



Jocassee Journal

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges



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Will Blozan pauses at the top of the largest known Eastern hemlock in South Carolina, at Coon Branch Natural Area in northern Oconee County. (Photo by Jason Childs)

Towering hemlocks of Jocassee Gorges treated for adelgids

Duke Energy Foundation grant of \$10,000 may save trees along Whitewater River

A Duke Energy Foundation grant of \$10,000 recently made possible the treatment of numerous giant hemlock trees for hemlock woolly adelgid at the Coon Branch Natural Area along the Whitewater River in northern Oconee County.

One of the hemlock trees treated along the Whitewater River is currently the largest known Eastern hemlock in South Carolina, in terms of wood volume.

"These hemlocks are a priceless forest resource," said Jen Huff, Duke Energy representative. "It is very important that we move quickly to help protect and preserve these forest giants, which are succumbing to the hemlock woolly adelgid at an incredibly fast rate."

The Coon Branch Natural Area Trail, part of the Jocassee Gorges in Pickens and Oconee counties, is a spur trail of the Foothills Trail (www.foothillstrail.org), a

76-mile trail between Oconee State Park and Table Rock State Park. Coon Branch Natural Area, accessed through Duke Energy's Bad Creek Hydro Project, is owned by Duke Energy and is part of the Jocassee Gorges lands that Duke placed under conservation easement.

Will Blozan and Jason Childs of Appalachian Arborists (www.appalachianarborists.com) in Asheville, N.C., completed the hemlock woolly adelgid treatments this fall. Two-hundred sixty-nine trees were treated by soil injection with insecticides that will be taken up by the trees' vascular systems, hopefully killing the adelgids. Without the treatments, the hemlocks would likely die within the next two to four years.

According to Blozan, who is president of the Eastern Native Tree Society (www.nativetreesociety.org), one of the giant hemlocks along the Coon Branch Natural Area trail is currently the largest known hemlock in South Carolina. Standing over 130 feet high and four

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Duke Energy Foundation grant may save hemlocks

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feet in diameter, measurements taken during a climb of the tree indicated a wood volume of 889 cubic feet. Taller and wider trees exist but wood volume is the only accurate determination of size and involves detailed measurements gathered during a climb. Data were gathered for a research project entitled the Tsuga Search Project. The self-funded project aims to document and preserve the largest and tallest specimens of Eastern hemlock (www.nativetreesociety.org/tsuga/index_tsuga_search.htm).

The Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund (www.hamptonfund.org) facilitated management and disbursement of funds from the grant given by the Duke Energy Foundation for the hemlock treatment. The Hampton Fund, headquartered in Columbia, receives private funds to assist in educational and other endeavors designed to contribute to the conservation and protection of the wildlife, marine and other natural resources of the State of South Carolina.



Will Blozan of Appalachian Arborists injects insecticide into the soil at the base of a hemlock tree at Coon Branch Natural Area to kill the hemlock woolly adelgid. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

The Duke Energy Foundation (www.duke-energy.com/community/foundation.asp) is the entity that distributes Duke Energy's charitable contributions. Through the Duke Energy Foundation, the company is able to exemplify its commitment to the communities it serves by providing funding to eligible organizations with programs that support education, community vitality and a competitive work force. ❁

Novel set in Jocassee Gorges read by Clemson freshmen

Author Ron Rash's novel "One Foot in Eden" part of Summer Reading experience

A novel with ties to the Jocassee Gorges region was the 2008 Summer Reading selection for incoming freshmen in the Clemson University Class of 2012.

The novel, "One Foot in Eden," was written by award winning author Ron Rash, who lives in Clemson. Rash grew up in Boiling Springs, N.C. He earned a bachelor's degree in English from Gardner-Webb College and a master's degree in English from Clemson University. He taught high school English for two years and was an instructor of English at a technical college for 17 years. Additionally, he has taught at Queens College, Clemson University, and the University of Georgia, and currently serves as the first Parris Distinguished Professor

in Appalachian Cultural Studies at Western Carolina University.



Ron Rash

When incoming Clemson freshmen attended summer orientation, they received a complimentary copy of Rash's book, instructions on how to access online resources and a writing assignment and due date. On Tuesday, Aug. 19, the day before the fall term began, students attended the Freshman Summer Reading Author's Address at Littlejohn Coliseum. There they joined 3,000 students, faculty and staff to hear Ron Rash speak about "One Foot in Eden." Following Rash's remarks, students broke into small groups across campus to discuss the book and the author's comments. The book will also be included in several freshman courses in both the fall and spring semesters. Students will be asked to write an essay

about their Summer Reading experience. ❁

Lake Jocassee trout stocking to close Devils Fork remote boat ramps

Remote ramps will be closed through Jan. 31, 2009 main boat ramp to remain open

Devils Fork State Park will again temporarily close the two remote day-use boat ramps this winter in conjunction with trout stocking efforts on Lake Jocassee. In cooperation with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), these remote boat ramps will be closed to public access once fish stocking efforts begin in November or early December. From the time fish stocking begins in November through Jan. 31, 2009 both the Roundhouse Point and Devils Fork boat ramps within Devils Fork State Park will be closed.

Rainbow and brown trout survive and grow well in the cold, deep waters of Lake Jocassee, but they cannot successfully spawn in the lake. The DNR annually releases trout raised at the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery into Lake Jocassee to maintain the popular fishery. Due to trout requiring colder temperatures for their survival, the best months for the restocking of trout vary from November through early December, when water surface temperatures reach about 65 degrees.

Devils Fork State Park offers family camping at its finest

Child-friendly state park makes for great adventure

By **Tim Harris**

I have enjoyed the majestic Jocassee Valley area of our wonderful state for a number of years now. So when the idea of doing a family camping trip came up, my vote for the location was obvious—Devils Fork State Park along the southern shore of Lake Jocassee.

I must admit that I was slightly concerned about how my 3-year old daughter would do in a campground setting. I'm happy to report that she loved it. The Devils Fork State Park campground really caters to children—the sandy beach, the playground, the fantastic sandbox we had right at our campsite (don't tell her it was really a tent pad)—she loved every minute of it.

We indulged a bit and rented a pontoon for a few hours one day in order to tour the lake. Even though the water level was down, we still had a great time exploring Laurel Fork Falls, Wrights Creek Falls and Mill Creek Falls. At Wrights Creek, my daughter landed the biggest

To help ensure greater survival rates for newly released trout, Devils Fork will restrict access to the remote day use boat ramp locations. By not fishing for the new populations of sub-legal size trout that have been released, the trout populations will have more time to become acclimated to the lake environment and disperse. State Parks and DNR hope to reduce the mortality rate of the newly released sub-legal trout by eliminating the stress of being caught and released.

“We hope that everyone will understand and cooperate with our efforts to improve the population of trout found within Lake Jocassee,” said Jim Stanton, assistant park manager at Devils Fork State Park. “Your commitment to stewardship will hopefully translate into healthier numbers of trout in Lake Jocassee in coming years.”

The boat ramps located at the Devils Fork State Park's main boat ramp and parking area will remain open during this time for all boat traffic and guests to Lake Jocassee. If you have any questions pertaining to activities and/or access within Devils Fork State Park, contact the Devils Fork State Park office at (864) 944-2639 for more information. ❁



Tim Harris and his 3-year-old daughter, Molly, show off a bream that she caught while on a camping trip to Devils Fork State Park.

fish of her life (coincidentally, it was also the first). I'm not sure who was more proud of it—me, or her!

By the time you read this, the weather will have turned cool and the leaves will be on the ground. I encourage you to gather your family and spend a few days in the Jocassee Valley. The memories you make will not soon be forgotten.

(Tim Harris is an Easley resident who visits the Jocassee Gorges area as often as possible for a variety of outdoor activities.) ❁



The barrier-free fishing pier at Dug Mountain Angler Access Area is one of the many improvements made to the popular Jocassee Gorges fishing spot. (DNR photos by Greg Lucas)

Eastatoee angler access area now features barrier-free fishing

Conservation partnership between Duke Energy, Trout Unlimited and DNR improves popular fishing spot

The new and improved Dug Mountain Angler Access Area, a popular fishing spot within Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens County, was the site of a celebration in spring 2008.

Duke Energy, Trout Unlimited and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) cooperated on the special project to improve access and site conditions. A barrier-free fishing structure was created over the edge of the river that affords physically-challenged anglers the opportunity to fish for trout near the landmark known as the “High Bridge,” which spans the Eastatoee River. A ribbon cutting was held May 22 at Dug Mountain to celebrate improvements to the site.

Public parking and access to the river and foot trail were also improved at the popular site, which is used heavily by Upstate trout anglers. Rainbow, brown and brook trout are stocked at the site each year by DNR, and it is a favorite fishing destination for families in the Upstate.

“The partnership among the groups involved has been tremendous,” said Steve Hammond, Duke Energy hydro manager for the Keowee-Toxaway and Nantahala



Celebrating the ribbon-cutting ceremony at Dug Mountain Angler Access area were (from left) Steve Hammond and Allen Nicholson, both of Duke Energy, Warren Moore and his dog, Taxi, Leon Stenzel of Trout Unlimited, and Dan Rankin of DNR.

area. “We share the same goal to make Dug Mountain more accessible to all folks while protecting its scenic beauty. We are certainly open to others who would like to become involved with this project.”

Dug Mountain Angler Access Area is about 1 mile down Roy F. Jones Highway off SC Highway 11. 

Trout Unlimited's Saluda River Chapter funds hatchery shelter

Shelter protects brood trout from direct sun, birds of prey

By Keith Cloud

A recent donation to the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery by Trout Unlimited's Saluda River Chapter should bring much-needed assistance to the staff and occupants (fish) of the hatchery.

It was on a chapter outing that I spoke with Robby Lowery of the Walhalla State Fish Hatchery.

After a tour of the hatchery by members of the chapter, it became apparent that a desire to assist the hatchery was very much in the hearts of those who attended the outing.

The Saluda River Trout Unlimited members had a first-hand look at the behind-the-scenes operation and having had that look could see how hard the staff of the hatchery has to work. Quite simply, it is time consuming, and the margin of error is very thin. Managing a cold-water hatchery in the Deep South is a labor of love.

One of the needs addressed was the need for a shelter for the brood trout of the hatchery. The shelter could provide much-needed protection from the sun and provide protection from birds of prey. Saluda River Trout Unlimited members discovered that the exposure of direct sunlight on the brood trout, especially during the summer months, creates added stress on the fish. With



This shelter, donated by the Trout Unlimited Saluda River chapter, helps protect brood trout at Walhalla State Fish Hatchery.

With stress comes disease and possible death of trout of all sizes.

Saluda River Trout Unlimited members obtained measurements necessary for construction of a new shelter. After a successful banquet and fundraising year, funding was approved by Saluda River Trout Unlimited leadership. Board member Bob Williams contacted

Whitten Building Systems in Seneca to construct the project. The recent completion adds to a long list of Saluda River Trout Unlimited accomplishments in assisting our friends in conservation. Saluda River Trout Unlimited is grateful for the hard work of the hatchery and its staff. Robby's behind-the-scenes tour was a wakeup call, and we know what effort it takes to get those much appreciated trout to come visit

our beautiful Saluda River in Columbia.

For more on the Saluda River chapter of Trout Unlimited, its meeting location and some great pictures, visit www.saludatu.org.

Robby Lowery of Walhalla State Fish Hatchery will address the Saluda River Chapter's Jan. 12, 2009, monthly chapter meeting.

(Keith Cloud is the former president of the Saluda River Chapter of Trout Unlimited and is currently its outing coordinator. For more information, call him at (803) 606-7871.) ❁

Study looks at fire, microorganism

Burns don't kill plant pathogen

By Inga M. McLaughlin and Steven N. Jeffers

Species of *Phytophthora*, a genus of fungus-like microorganisms, are known to be destructive plant pathogens of agricultural crops and forest trees worldwide. For example, in the Southeastern United States, *Phytophthora cinnamomi* causes littleleaf disease on shortleaf pine trees and root rot on many woody ornamental crops in nurseries and landscapes as well as on American chestnut and chinquapin trees in our forests. Species of *Phytophthora* can survive in soil in the absence of a host plant for long periods of time because they produce thick-walled resting spores.

Because of the organism's soilborne nature, the use of prescribed fire has been suggested as a possible strategy to reduce or eliminate species of *Phytophthora* from forest soils if soils could be heated to temperatures that are lethal to the pathogens. In collaboration with

DNR, we were able to test this strategy during two low-intensity prescribed fires in the Jocassee Gorges Natural Area in spring 2007. Soil temperatures were recorded and survival of *P. cinnamomi* was evaluated at two depths below the soil surface where the pathogen is known to occur. In our study, the low-intensity fires did not generate enough heat to raise soil temperatures high enough or long enough to significantly affect survival of *P. cinnamomi*.

Therefore, prescribed fire, particularly the low-intensity type used routinely in forest management, does not appear promising as a management strategy for reducing populations of *Phytophthora* species in forest soils.

(Steven Jeffers is a professor of plant pathology at Clemson University. Inga McLaughlin received her master of science degree in plant and environmental sciences at Clemson in December 2007.) ❁

Clemson's Youth Learning Institute

Wilderness adventure camp connects youth with nature

By Chris Copeland

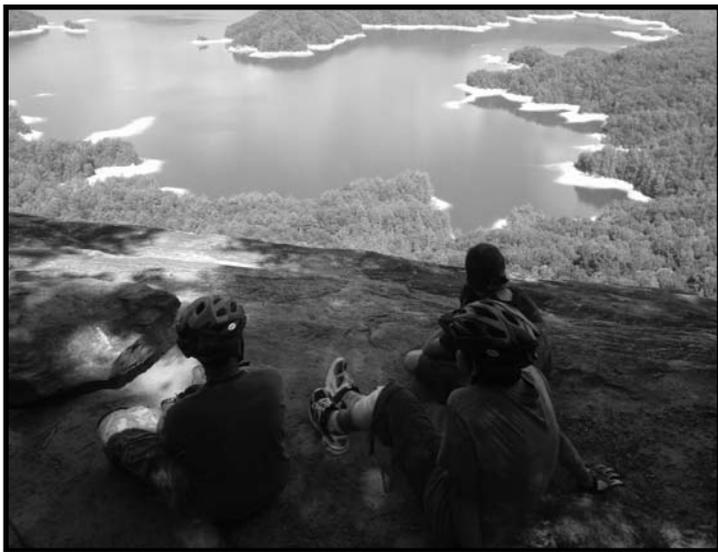
A disconnect with nature among today's youth is linked to childhood disorders like obesity, attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder and depression. Author Richard Louv calls it "nature-deficit disorder" in "Last Child in the Woods," a book that has spurred national dialogue among those concerned about the health and well-being of children.

In response, Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute has introduced Adventure Summer Camp, a 10-day wilderness excursion in the Jocassee Gorges area for youth ages 12 to 15. Backpacking, canoeing, mountain biking and workshops on wilderness safety and survival skills help young people cultivate responsibility, self-confidence and teamwork.

"Connecting kids with nature is important for healthy youth development," said Brett Deming, adventure programming director at the Institute. "This is a great adventure that teaches skills and encourages kids to continue pursuing outdoor activities."

The camp is located at Pinnacle Falls, a 100-acre camp donated by The Cliffs Communities and its foundations. The site features a trout stream, 60-foot waterfall, game field and hiking trails, with access to the 76-mile Foothills Trail and Lake Jocassee.

For more information about Adventure Summer Camp, contact Brett Deming at (864) 878-1041, bdeming@clemson.edu or <http://www.clemson.edu/yli/pages/adventure.php>.



The breathtaking view at Jumping Off Rock is enjoyed by mountain bikers who are part of the 10-day wilderness excursion at Adventure Summer Camp with Clemson's Youth Learning Institute.



Adventure campers take a breather while crossing a swing bridge over the Jocassee Gorges State Park on the Foothills Trail. The hike is part of Adventure Summer Camp managed by Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute.

Children walk to highest point in state during Sassafras Mountain Climb

Hundreds of children gathered at Young Life's Pinnacle Point Camp to greet world-famous golfer Gary Player, The Cliffs Communities founder/CEO Jim Anthony and celebrity actor Kevin Sorbo as they arrived via helicopter to kick off Player's pro-am golf tournament with the Sassafras Mountain Climb.

The purpose of the event, hosted by the Gary Player Invitational and The Cliffs' Zest Quest fitness program, was for kids to have fun outdoors while hearing messages about wellness and the importance of physical activity.

Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute hosted families prior to the hike with large inflatable games and a climbing tower, a hit with the kids. Then, Player, Anthony and Sorbo led children and parents on the hike up Sassafras Mountain, a three-mile stretch to the state's highest point. The 3,560-foot summit is



te finds a home in Jocassee Gorges



ng bridge spanning the Toxaway River in North Carolina's
of a 10-day wilderness excursion at Adventure Summer
nstitute.

owned by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources.

Youth Learning Institute, a unit of Clemson
Public Service Activities, knows all about enhancing
the lives of youth by connecting them with the great
outdoors and engaging them with challenging activities.

“The kids were drawn to the climbing
tower,” said Andrew Hopson, assistant
director for Youth Learning Institute
Adventure Programming. “They were eager
to get fitted in harnesses and helmets, and
excited about climbing high above the
ground. Young people intuitively know how
to be adventurous; our job is to provide safe
opportunities to explore their capabilities.”

Proceeds from the golf tournament will benefit
Zest Quest and the S.C. Teacher Renewal Center, a
partnership initiative involving The Cliffs, Clemson
University’s Youth Learning Institute and the S.C.
Department of Education, that provides weeklong
nature-based, wellness experiences for South Carolina
educators.



Young environmental scientists will use Jocassee Gorges for field-study program

As early as second and third grade, children
learn about the earth’s environmental problems. They
can explain the demise of rainforests, the plight of
endangered species and the damage of oil spills.
Clemson’s Youth Learning Institute agrees with author
David Sobel that “if we want children to flourish, we
need to give them time to connect with nature and love
the Earth before we ask them to save it.”

Since 1991, the Institute has reached more than
70,000 teachers and students through Teaching Kids
About The Environment (KATE) programs at Camp
Bob Cooper in Summerton. Now, a gift of forestland by
The Cliffs Communities and its foundations will enable
the program to expand to the Jocassee Gorges area.

During the three-day residential adventure,
third- through fifth-graders are exposed to more core
outdoor education than they experience in three weeks
of traditional classroom instruction. The program was
developed by the Youth Learning Institute and the S.C.
Coalition for Natural Resources. It utilizes hands-on,
science-based curriculum that covers water ecology,
wildlife resources, forestry and soil science, and is
endorsed by the S.C. Department of Education.

For more information about Teaching KATE,
contact Greg Linke at 864-353-431, glinke@clemson.edu
or <http://www.clemson.edu/yli/pages/kate.php>.
(Chris Copeland is a writer/editor for Clemson University’s
Youth Learning Institute. She can be reached at ccopela@clemson.edu.)



School children gather samples for a soil science
class, part of Teaching Kids About The Environment
(KATE), a hands-on, science-based program operated
by Clemson's Youth Learning Institute.



The Teacher Renewal Center, a partnership between Cliffs Communities, Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute and the S.C. Department of Education, will be built on the banks of the Keowee River between lakes Keowee and Hartwell.

Teacher Renewal Center to be developed along Keowee River

Cliffs Communities working with Clemson's Youth Learning Institute, S.C. Department of Education to help retain teachers

By Chris Copeland

More than 6,800 teachers in South Carolina will not return to schools where they taught last year, and one-third of new teachers leave the profession within three years. A new partnership seeks to change these statistics and set a national standard for education.

The Cliffs Communities and its foundations are donating \$10 million and more than 355 acres of land along the Keowee River to support development of a Teacher Renewal Center that will be jointly operated by Clemson's Youth Learning Institute and the S.C. Department of Education.

Jorge Calzadilla, executive director of the Youth Learning Institute, said, "We are humbled to be the stewards of a gift that will impact education for generations to come."

Jim Anthony, founder and chief executive officer of The Cliffs, concurred: "We are honored to be a part of a project that will make a tremendous difference in the lives of thousands of teachers and children in South Carolina."

State Superintendent of Education Jim Rex

said, "The scope of this takes your breath away. It's such an amazing show of support for our children, for our schools and for our state. Now we have to honor Mr. Anthony's support by building something that will become the gold standard for the whole nation."

The center will include residential and conference facilities where teams of teachers can attend weeklong programs to enhance collaborative inquiry and continuous improvement in schools, and to heighten awareness of personal health and wellness. It also will incorporate experiential learning programs for students while teachers participate in seminars.

"Our goal is nothing less than creating the nation's premier teacher center and developing a national model for nature-based education programs," said Clemson President James Barker.

"This partnership allows the Youth Learning Institute to expand our programs for youth and educators into new areas," said Calzadilla.

For more information about the S.C. Teacher Renewal Center, contact Stephen Lance at (803) 414-1735 or slance@clemson.edu.

(Chris Copeland is a writer/editor for Clemson University's Youth Learning Institute. She can be reached at ccopela@clemson.edu.) 



Conservation partnership protects critical mountain tract

A portion of Nine Times tract is protected, partnership now turns its attention to adjoining tracts

The South Carolina chapter of The Nature Conservancy and Upstate Forever announced the establishment of a new nature preserve at one of the most biologically significant properties in the Southeast, the Nine Times Preserve.

The Nine Times Preserve is a 560-acre tract located in northern Pickens County where the Southern Blue Ridge Mountains meet the Piedmont. The Nature Conservancy purchased the land from conservation partner Upstate Forever, which acquired the property from Crescent Resources at the end of 2007. Upstate Forever also secured an option to purchase the balance of the property, about 1,700 acres.

The land contains two mountains and supports seven distinct forest types, and is home to an abundance of fish and wildlife, including reptiles, amphibians and black bear. A recent inventory of the property identified a high concentration of state-level rare species and species of federal concern including the peregrine falcon. A botanical survey at the site revealed 134 native wildflower species.

The South Carolina Conservation Bank provided a generous grant of \$1.5 million, and conservation benefactors Fred and Alice Stanback also made a very generous gift to protect Nine Times.

State Sen. Larry Martin of Pickens said, "This is a great day for conservation in South Carolina with the protection of this magnificent tract. It's only a 15-minute drive from downtown Pickens and will remain open to the citizens of South Carolina for hiking, hunting and environmental education."

State Rep. David Hiott, whose district includes the Nine Times Preserve, said, "This is the last big piece of property left in Pickens County, and I'm delighted that a key part of it has been preserved. The citizens of Pickens County and the state of South Carolina will benefit for many years to come from this historic transaction."

The Nature Conservancy will own and manage the property as a nature preserve. The site will remain in a Wildlife Management Area administered by the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, and will be open to the public for hunting during designated seasons. For more information, visit nature.org/southcarolina, upstateforever.org, or sccbank.sc.gov. 

Jocassee Gorges a backdrop for internship

Furman student takes on a variety of tasks for DNR

Talley V. Kayser, a Furman University student from Boiling Springs, spent the spring and summer of 2008 working as a conservation and recreation intern for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources' Clemson office.

Talley tackled a variety of tasks during her DNR internship, including:

- * Acting as naturalist and guide for a weekly Saturday morning hike on the Natural Bridge Trail at Keowee-Toxaway State Natural Area, future home of the Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center.

- * Spending a week at Camp Wildwood, a conservation camp for 100 rising 10th graders held at Kings Mountain State Park by The Garden Club of South Carolina, the S.C. Wildlife Federation and DNR. Talley assisted with classes in forestry, wildlife, fisheries and hunter education.

- * Writing an article for *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine on Lake Jocassee, and updating the DNR's Jocassee Gorges Web site and the Foothills Trail Conference Web site.



Talley V. Kayser (right) talks with *South Carolina Wildlife* magazine photographer Michael Foster on Lake Jocassee. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

- * Assisting the DNR's Stream Team with biological assessments of various Upstate streams and creeks, helping with the inventory of a brook trout restoration stream, and assisting DNR biologists with heritage preserve maintenance and feral hog trapping.

- * Giving boater safety presentations at 4-H Pontoon Classrooms.

- * Handling front-desk duties at the Clemson DNR office, including boater registration and license sales.

"Talley performed an incredible variety of duties at the Clemson DNR office during her internship,"

said Greg Lucas, her DNR supervisor. "She handled everything she did with enthusiasm and with good cheer at all times. Her contribution to the DNR's conservation mission was invaluable." 



A young lady takes aim at the 4-H Shooting Sports Booth at the second annual National Hunting and Fishing Day held at Duke's World of Energy.

Upstate National Hunting and Fishing Day has banner second year

1,400 people spend a great day out of doors at Duke's World of Energy

There is no better way to spend a beautiful Saturday in the South Carolina mountains than kayaking, fishing, shooting and climbing trees.

On Oct. 3-4, 1,400 people poured onto the grounds of the World of Energy visitor center at



A father and son try their hand at target practice with a bow and arrow at the second annual Upstate National Hunting and Fishing Day held Oct. 4 at Duke's World of Energy in northern Oconee County.

Oconee Nuclear Station on Lake Keowee in Oconee County for an outdoor family adventure celebrating National Hunting and Fishing Day. With more than 150 volunteers, including 41 Clemson University students, the event ended with smiles on faces.

For the second year in a row, the World of Energy hosted one of South Carolina's largest community outdoor events. More than 37 conservation organizations partnered with Duke Energy to promote outdoor recreation and encourage conservation.

Visitors were treated to a variety of activities including kayaking, air rifle shooting, archery, retriever demonstrations, tree stand climbing, camo games, fly casting, fly tying and spinner fishing—just to name a few. A group of visitors even witnessed the birth of a monarch butterfly at the butterfly exhibit.

The event was sponsored by Duke Energy, Upstate Forever, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, South Carolina Wildlife Federation, Clemson University 4-H Shooting Sports, Clemson University 4-H, Trout Unlimited, Sunrift Adventures, Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund and Weatherby Foundation International. 

What do wild hogs and white trilliums have in common?

Upstate naturalist discovers uncommon wildflowers in Jocassee Gorges

By Dennis Chastain

Writing about the process of discovery in a previous issue of *Jocassee Journal* I made the following observation, “More often than not, it is while we are looking for something else that we make the most significant finds.” Well, serendipity strikes again.

This past spring I was turkey hunting up on Twisting Pine Mountain in the heart of the Jocassee Gorges property. I had managed to get myself up on top of the high peak by first light, but after an hour of straining my ears to pick up the tell-tale rattle of a distant gobbler, I heard nothing—not so much as a peep from a lusty Tom. As I have often told my wife, “The worst thing that can happen to a turkey hunter is nothing.”

So rather than waste a beautiful spring morning stomping out of the woods in disgust I decided to go botanizing. The Side-of-the-Mountain watershed, which lies at the foot of Twisting Pine, has long been one of my favorite areas to look for interesting spring wildflowers. Plus there’s the old railroad bed of the Appalachian Lumber Co. from the 1920s to explore.

I slipped and slid my way down the north side of the mountain and soon found myself at the point where a logging road that I know well intersects with the Side-of-the-Mountain Creek. There, in the rich soils that line the creek bank, were several sets of fresh hog tracks. The tracks were so fresh that I could smell boar hog. My best guess was the hog had just come through within the last 30 minutes or so before I had arrived. Hmmm, this will be fun, I said to myself, I think I’ll track the hog and see what he’s up to.

So I followed the fresh tracks for about a quarter mile up the logging road and off into the woods until he dropped off down in the mini-gorge in the upper Side-of-the-Mountain drainage. This is an area that I know well and one of the most botanically rich areas in that quadrant of the Jocassee Gorges. I followed the tracks down the steep slope and down into the creek bed. A few yards downstream, the hog tracks left the creek bed and trailed up a nearly vertical wall of the gorge. To my absolute astonishment, the first 30 yards of the slope was carpeted in beautiful white-flowered trilliums. White-



This white trillium was one of hundreds discovered by Upstate naturalist Dennis Chastain on a Jocassee Gorges hillside. (DNR photo by Herrick Brown)

flowering trilliums are as rare as hen’s teeth in our part of the world. In fact, Wadakoe Mountain is the only other place in the Jocassee Gorges that I have seen them.

I spent an hour or so trying to identify the several different forms that were evident. My best guess was that on that slope, and along both sides of the streams

for the next 100 yards, there were somewhere between 200 and 300 stems, a real botanical hotspot. I soon broke it down into three possibilities. There were some flowers that closely resembled the broad, textured petals and nearly black ovaries

of Gleason’s trillium (*T. simile*), some more closely resembled the white-flowered version of Wake Robin (*T. erectum* variety *album*), and a third type appeared to be an intermediate form, with characteristics of both.

When I got home, I contacted my old pal, Bert Pittman, the DNR’s resident plant hunter. Bert shared my enthusiasm for the find and promised to come up as soon as possible. Within a few days, me and Bert and his able assistants, Kathy Boyle and Herrick Brown, found ourselves down in the rich cove oooing and ahing over my secret garden of uncommon wildflowers. Unfortunately, most of the stark white petals had faded and some had already dried up. Nevertheless, we took a few specimens for identifying at a later date and spent the rest of the morning exploring the diverse botany of the immediate area. We still don’t have positive identifications on the white trilliums, but you can bet we will be back in there next spring to see the stark white trilliums in their full glory.

Lesson to be learned from all this—keep your eyes open, keep exploring—there are still things out there to be discovered.

(Dennis Chastain is an Upstate hunter, writer and naturalist.) ❁

‘Lesson to be learned from all this—keep your eyes open, keep exploring—there are still things out there to be discovered.’

Upstate Master Naturalist Program trains volunteer citizen scientists

Program visits many scenic Upstate natural areas

By Dr. Brian J. Callahan

For the second consecutive year, the Upstate South Carolina Master Naturalist Program has successfully attracted and developed outdoor enthusiasts who are interested in maintaining the quality of our native ecosystems.

These Master Naturalist participants experience 11 "hands on" classes that provide a natural science-based foundation, and expand upon this knowledge by gaining an understanding of the significance of human impacts on the environment. The program locations vary from session to session, including Caesars Head State Park, Lake Conestee Nature Park, Table Rock State Park, Clemson Experimental Forest, Stumphouse Tunnel and Jumping-Off Rock in Jocassee Gorges, to name a few.

The Upstate Master Naturalist Program is a collaborative effort between the Clemson University Cooperative Extension Service, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, and South Carolina State Parks, along with the assistance of other groups and organizations. This program is part of the South Carolina Master Naturalist Program. For more information, visit www.clemson.edu/masternaturalist.



Naturalist Dennis Chastain talks to the 2008 Upstate Master Naturalist class during a trip to Jumping Off Rock looking out over Lake Jocassee (DNR photo by Greg Lucas).

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(Dr. Brian J. Callahan is the lead agent of the Clemson University Extension Service office in Pickens.)



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