK ONLINE TO RESERVE
SEATS**
www.jocasselaketours.com

**WEEKLY EVENTS
WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS**

Warm Season Lake Tours**
 Tues-Thurs, Sat & Sun: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM [Book Now!](#)

Sunday Afternoon Tour: 2:30-5:30 PM [Book Now!](#)

FISHING ADVENTURES WITH CAPT. ZACH
 8:00 AM-12:00 PM
 Call (864) 280-5501 to Book!

**Please note the new times for warm season tours, and new parking directions!

PRIVATE TOURS ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE!
[Book online](#) or call 864-280-5501

**THIS WEEK ON LAKE JOCASSEE
APRIL 29, 2024**

TEARS AND CHEERS. There is really nothing quite like it. 6 boats full of kids, coming in from an outing on Lake Jocassee, singing and cheering at the top of their lungs about their wonderful day. It's enough to make a grown man tear up. (please don't tell anyone). Nearly 200 kids went through our Jocassee Wild Child program this week, with several weeks to go before summer break. Kerry McKenzie heads our Wild Child work and has taken the program, which got flattened in its infancy by Covid, to the



Take the pictures BEFORE they get wet and muddy...



If you've every herded butterflies to get a group photo... you understand!



Betula lenta Sweet birch branches, slightly submerged and floating outside this *Castor canadensis* North American beaver lodge.
Photo by Kerry McKenzie

THIS WEEK!
APRIL 29, 2024

STATE PARK EVENTS

Oconee Station State Historic Site
Park Grounds Open Daily: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Originally a military compound and later a trading post, this Historic Site offers both recreational opportunities and a unique look at 18th and 19th century South Carolina. A self-interpretation station is available at the park office.

Table Rock State Park
May 4: 2:00-10:00 AM
Sunrise Hike-Table Rock

incredible place we are now. 600+ plus kids this spring, and many more this fall. 11 elementary schools so far, spread out over 4 Upstate counties. It is good work, important work, and we are all thrilled to see it thrive and grow. Watch the video attached to see and hear some kids coming into the dock. And bring a hanky. You may need it. (We won't tell anyone.) ~B

Jocassee's lake level was down about 5' most of the week which gave us plenty of places to beach the boats and let over 150 school kids from 3 different schools get off to explore, play and swim along the shores of the lake. For most, it was their first time experiencing the wonders of Jocassee. These kids romped and played alongside South Carolina's state butterfly, the Eastern Tiger Swallowtail, which at times were more numerous than the kids. This species can have 3 generations per year. The caterpillar (larva stage) feeds on leaves of the common tulip poplar tree. The lower lake level also gave us a chance to peek in on the resident beaver family living in the upper lake. These industrious critters subsist on woody and aquatic vegetation and had collected a substantial supply of sweet birch branches to eat. The tender bark and cambium layer offer nutrients, minerals, starches, sugar and fiber which keep these mammals healthy, plus taste great too. We pulled one floating branch from outside the den to smell and taste. No wonder beavers like this tree! If you haven't tried it, think wintergreen or hints of root beer. Yum! Even the kids were pleasantly surprised. The swimming and jumping off of rocks into the lake continued on Friday, even though it was overcast with slightly cooler air & water temps, but that doesn't stop a Jocassee Wild Child as you well know! ~ Sheryl White, JLT guide

COMING SOON!
MAY

STATE PARK EVENTS

Table Rock State Park
May 11: 2:00-6:00 PM
Music on the Mountain

Oconee State Park
May 23: 8:30-10:00 PM
Full-Moon Hike

OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

Mushroom Mountain
May 9: 2:00-4:00 PM
Medicinal Mushroom Mini Clinic

Conestee Nature Preserve
May 9: 4:00-5:30 PM
Nature Discovery After School Club- Middle School, Student's Choice

GNHA
May 11: 8:00 AM-3:00 PM
Silver Springs/Jones Gap/Tom Miller Loop

KOBA
May 11: 9:00-11:00 AM
2nd Saturday Litter Pickup

Upstate SCNPS
May 11: 9:00-11:00 AM
Upstate Spring Native Plant Sale at Conestee Park

GNHA
May 11: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

After experiencing the nocturnal aspects of the forest we will enjoy the pre-dawn sky from the outcrop as we anticipate the beauty of a new sunrise. BYOT (bring your own thermos) - there is no coffee shop at the top!

Oconee State Park

May 4: 10:00-11:30 AM

CCC History Stroll

Join our Interpretive Ranger on a guided walk through history. Explore the impacts the Civilian Conservation Corps has made on South Carolina and check out several of our structures built by enrollees.



OSP CCC statue,
Photo by Tia Leanne Jones

OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

Conserving Carolina

May 1: 10:30 AM

Etowah Library Speaker Series – The World of Monarch Butterflies w/ Joyce Pearsall

This presentation will briefly discuss the Monarch life cycle, some statistics (how many this year?), where they go in the winter, then summer, and their migration routes. You'll learn about what they have to contend with as caterpillars and then as they emerge from their chrysalises and begin their adult lives, and why milkweed is the caterpillars only food source.



Photo by Conserve Wildlife Foundation of New Jersey

Mushroom Mountain

May 2: 2:00-3:30 PM

MM Farm Tour

Tours of MM includes an introduction to fungal ecology and life cycles, laboratory overview, tour of the greenhouse fruiting

East Fork to Spoonaugh

Hagood Mill Historic Site

May 11: 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

Plants are Medicine: Early Spring Wild Edibles & Medicinals

Conestee Nature Preserve

May 11: 10:30 AM-12:30 PM

History Hike Part 2- A Naturalist-led Walk and Talk about Conestee's Past

Sierra Club of South Carolina

May 11: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Hike: Eastatoee Passage of the Palmetto Trail

Friends of Jocassee (FOJ)

May 13: 12:00-2:00 PM

Perk Up the Park: Keowee-Toxaway State Park

Conserving Carolina

May 14: 6:00-7:30 PM

Landrum Library Speaker Series: Using genetics to aid recovery of the federally endangered Bunched Arrowhead

Mushroom Mountain

May 16: 2:00-3:30 PM

MM Farm Tour

Greenville County Bird Club

May 18: 7:00 AM-12:00 PM (Longer Walk)

May 18: 8:00-10:30 AM (Shorter Walk)

Conestee Nature Preserve

Foothills Trail Conservancy

May 18: 9:00 AM

FTC Hike w/ Bill Ranson

GNHA

May 18: 9:00-11:00 AM

Foothills Trail Conference Trail Maintenance Hike

Hagood Mill Historic Site

May 18: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Mountain Roots Herb Festival

Conestee Nature Preserve

May 18: 7:30-9:30 PM

Night Hike

Holly Springs Center

May 18-19: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Pickens County Ag + Art Tour

Upstate Forever

May 21: 5:30-7:30 PM

Generations Campaign Launch

SC BOTANICAL GARDEN EVENTS

May 10: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

SCNP Elective: Ferns

May 18: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Sustainable Landscaping

May 25: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

South Carolina Native Plant Certificate Core Class: Tree Identification

READY TO RAMBLE A LITTLE FURTHER? CHECK OUT WHAT THESE FRIENDS HAVE TO OFFER!

SC Botanical Garden

Highlands Biological Station

Alarka Institute

Conserving Carolina

Bigelow's Botanical Excursions

room, and if there is anything fruiting on the trail, you will get to experience it.

Conestee Nature Preserve

May 2: 3:00-4:30 PM

Nature Discovery After School Club-Elementary

In this twice-monthly after school session, your child(ren) will discover the Preserve as young naturalists, letting their curiosity guide their hands-on exploration.

GNHA

May 4: 8:30 AM-3:30 PM

Gorges SP – Upper Bearallow, Rainbow, Turtleback, and Drift Falls

We will hike from the Visitor Center to Upper Bearallow Falls Observation Deck and then drive to another parking area to hike to Rainbow, Turtleback and Drift Falls.

GNHA

May 5: 10:30 AM-2:30 PM

Ashmore Heritage Preserve

We'll hike from old Camp Spearhead parking lot off 276. Specific directions can be given if meeting at trailhead. We'll hike 1 mile to connecting trail which leads around lake and on return we can walk to bat house and double back to trailhead if interested; this will add about half mile. The lake road is gravel.

SC BOTANICAL GARDEN EVENTS

May 2: 4:15-5:45 PM

Junior Naturalists 2

We'll discover how plants and animals adapt to their environments and how those environments are changing over time. We'll hone our science skills as we learn more about the complexities of natural world (Ages 12-16).

May 4: 10:30-11:30 AM

Saturday Garden Tours

These tours last approximately an hour and focus on the Garden's history, development, and seasonal highlights.



Shout out to all the many volunteers, past and present, who keep the Garden beautiful,
THANK YOU!

Borrowed Glimpses



Sassafras albidum

Plant a tree! Every day is Arbor Day.
Photo by Conserving Carolina



Meanwhile, Gorges rhododendron and Mtn. laurel are coming into their bloom time on Lake Jocassee

Your support makes
Jocassee Wild Child Adventures
happen!

<https://www.jocasseewild.org>
and follow Jocassee Wild Child Adventures
on Facebook!

<https://www.facebook.com/jocasseewild>

SPONSOR A JOCASSEE WILD CHILD TODAY!



Watch the DFSP webcam as kids from James M Brown Elementary leave the dock on May 2 and May 3: 9:30-ish am

Watch them return at 1:30-ish pm!

[Current conditions at Lake Jocassee via Devils Fork State Park webcam](#)

[Sponsored by Friends of Jocassee!](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

Jocassee Wild Outdoor Education is a 501c3 charitable non-profit dedicated to getting young people and adults outside to learn about the unique ecosystem of the Jocassee Gorges. All donations support Jocassee Wild Child adventures, so local school children will have a chance to experience the many wonders of the Jocassee Gorges.

ABOUT THE BLUE WALL

Spanning three states (North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia) and encompassing 859,000 acres, the Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment, known as the 'Blue Wall' by Native Americans, contains some of the highest natural diversity of rare plants and animals found anywhere in the world.



www.JocasseeLakeTours.com

info@jocasseelaketours.com

Thanks to Sheryl White for compiling the Blue Wall Weekly calendar, and to all JLT GUIDES for photos and continuous inspiration!

Phone: 864-280-5501

Jocassee Lake Tours Depart from the Main Dock at Devils Fork State Park

PLEASE CALL 864-280-5501 AT LEAST 24 HOURS IN ADVANCE TO RESERVE YOUR SEATS!



Enjoy this Lake Jocassee peaceful hideaway.
CAMP GLAMP!



Love Jocassee?
Join FOJ!



Visit Oconee Convention and Visitors Bureau



Your Portal to Paradise!



The Cottages at Jocassee are now available!