



[Gmail messages are clipped.]

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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!**

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## **Wild for the Child**

**Misty gray cloud nestles onto Lake Jocassee like a feather blanket, settling pollen onto calm water in clumps thick as pancake batter. Visibility is zero. Four boats head into this mysterious void with no landmarks visible to guide the way. The fourth graders onboard, out for a Jocassee Wild Child adventure, are unusually quiet, a**

tad uncertain, and on this day, nary a one complains about wearing the mandatory life jacket. Then, in the middle of the lake, in the middle of what surely seemed like nothingness, sounds. Hoots. Tremelos. The patter of wide webbed feet running across water. Common loons, eager to be on their way north. What must these youngsters have thought, witnessing an extraordinary migratory event not with their eyes, but with their ears? Surrounded by departing loons, caught up in an experience as foreign to these kids as being on a boat in the middle of a lake in the middle of a dense gray cloud. Were they afraid? NO! Eavesdrop on their excitement here!. ~K



Lake Jocassee, Thursday, 10am

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**SPECIAL EVENTS WITH  
JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS**

Sunrise Photography Tour w/ Pam  
Barbour Book Now!  
April 10: 6:30-9:30 AM

Full "Pink" Moon Rising Tour  
Book Now!  
April 12: 6:30-8:30 PM

Happy Easter Sunday! Book Now!  
April 20: 2:00-5:00 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!**

**(864) 280-5501**

**PRIVATE TOURS**



Another loon almost ready to go!  
Photo by Natasha Bartolotta



Dan and his Jocassee discovery!

**THIS WEEK ON LAKE  
JOCASSEE  
APRIL 7, 2025**

**LOON TIME!** Time to leave us, that is. Spring loon migration is in full swing. On some days in the early predawn you can hear Loons hooting over most of the lower basin. On other days, the lake can be hauntingly quiet, like it was this past Tuesday morning when we saw only 10 or 12 loons. Such is the nature of spring migration. But on Wednesday morning loons were everywhere. Clearly the loons arrived late that Tuesday afternoon. And for Friday and Saturdays' before-sunrise sojourns, the heavens had clearly rained loons. And Bonaparte's gulls, and Red-breasted mergansers, and Coots by the hundreds. It has been a nearly overwhelming couple of mornings, the kind of mornings you must remind yourself to breathe, as loons fly right above your boat. The loon research is done for the year, soon followed by the loons. The two remarkable loon scientists, Dr's James Paruk and Jay Mager, and all the loon lovers and professionals, here from Florida to Maine to Colorado. They are all gone. There is a deep and certain sadness to the end of all this, as there is a certain sadness at the end of each season. And yet a certain joy too, as the seasons change

## STATE PARK EVENTS

### Gorges State Park

April 10: 8:00-9:00 PM

#### Night Hike at Gorges-NC Science Festival Program

We will be exploring the trail after dark with flashlights to look for animal eye-shine and to listen for sounds in the night.



*Strix varia* Barred owl, GSP photo

### Table Rock State Park

April 12: 3:00-10:00 AM

#### Sunrise Hike-Bald Knob

Check website to make sure trails are open. Be an extra early riser and take a unique moonlit hike to Bald Knob overlook on Pinnacle Trail.

### Table Rock State Park

April 12: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

#### Spring Wildflower Walk

Join us for a beautiful morning walk around the Lakeside Trail and explore the area in search of native wildflowers.

### Oconee Station State Historic Site

April 13: 3:00-4:00 PM

#### Historic Dye

Step back in time and learn how families in the early 1900s used natural ingredients to create beautiful, hand-dyed eggs.

and the new season slowly put us under her spell.

**BLOOM TIME:** On Tuesday, we did a tour under blue skies that show an abundance of wildflowers blooming. These included Flowering Dogwood, Downy Serviceberry, Mountain Silverbell, Oconee Bell, Canada Violet, Faded Trillium, Vasey's Trillium, and a new discovery that I learned the ID of the next day with Keith Bradley's class. This was Sand-myrtle, *Kalmia buxifolia*. This turns out to be the 2nd documented location in upstate SC of this rare species to SC. Wednesday added more flowers including Sweet White Violet, Doghobble, and Witch-alder. The coves added singing warblers. Out on the lower basin were hundreds of loons with many flying off only to return since they had no visibility over a hundred feet or so. I think most had dropped out of migration due to the weather impact days. We added a lone Osprey and a couple of Eagles to boot. Join in on all the excitement and get out there! ~Dan Whitten, JLT guide

## NEW EVENTS COMING IN APRIL/MAY

## STATE PARK EVENTS

### Gorges State Park

April 20: 10:00-10:30 AM

#### Spring Hike!

### Table Rock State Park

April 24-26

#### Blue Wall Birding Festival

## OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

### Hagood Mill Historic Site

April 8: 10:00-12:30 AM

#### Plant Medicine: Early Spring Wild Edibles & Medicinals Class

Join us for a guided walk, where we'll explore early spring edibles and medicinal plants hiding in plain sight.

### Conserving Carolina

April 8: 2:00-3:30 PM

#### Saluda Library Speaker Series: History of the Saluda Grade

This presentation will address many of the important events that occurred during that period and several advancements in railroading that came from operation on the Grade.

### SC Wildlife Federation (SCWF)

April 9: 12:00 PM

#### Wild Webinar Wednesdays

Tune in every Wednesday in April to learn about a variety of topics, including endangered species, turtles of SC, creating wildlife habitat with native plants, fishing with artificials, and how to get involved in citizen science.

### Conestee Nature Preserve

April 10: 3:00-4:30 PM

#### Nature Discovery After School Club – Elementary

Play like an animal- Let's visit our Nature Playscape and have fun playing like some of Conestee's critters.

### Conestee Nature Preserve

April 10: 4:00-5:30 PM

#### Nature Discovery After School Club – Middle School

Build like an animal- Why do animals build things? The Nature Playscape

### Gorges State Park

April 27: 1:30-2:30 PM

#### Wildflower Walk

### Gorges State Park

April 29: 10:00-11:00 AM

#### History of Gorges-Guided Hike

### Oconee Station State Historic Site

May 1: 10:00-11:30 AM

#### Monthly First Day Hike

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## OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

### SCNPS- Upstate

April 15: 6:30-8:00 PM

#### "Garden Scale Landscape Design with Natives"

### SC Wildlife Federation (SCWF)

April 16, 23 & 30: 12:00 PM

#### Wild Webinar Wednesdays

### Mushroom Mountain

April 17: 2:00-3:30 PM

#### MM Tour

### Highlands Biological Station

April 18: 3:00-4:00 PM

#### Wildflower Walks

### Hagood Mill Historic Site

April 18-19: 12:00 PM-9:00 PM

#### Old Time Weekend Jam Festival

### Greenville County Bird Club

April 19: 7:00 AM-12:00 PM  
(Longer Walk)

April 19: 8:00-10:30 AM (Shorter Walk)

#### Conestee Nature Preserve

### Highlands Biological Station

April 19: 8:00-9:00 AM

#### Morning Bird Walk

will be the place to find your inner architect!

### Highlands Biological Station

April 11: 3:00-4:00 PM

#### Wildflower Walks

Join a Naturalist for an easy stroll through the Botanical Garden to explore what spring ephemerals are blooming.

### SCNPS- Upstate

April 11-12: 8:00 AM-5:00 PM

#### Upstate SCNPS Volunteer Opportunity at the Spring Native Plant Sale

Whether you're a longtime volunteer (come back! your tribal knowledge is invaluable) or thinking about pitching in for the first time (we love meeting new folks!), we kindly ask for your support leading up to or on the day of the sale.

### GNHA

April 12: 8:30 AM-4:30 PM

#### Laurel Valley TH to Laurel Fork Falls - out and back

The trail is challenging (up and down) prior to Virginia Hawkins Falls. Once we pass the falls the trail becomes more subtle in its decent toward Laurel Fork Falls and Lake Jocassee.

### Duke Energy-World of Energy

April 12: 9:00-11:00 AM

#### Energy-Saving Free Tree Giveaway

First come, first served. Each household can claim two trees. Species available: Pawpaw, Pecan, Redbud, Red Maple, Tulip Poplar, River Birch, Blackgum, Overcup Oak, Swamp White Oak, Bald Cypress, Shumard Oak.

### SCNPS- Upstate

April 12: 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

### Upstate Forever

April 22: 11:30 AM-1:00 PM

#### Forevergreen Annual Awards Luncheon 2025

### Conserving Carolina

April 22: 6:00-7:30 PM

#### Landrum Library Speaker Series: Native Freshwater Fishes of Upstate SC - Conservation challenges & strategies

### Hagood Mill Historic Site

April 23: 10:00 AM-12:30 PM

#### Woodland Foraging

### Greenville Sea Kayakers

April 23-27: 1:00 PM-12:00 PM

#### Paddle & Camp Tugaloo State Park, Lake Hartwell

### Conestee Nature Preserve

April 24: 3:00-4:30 PM

#### Nature Discovery After School Club – Elementary

### Conestee Nature Preserve

April 24: 4:00-5:30 PM

#### Nature Discovery After School Club – Middle School

### Highlands Biological Station

April 25: 3:00-4:30 PM

#### NC Bioblitz + ecoEXPLORE Club: Bioblitz

### SC Wildlife Federation (SCWF)

April 25-27: 1:00 PM-12:00 PM

#### Palmetto Outdoors Women's Retreat

### Friends of Jocassee (FOJ)

April 26: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM

#### Fishing with Friends Trout Tournament

**Upstate Spring Native Plant Sale at Conestee Park**

Please know that proceeds from this event will go to support SCNPS's non-profit work to protect, restore, and educate about South Carolina's native plants and habitats.

**Hagood Mill Historic Site**

April 12: 9:00 AM-4:00 PM

**Homestead Day Camp**

This hands-on, immersive experience is designed for those eager to explore the art of homesteading through four engaging workshops: Blacksmithing for the Homestead, Cooking with Fire, Foraging for Wild Edibles, and Canning for Preservation.



Cooking with Fire, HMHS photo

**GNHA Hiking Club**

April 12: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

**King Creek Falls via Cherry Hill Campground & Burrells Ford -A Key Swap**

The Up River leg hikers will start at Cherry Hill Campground and hike the Big Bend Trail down the grade along the Chattooga River. The Down River leg hikers will start at Burrells Ford and hike the opposite direction. The two teams will cross paths and drivers will key swap.

**Mushroom Mountain**

April 12: 10:00 AM-12:00 PM

**MINI CLINIC - Building Soil with Mushrooms**

**SCNPS Upstate**

April 26: 9:30 AM-2:00 PM

**Ashmore Heritage Preserve, Greenville County, SC**

**Mushroom Mountain**

April 26-27: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

**Wild Mushroom Food Safety Certification - NORTH CAROLINA**

**Boomers Connect**

April 27: 2:00-5:00 PM

**Nat'l Geographic Declared Lake Jocassee one of the World's 50 Last Great Places! Carpool**

**Conestee Nature Preserve**

May 2: 6:00-8:30 PM

**Great Blue Gathering and Silent Auction**

**Foothills Trail Conservancy**

May 3: 9:00 AM

**May Wildflower Hike**

**SC Botanical Garden Events**

April 14: 10:00 AM-2:30 PM

**Lake Jocassee, Perfect Outdoor Classroom: SCNP Certificate Elective**

April 15: 1:30-3:30 PM

**An Introduction to Native Bees**

April 19: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

**Basic Horticulture: SC Native Plant Certificate Core Class**

April 26: 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

**Second Chance Sale**

April 26: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Discover the secret to creating nutrient-rich soil for your garden with Olga's expert guidance!

### SC Botanical Garden Events

April 7: 1:00-3:00 PM

#### SCBG Docent Orientations

Docent Orientation introduces future docents to our various docent opportunities and provide participants with information about the SCBG's history, mission, garden spaces and features, as well as techniques for communicating effectively with the public.



*Aesculus pavia* Red buckeye

### Sustainable Landscaping: SC Native Plant Certificate Core Class

#### **BORROWED GLIMPSES**



*Kalmia buxifolia* Sand Myrtle,  
Photo by Dan Whitten



Blue Ridge Elementary  
Students at Wright Creek Falls,  
4.4.2025,  
Photo by Ellen Harnett





Current conditions at Lake Jocassee via Devils Fork State Park webcam  
Sponsored by Friends of Jocassee!

Follow  
Jocassee Wild Child Adventures  
on Facebook!

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

SPONSOR A JOCASSEE WILD CHILD TODAY!



**APRIL 1 - THE FOOTHILLS TRAIL REOPENED  
THROUGH THE JOCASSEE GORGES! HAPPY HIKING!**

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### **DID YOU KNOW?**

Kalmia buxifolia is a species of flowering plant in the family Ericaceae known by the common name sandmyrtle. It is native to the mid-Atlantic and southeastern United States, where it has a disjunct distribution, occurring in three separate areas. It is only known from the Pine Barrens of New Jersey, the Coastal Plain of the Carolinas, and the southeastern Blue Ridge Mountains.

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### **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.

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[www.JocasseeLakeTours.com](http://www.JocasseeLakeTours.com)

[info@jocasseelaketours.com](mailto:info@jocasseelaketours.com)

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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**SUPPORT OUR JOCASSEE PARTNERS!**

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