

THE BLUE WALL WEEKLY

Your Source for Outdoor Activities

Along the Southern Blue Ridge Escarpment

[Gmail messages are clipped.

Click link on bottom left corner to view entire newsletter.]

Greetings!

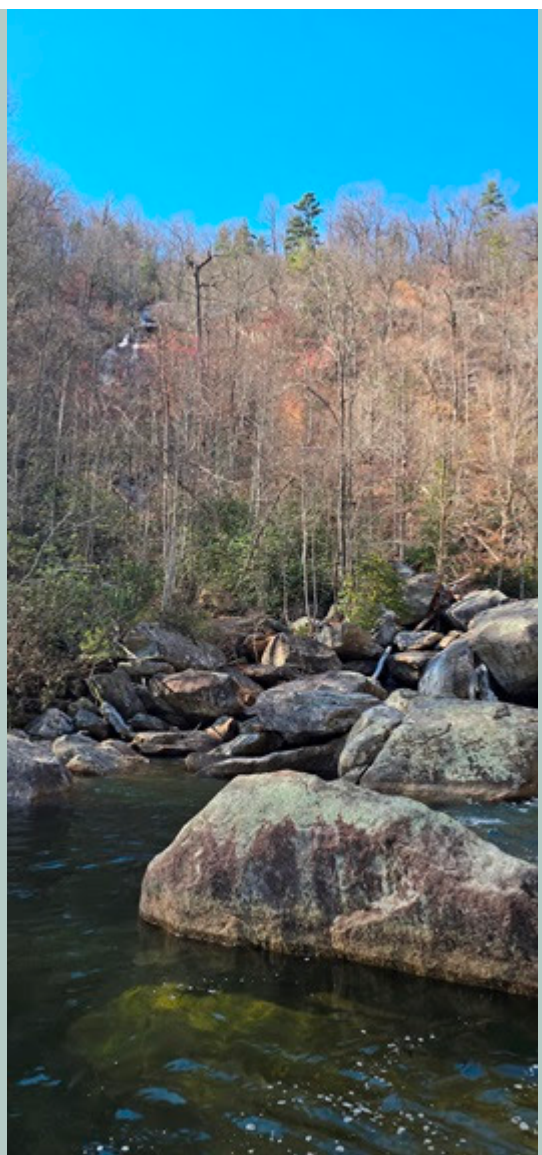


Welcome to the Blue Wall Weekly, your source for what's going on outside along the Southern BlueRidge Escarpment. Feel free to share your own photos, videos, and adventures along the Blue Wall by sending them to the email address at the bottom of the page, and we'll do our best to make you (locally)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

Big Fat Buds

The Jocassee Gorges inhale winter and exhale spring, and whispers of greenery push out from the dry ground through leaves dampened by a recent trace of rain. It's March. Wind rolling off the mountains is cold one day and warm the next, and cool again the day after that. Oconee Bells are opening just a few shimmering white flowers,

testing the air, but the big bloom is still days away. Likewise, slender cylinders of trillium buds are peeking from within tiny wreaths of mottled leaves, not quite ready to open, allowing the sharp-lobed hepatica and halberd-shield violets a few more days to bask in the spotlight of first blooms. Over Lake Jocassee the copper-colored spears of beech leaves, still in bud, shine against bright blue sky while maples begin the show of soft spring color across undulating hills. The past few months have been cold, sometimes bitter. Change is imminent. We are ready. ~K



SPECIAL EVENTS WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS

BellFest Day Tour [Book Now!](#)
March 15: 11:00 AM-2:00 PM

**Loons, Eagles, and Waterfalls
[Book Now!](#)**
March 16: 2:00-5:00 PM
March 30: 2:00-5:00 PM

Spring Equinox Tour [Book Now!](#)
March 20: 11:00 AM-2:00 PM

**Sunset Photography Tour
[Book Now!](#)**
March 20: 5:00 PM-7:00 PM

WEEKLY EVENTS WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS

Cool Season Lake Tours
Tues, Thurs, Sat:
11:00 AM-2:00 PM [Book Now!](#)

Sunday Afternoon Tours:
2:00-5:00 PM [Book Now!](#)

**CALL OR BOOK ONLINE TO
RESERVE SEATS
[Book Now!](#)**

PRIVATE TOURS



Well helloooo, Bob!
It's nice to see you!
Photo by Amanda Miller



Adult loons at various stages of molt. Photo by Pam Barbour

THIS WEEK ON LAKE JOCASSEE MARCH 10, 2025

We saw Bob! Bob is the first loon we ever banded, one very cold night in February of 2016. For the nine years that followed, we have seen him each winter, and in the same area of the lake. It's quite remarkable, really. This year I was losing hope, when, on the second day of this year's loon research week, there he was! Rolled over to preen his belly feathers, he seemed to wave his banded leg at us. It's a behavior Bob does every year. Really! Loons are known to be site loyal to their natal lakes and regions most every breeding season, but it has not been known definitively if loons are also site loyal in winter. Well, Bob's presence here, for 10 straight years now, proves emphatically that at least some loons are indeed site loyal to their winter waters. Good stuff, don't you know. It's the beginning of loon migration season now, proven by the arrival of Bonaparte's gulls this week, the harbinger gull of spring loon migration each year. Kay counted over a hundred just looking from the main dock. Jocassee becomes alive with waterbirds this time of year. ~B

OUTDOOR EVENTS THIS WEEK, MARCH 10, 2025

STATE PARK EVENTS

Devils Fork State Park

March 13: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Oconee Bell Nature Walk

We will walk along the one-mile long Oconee Bell Trail through the pre-spring forest and discover the story of the plant that has been the quest of botanists for over 200 years.

NEW EVENTS COMING IN MARCH/APRIL



STATE PARK EVENTS

Oconee State Park

March 29: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Flip the Script: Honoring the Women of the She-She-She Camps

Table Rock State Park

March 29: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Spring Wildflower Walk

Oconee Station State Historic Site

April 1: 10:00-11:30 AM

Monthly First Day Hike

Devils Fork State Park

March 15: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

BellFest 2025

Join us as we kick-off spring and celebrate the rare Oconee bell during its late-winter, early-spring blooming season.
March 11: 2:00 PM

Saluda Library Speaker Series:
Owls of the Carolinas

Pam Torlina's presentation will focus on the several species of owls found in the Carolinas and highlight the special characteristics that make them successful predators of the night.

Mushroom Mountain

March 13: 2:00 PM

MM Farm Tour

This tour is perfect for anyone interested in learning about growing or cooking their own mushrooms, foraging for wild mushrooms, caring for our environment with mushrooms, or even starting their own mushroom farm.

Friends of Lake Keowee Society (FOLKS)

March 13: 2:30-4:00 PM

OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

Upstate SCNPS

March 18: 6:30-8:00 PM

"Our Relationship with Trees after Hurricane Helene" with Scott Carlson

Conserving Carolina

March 20: 2:00-3:30 PM

Etowah Library Speaker Series: Trilliums of the Southern Appalachian Mountains

Oconee History Museum

March 20: 6:00-8:00 PM

Paint & Learn: Oconee Bell

Highlands Biological Station

March 21: 2:00-3:00 PM

Birding Basics

Jeanne Malmgren

March 22

Silent Hikes Spring Equinox- Poe Creek State Forest, Pickens County.

GNHA Hiking Club

March 22: 8:00-11:50 AM

Sassafras Mountain Up and Down

Speaker Series 1-Boating Safety.

The program is a fun and informative event focused on boating safety, presented by America's Boating Club's Golden Corner Lakes along with US TowBoats.

Conestee Nature Preserve

March 13: 3:00-4:30 PM

Nature Discovery After School Club – Elementary.

Salamander Search - It's that time of the year for salamanders to begin laying eggs. Let's see if we can find some!

Conestee Nature Preserve

March 13: 4:00-5:30 PM

Nature Discovery After School Club – Middle School

Amphibians of the Upstate - Why do scientists care so much about the health of amphibians? Let's find out!

Hagood Mill Historic Site

March 14: 2:00-4:00 PM

Growing Mushrooms 101

Whether you're a beginner or looking to expand your gardening skills, this hands-on interactive class will teach you the fundamentals of growing edible mushrooms outdoors.

Greenville County Bird Club

March 15: 8:00-10:30 AM (Shorter Walk)

March 15: 8:00 AM-12:00 PM (Longer walk)

Conestee Nature Preserve

Longer walk--Meet behind the baseball stadium to bird a variety of paved and natural surface trails. Shorter walk--Meet at the Spanco Drive parking area next to

GNHA Hiking Club

March 22: 8:00 AM-12:30 PM

Chimney Top Gap to Sassafras Mountain

Mushroom Mountain

March 22: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Mini Clinic--Mushroom Log Gardening

Conestee Nature Preserve

March 22: 1:00-2:00 PM

End of Hibernation Hunt!

Conserving Carolina

March 25: 6:00-7:00 PM

Landrum Library Speaker Series: "Something in These Hills: the culture of family land in southern Appalachia"

Conestee Nature Preserve

March 27: 3:00-4:30 PM

Nature Discovery After-School Club: Elementary.

Conestee Nature Preserve

March 27: 4:00-5:30 PM

Nature Discovery After School Club: Middle School

Upstate SCNPS

March 29: 9:30 AM-2:30 PM

Chestnut Ridge Heritage Preserve, Landrum SC

Mushroom Mountain

March 29: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

Growing Mushrooms on Logs at Holly Springs Center

Conserving Carolina

April 2: 10:00-11:30 AM

Edneyville Library Speaker Series: An Overview of Native Brook Trout Conservation in North Carolina

the old Conestee Mill and Dam to bird a section of the paved trail.



Carolina wren
Photo by Anthony Q Martin

Foothills Trail Conservancy

March 15: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Oconee Bells at Devils Fork State Park

Join fellow FTC members to celebrate the Jocassee Gorges' most famous harbinger of spring, the flower of the rare and beautiful Oconee Bell.

Friends of Jocassee

March 15: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
BellFest 2025

Come celebrate the blooming of the rare Oconee Bell with live music, guided hikes, vendors, kids' activities, and silent auction. Dan Whitten, current president of the SC Native Plant Society, will present the story of the "Oconee Bell and its special place within our Jocassee Gorges."

Upstate SCNPS

March 15: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Be Part of BellFest 2025--Attend & Volunteer with SCNPS

Mushroom Mountain

April 5: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

Spring Mushroom Cultivation Workshop

Foothills Trail Conservancy

April 5: 2:00-7:00 PM

FTC Spring Picnic

SC Botanical Garden Events

March 18: 1:30-3:30 PM

An Ecology of Spring Wildflowers

March 20: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

Intro to SC Invasive Plants: SC Native Plant Certificate Elective

March 22: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Natural Plant Communities: SC Native Plant Certificate Core Class

March 29: 1:00-4:00 PM

Nature Center Open House: Beautiful Birds

BORROWED GLIMPSES



Viola hastata Halberd leaf violet,
Photo by Steve Lewis

This year, we are looking for approximately 1-3 volunteers to assist in managing a booth. This would include selling plants, teaching the public about our society's mission, and providing education on native plants!

Hagood Mill Historic Site

March 15: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Kids Fest--2025

This family-friendly event features performances from local YAMs students, a traditional talent show, and interactive games and activities.

North Carolina Native Plant Society

March 15: 2:00-3:30 PM

Winter Workshop on Tree and Bud Identification with the Oconee Bell Chapter at Gorges State Park

Carrie Blair will bring a long list of tree field guides (beginner to advanced) that she recommends, and she will have many of these books with her on display.

GNHA Hiking Club

March 16: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

The Rebooters: Chestnut Ridge

If you're completely new to hiking, getting back into hiking, or need an assessment hike to check your capabilities, then grab those boots and "reboot"--this is the hike for you!

Highlands Biological Station

March 16: 10:00 AM-6:00 PM

The Lost Shortia: HBS Oconee Bells 2025

Join Dr. Jim Costa for a full-day adventure at Lake Jocassee, celebrating the fascinating history



Male catkins on *Alnus serrulata* smooth alder,
Photo by Pam Barbour



Acer rubrum Red maples in flower,
Female (red) and Male (gold),
Photo by Pam Barbour



Peekaboo!

Photo by Kerry McKenzie

and stunning beauty of the
SC Botanical Garden Events
Oconee Bells (*Shortia galacifolia*).

March 15: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Basic Horticulture: SC Native
Plant Certificate Core Class

Discover how and why native plants have the potential to transform traditional horticultural practices with Jon Fritz, owner of Bluestem Landscape Design.

Why (Re)Plant Native Oaks?



Sometimes you just have to stop and take a minute to be grateful.

Photo by Kerry McKenzie



Current conditions at Lake
Jocassee via Devils Fork State

Park webcam

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Jocassee!

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DID YOU KNOW?

Zugunruhe is a German word that means "migratory restlessness". It describes the anxious behavior of migratory animals, especially birds, as they prepare to migrate.

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

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

Jocassee Lake Tours Depart from the Main Dock
at Devils Fork State Park, 528 Jocassee Lake Road

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

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