

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 Blue Ridge 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!

Ahh-chooo!

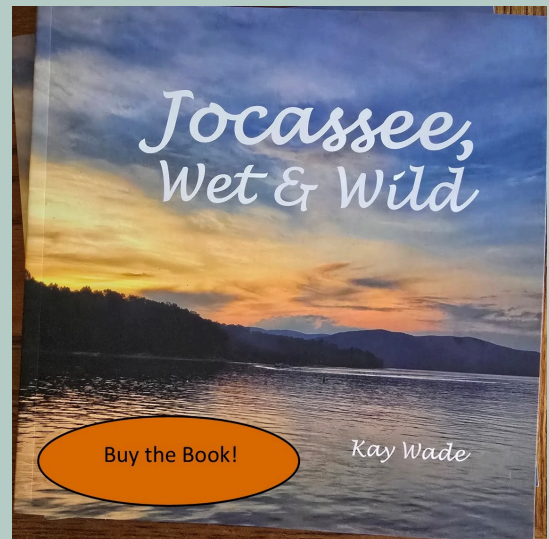
Chill rises with morning air to wipe a smooth surface across deeper recesses of Lake Jocassee. Sun has risen behind these steep, worn mountains, but here, where ancient river follows an ancient path, light is subdued. Then river bends around mountain, and rays of sunshine stream through trees, illuminating water dusted white with pollen from a forest full of oak trees. With each puff of breeze,

every dangling catkin releases thousands of fine, dusty pollen grains, which hang invisibly in cool, dry air until some hapless boater comes along and inhales the suspended particles. Itchy eyes, watery nose, and sneezing commences. One wonders whether beings other than humans are affected by this unfortunate bounty of nature. ~K



Oak catkins

Hot off the press and for sale now at the Jocassee Lake Tours' office, Devils Fork State Park, and by giving us a call at 864-280-5501 or sending an email to Kay at kay@jocasseelaketours.com!



SPECIAL EVENTS WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS

Two-Hour Flower Power Tour
[Book Now!](#)
Apr. 30: 2:30-4:30 PM

Full 'Flower' Moon Rising Tour
[Book Now!](#)
May 1: 6:30-8:30 PM

"All the Falls" Tour [Book Now!](#)
May 9: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

WEEKLY EVENTS WITH JOCASSEE LAKE TOURS

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

Sun. Afternoon Tours:
2:00-5:00 PM [Book Now](#)

[PRIVATE TOURS](#)
[ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE !](#)

[BOOK ONLINE](#)

Sunset Lake Tours Book Now!

May 9 & 16: 6:30-8:30 PM

**FOOTHILLS TRAIL
HIKING SHUTTLES
ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE!**

Warm Season Tours begin May 1

Public Tours Tues.-Sun.

4 hours, 10am-2pm

Warm Season Parking Protocol

Read those parking directions!



These gentle creatures certainly draw our attention and sometimes, if you're lucky enough, they may just invite you to sit beside them for a while.
Photo by Kerry McKenzie

THIS WEEK ON LAKE JOCASSEE APRIL 20, 2026

“Her name is Tickle,” she said, giggling as a millipede crawled across her arm. “It tickles!” That moment—pure curiosity, a little bravery, and a lot of joy—captured the spirit of our first week of Jocassee Wild Child Outdoor Laboratory Experiences (JWC OLÉ). This week, 4th graders from Oconee and Greenville counties stepped into a living classroom—one that floats, explores, and invites wonder at every turn. On the water, our guides shared stories of geology, life cycles, and the rhythms of the natural world. Just as often, learning flowed the other way. Students lit up the boats with their own discoveries—teaching us about water bears, explaining tectonic plates, and even breaking into a spontaneous rap about science. Along the shoreline and beneath cascading waterfalls, moments of awe unfold everywhere—like the student captivated by a swirl of swallowtail butterflies. These are the moments that build confidence, spark curiosity, and stay with children long after the day ends. ~Kerry McKenzie, Director, Jocassee Wild Child Outdoor Lab Experiences,

OUTDOOR EVENTS THIS WEEK, APRIL 20, 2026

STATE PARK EVENTS

Table Rock State Park

April 22: 10:00 AM-4:00 PM

Earth Day At Table Rock State Park

Step outside and celebrate Earth Day where nature and neighbors meet.



Photo taken from Caesars Head looking towards Table Rock, Photo by Chase V Harris

Table Rock State Park

April 23-26

Blue Wall Birding Festival

Tour some of the best bird-watching hot spots in the upstate as spring migration is ramping up.

OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

Upstate Forever

April 21: 11:00 AM-1:00 PM

Forevergreen Annual Awards Luncheon

Plan to join us as we celebrate several inspiring individuals who have been tireless champions for land and water protection, balanced growth, and environmental education in the Upstate.

Palmetto Trail

April 21: 5:00-8:00 PM

Conservation Conversation

The yearly event takes place at the classic Nickelodeon Theatre in downtown Columbia where numerous conservation leaders join to speak on the future of

JLT Naturalist Guide & Kayak Instructor

NEW EVENTS COMING IN APRIL/MAY

STATE PARK EVENTS

Table Rock State Park

May 1 & 15: 9:30-11:30 AM

In Bloom: A Wildflower Walk Series

Table Rock State Park

May 9: 2:00-6:00 PM

Music on the Mountain

Table Rock State Park

May 16: 2:00-10:00 AM

Sunrise Hike- Bald Knob

OTHER OUTDOOR EVENTS

Friends of the Reedy River (FoRR)

April 28: 9:30 AM-2:30 PM

2026 Upper Saluda Streambank Stabilization Workshop

Oconee History Museum

April 29: 6:00 PM

The America Revolution--Episode 5: The Soul of All America

South Carolina Wildlife Federation

April 29: 7:30 PM

Fireflies of South Carolina: The Natural History and Conservation of Lightning Bugs

SCNPS Upstate

April 30: 6:30-8:00 PM

Social Gathering & Membership Drive at Southernside Brewing Co.

Highlands Biological Station

May 1: 9:00 AM-3:30 PM

conservation, outdoor recreation, and natural resource stewardship in South Carolina.

Oconee History Museum

April 21: 6:00 PM

Revolutionary Reads: Drums

Along the Mohawk

Join us in celebrating America's 250th Birthday attending Revolutionary Reads!

Conserving Carolina

April 21: 6:00-7:30 PM

Landrum Library Speaker Series:

Our Vanishing Biodiversity and How to Save It

This presentation will present an overview of the causes and potential solutions to the species extinction crisis.

Conserving Carolina

April 22: 9:30 AM-4:30 PM

Etowah Library Speaker Series:

Hummingbirds--Flying Jewels

This program explores their iridescent colors, remarkable flight abilities, extreme metabolisms, and fascinating behaviors, from migration and torpor to courtship and nesting.

Upstate Forever

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

Earth Day Volunteer Workday

Join us for an invasive species workday.

Oconee History Museum

April 22: 6:00 PM

The American Revolution--Episode 4: Conquer by a Drawn Game

Join us each Wednesday throughout April and May for a

Mindful Birding

Hagood Mill Historic Site

May 1 & 2: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Wild Plants for Food & Medicine:

Soap-Making

Foothills Trail Conservancy

May 2

Foothills Trail Geology Hike

Sierra Club SC

May 2: 9:00-11:00 AM

Lake Conestee Nature Preserve Hike

Hagood Mill Historic Site

May 2: 9:30 AM-5:30 PM

Eastern Cherokee Southern Iroquois United Tribes of South Carolina

Pickens County Native Plant Jubilee

May 2: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM

2026 Pickens County Native Plant Jubilee at Liberty Elementary

Conserving Carolina

May 3: 8:00-11:00 AM

Hike with Hemlock Restoration Initiative at John's Rock in Brevard

Conestee Nature Preserve

May 6: 5:30-6:30 PM

Mindful Walk & Talk for Women

Oconee History Museum

May 6: 6:00 PM

The American Revolution--Episode 6: The Most Sacred Thing

Mushroom Mountain

May 6: 7:00-9:00 PM

Mushroom Hunting Made Easy: Learn to Identify Edible Wild Mushrooms (Live Online Class)

screening of **The American Revolution: A Film by Ken Burns.**

Mushroom Mountain

April 23: 2:00-2:30 PM

MM Farm Tour--Discover the Hidden World Beneath Your Feet

Join us for a 90-minute guided tour through one of the most unique farms in Upstate South Carolina.

Conestee Nature Preserve

April 23: 3:00-4:30 PM

Nature Discovery After School Club--Elementary School

This is an exclusive opportunity to experience hands-on exploration, investigation and discovery in ways unavailable to those just visiting the Preserve.

Highlands Biological Station

April 23-25: 10:00 AM-3:30 PM

BioBlitz Boogy

Become a wildlife explorer and discover what's living right in our backyard!

Hagood Mill Historic Site

April 24-25: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Wild Plants for Food & Medicine: Beauty Care--Lotions & Balms

This hands-on, beginner-friendly class is part of the Wild Plants for Food & Medicine: A Practical Beginner Series. Each class is designed to stand alone, so no prior experience is required.

Palmetto Trail

April 25: 8:00-10:30 AM

Upstate Bird Walk--Blue Wall Passage

Join us for a spring morning of birding along the stunning Blue Wall Passage of the Palmetto Trail

Hagood Mill Historic Site

May 8 & 9: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Wild Plants for Food & Medicine:

Wild Edibles as Food

Sierra Club SC

May 9: 3:00-7:00 PM

Sierra Upstate Spring Picnic at Cleveland Park

Conserving Carolina

May 12: 2:00-3:30 PM

Saluda Library Speaker Series:

Environmentally Friendly

Landscaping

Friends of the Reedy River (FoRR)

May 12: 6:00-7:30 PM

By the Banks: "Nature in Harmony: The Vital Role of Native Birds, Bees, and Trees"

Mushroom Mountain

May 14: 6:00-8:00 PM

Mushroom Cooking Class at MM

Sierra Club SC

May 16: 9:00-11:30 AM

Adopt-A-Highway Cleanup Greenville

Conserving Carolina

May 16: 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

Walnut Creek Preserve Speaker

Series: Bugs in Motion-Filming

Insects to Appreciate Biodiversity

& Advance Science

SC Botanical Garden Event

May 2: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM

Ferns: SC Native Plant Certificate

Elective

May 4: 9:00 AM-3:00 PM

in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains!



Red-eyed Vireo,
Photo by Gene Rochester

Friends of Jocassee (FOJ)

April 25: 8:00 AM-4:00 PM
Fishing with Friends Trout Tournament

Join us for our annual Fishing with Friends Trout Tournament! Entry fee is \$40/person. Click link above for rules and details.

Mushroom Mountain

April 25: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Wild Mushroom Food Safety Certification (Online) – 5-Year State-Approved Permit Training

This 5-year certification course meets the state health department criteria for the foraging and selling of wild mushrooms in South Carolina, North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, and Rhode Island.

SCNPS Upstate

April 25: 10:00 AM-3:00 PM
Chestnut Ridge Heritage Preserve, Landrum SC

Freshwater Monitoring Workshop at SCBG (May 4--Pickens)

May 9: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Sustainable Landscaping: SC Native Plant Certificate Core Class

May 15: 9:00 AM-5:00 PM
Wetland Ecology--SC Native Plant Certificate Elective



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

These Jocassee Wild Child experiences are made possible through meaningful community support. The Gutenstein Heritage Foundation is supporting students in Oconee and Pickens counties, while Lisa & Alan Shumacker are helping expand access for students in Greenville County. We are also deeply grateful to the many donors and partners whose support makes this work possible throughout the year.

For many students—especially in Title I schools—this experience is transformative. In partnership with Clemson University, we are also capturing these moments to better understand and strengthen the impact of outdoor learning.

Please join this hike led by Dan Whitten to enjoy trillium, bloodroot, chickweed, violets, Solomon's seal and many others.

SC Botanical Garden Events

April 24: 10:00-11:30 AM

Friday Garden Forays

Explore different areas of the SCBG each month with naturalist, James Wilkins.



Spring is a great time to come explore the Garden, SCBG Photo

April 25: 9:00 AM-1:00 PM

SCBG Second Chance Plant Sale

Plant Sales are major fundraising events for the SCBG, and all profits support operations and enhancements in the garden.

Week one set the tone: full of energy, wonder, and possibility. And we're just getting started—growing wild hearts in wild places.

Want to help shape today's explorers into tomorrow's stewards? A gift of \$65 helps a child experience a day of hands-on, outdoor learning at Lake Jocassee. Your support ensures that every student—regardless of background—has the chance to explore, discover, and connect with the natural world.

Visit www.jocasseewild.org to make a gift and support this work.

Kerry McKenzie

Director, Jocassee Wild Child
Outdoor Lab Experiences



Lake Jocassee Webcam

DID YOU KNOW?

Pine pollen is bright yellow and clumps in water. Soft, dusty, whitish pollen that creates a film comes from hardwoods... especially oak trees!

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,
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!**

SUPPORT OUR JOCASSEE PARTNERS!



JOCASSEE
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