



Jocassee Journal

Information and News about the Jocassee Gorges

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The view from Pinnacle Mountain shows some of the spectacular Jocassee Gorges scenery that the late Dr. James A. Timmerman Jr. helped protect during his tenure as DNR director. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

Former DNR chief left legacy of land protection

Timmerman, whose name will forever be linked to Jocassee Gorges, dies at age 70

Dr. James A. Timmerman Jr., who protected thousands of acres of land for conservation during his tenure as director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources and who was one of key figures in the state's acquisition of the Jocassee Gorges, died Nov. 12 at the age of 70. Timmerman served as the director for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources from 1974 to 1997.

Services for Timmerman were held Nov. 17 in Irmo and Anderson. The Timmerman family requested that memorials be made to the Jim Timmerman Jocassee Gorges Memorial Fund, PO Box 167, Columbia, SC 29202.

During Timmerman's tenure, the DNR

acquired thousands of acres in heritage preserves, protecting many rare and endangered species. The ACE Basin Project became one of the nation's premiere land protection efforts.

Timmerman played a key role in acquisition of the Jocassee Gorges property in his beloved Upstate region. By resolution of the South Carolina Senate and designation of the S.C. Natural Resources Board, the property was named the Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges in his honor, with formal dedication on Dec. 7, 2000. In December 2003, Clemson University recognized Timmerman by presenting him the honorary doctor



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Upstate fisheries biologist receives trout award

DNR's Rankin honored by Trout Unlimited

A veteran Upstate fisheries biologist was selected 2005 winner of the Palmetto Trout Award by the South Carolina Council of Trout Unlimited.

Trout Unlimited says the efforts of Dan Rankin, a 14-year veteran fisheries biologist with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), have been especially meritorious. Rankin is based at the Clemson DNR office near Clemson University and is the Upstate regional fisheries biologist.

Wes Cooler, a Pickens County resident who has been actively involved in the Partners for Trout coalition, says of Rankin: "I don't know of a finer example of a dedicated state employee than Dan Rankin. The Upstate is privileged to have such a hardworking and competent biologist working to protect and enhance our natural resources. It's a fitting tribute that Trout Unlimited has recognized Dan in this way."

Trout Unlimited's mission is to conserve, protect and restore North America's trout and salmon fisheries and their watersheds.

Trout Unlimited accomplishes this mission on local, state and national levels with an extensive and dedicated volunteer network. The national office, based just outside of Washington, D.C., and its regional offices employ professionals who testify

Dan Rankin (right), DNR Upstate regional fisheries biologist, was recently honored by the South Carolina Council of Trout Unlimited as the 2005 winner of the Palmetto Trout Award. Here he samples



at Keowee-Toxaway State Natural Area in Pickens County with Mark Scott, DNR fisheries research biologist. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

before Congress, publish a quarterly magazine, intervene in federal legal proceedings, and work with the organization's 142,000 volunteers in 450 chapters nationwide to keep them active and involved in conservation issues. ❁

Gorges area named in honor of Timmerman

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of science degree. He continued to assist the S.C. Natural Resources Board and the S.C. Department of Natural Resources in the cause of preserving and protecting the state's natural resources and helping the people of South Carolina better understand and appreciate the natural world.

Timmerman was born in Pelzer in 1935. He earned his bachelor of science degree in zoology from Clemson University in 1957, his master of science degree in zoology from Clemson University in 1959, and his doctorate degree in zoology from Auburn University in 1963. Timmerman joined the faculty at The Citadel in Charleston in August 1961 and was later appointed to head the new biology department, which was formed at the military college in July 1967. He helped establish and staff the new biology department and fund a new biology building and was the youngest department head ever to serve at The Citadel.

Timmerman served as acting director, then director, of the Marine Resources Division of the

S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department from March 1970 through January 1974. During this time, he was instrumental in the development, staffing and funding of the Marine Center at Fort Johnson on James Island in Charleston. He was appointed deputy executive director, then executive director of the S.C. Wildlife and Marine Resources Department, which developed into one of the premiere state wildlife agencies in the nation.

Following the passage in 1993 of the South Carolina Restructuring Act, which reorganized several state agencies, Timmerman was named director-designee of the new S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), and on July 15, 1994, the S.C. Natural Resources Board voted unanimously to name Timmerman agency director. Timmerman served as in this capacity until his retirement on June 30, 1997. Upon his retirement, the S.C. Natural Resources Board named him director emeritus.

He is survived by his wife, Jo Anne, three daughters and a son. ❁

‘The richest man in the world’

An essay

By Dr. Walt Cook

Who among us has not occasionally wished to be rich? As Tevye sang in “Fiddler on the Roof,” “If I were a rich man...” he would no longer have to work. Some people have other reasons for wanting to be rich—to have a big car (or maybe two), to have a big house (or maybe two), to travel the world, to send their children to the best university, or merely to not worry about their monthly bills. Many times in the literature of myth,

characters who have unlimited riches are depicted as having large chests overflowing with jewels, surrounded by the utmost beauty of colorful paintings, with everything touched by gold.

On a fall day several years ago, I discovered that I, too, was rich—not in the sense of Tevye’s

longings, not in the sense of a carefree life, but rich in the sense of a mythical kind. As I was walking along the Middle Oconee River near my hometown of Athens, Ga., I enjoyed the many colorful red and sugar maples, dogwoods, blackgums and poison ivy along the river’s levee. Many leaves had fallen, and I recalled that when I was a young boy, I would gather a half dozen of the prettiest leaves to bring home to share their beauty with my mother. But as I looked at the leaves lying ankle-deep on the ground, I realized it would be impossible to choose the six best leaves—there were so many! How could anyone make such a choice? They are like jewels, even better than jewels, for no jewel could match the dazzling spectrum of colors in even one leaf, much less all the leaves. And, as I looked up at the trees that had produced these super jewels, they were like

paintings, only far surpassing any human-made work of art.

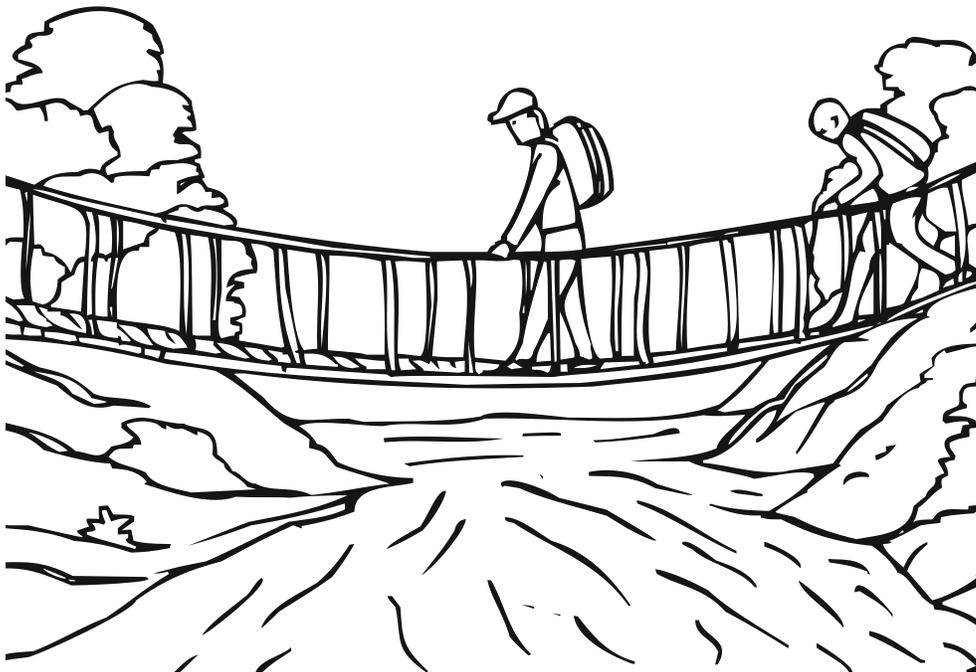
So here I was, ankle-deep in the world’s most beautiful jewels, surrounded by superb works of art, and all the while being entertained by the music of songbirds. What more could one possibly wish for? I was a rich man, and I didn’t even have to work for it. Tevye would have liked that.

Since that long-ago day in 1993, I have walked in a lot of forests, along many riverbanks, and in other interesting environments. In the past few years, I have enjoyed exploring the backcountry while flagging new trails in the Jocassee Gorges. Compared with the quiet beauty of the Oconee River in Georgia, the scenery in Jocassee is simply spectacular. The tremendous cliffs (not all cliffs are in state parks!), the numerous waterfalls, the natural gardens

of wildflowers, and the views of endless mountains rolling to infinity, all certainly qualify as beautiful.

But don’t be fooled! The nice thing about nature is you don’t have to wait until fall, or travel to the Blue Wall of Jocassee, to enjoy its beauty. Nature is, almost by definition, beautiful. We rightly enjoy the special shows of fall colors, spring and summer flowers, winter ice and snow, and the special landscape of Jocassee. But even without these spectaculars, nature—the undisturbed environment—is beautiful. All we need to enjoy it is to open our minds to its presence. Then we can all be as rich as a mythical king.

(Dr. Walt Cook is a retired forestry professor at the University of Georgia and an expert in trail design and construction. He has helped design many of the new trails in Jocassee Gorges.) ❁





Pickens County hunter Dennis Chastain shows the 400-pound black bear that he harvested during the 2005 season in the South Carolina mountains. Chastain's bear was the largest among the 34 harvested during the 2005 season, and Pickens County led the harvest total among the three mountain counties with a total of 16 bears taken. (Photo by Jane Chastain)

2005 bear harvest third-largest on record in South Carolina

Still hunt harvest exceeds party hunt harvest for first time ever

A total of 34 bears were taken during the 2005 black bear season in South Carolina, which consisted of a six-day still hunt from Oct. 17-22 and a six-day party, or group hunt with dogs, from Oct. 24-29.

The 34 bears represented the third-highest harvest ever in South Carolina, trailing only the record 55 bears taken in 2003 and the 42 bears killed in 2000.

The still hunt harvest of 18 bears exceeded the party hunt harvest of 16 bears for the first time ever.

"There were a lot of bears treed that weren't harvested," said Skip Still, black bear biologist with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources. "It seems as though more and more bear hunters are

using more discretion when it comes to what they harvest." A number of hunters passed up shots during the two-week bear season. Many bears were left to roam, either because they were sows with cubs still in tow, or simply undersized yearling bears.

The majority of the bears that were harvested were of good size, Still said, as evidenced by an average weight of more than 180 pounds for the 34 bears.

Pickens County led the harvest for a fifth consecutive year, producing a total of 16 bears. Ten bears were killed in Greenville County, while eight bears were taken in Oconee County.

Dennis Chastain of Pickens County, who harvested the largest bear of the season at 400 pounds, said bears were abundant this season. "I saw good bear sign or had a bear encounter on every scouting trip I made before the season," Chastain said. ❁

Key tract added to Jocassee Gorges with Conservation Bank grant

100 acres along SC 11 will improve public access to area

The Jocassee Gorges Project in the mountains of South Carolina has added a key tract of land with funding from the S.C. Conservation Bank. The Alewine tract in Pickens County will provide needed access to the eastern portion of the 33,800-acre property.

The tract, purchased from the Alewine family of Greenville County, is on SC 11 just east of the Holly Springs Community in northern Pickens County. It is 100 acres in size and will provide public access to several thousand acres of the Jocassee property that were previously difficult to reach.

“The eastern portion of Jocassee previously required a long walk to reach,” said

Mark Hall, Jocassee Gorges manager for the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) stationed at Rocky Bottom. “This tract will allow the public to reach the Big Bottom and Long Ridge areas easily while reducing requests to cross private lands.”

DNR will upgrade an old road in the future to improve emergency and management access to the property. Seasonal public vehicular access to some of the area is planned.

“This tract contains mature hardwoods and important mountain cove habitats that add to the beauty of Jocassee,” Hall said. “We intend to manage the tract with the rest of the Jocassee Gorges as important wildlife habitat.”

The tract was acquired with a grant from the S.C. Conservation Bank. The Conservation Bank receives a portion of real estate transfer fees and funds projects to protect natural habitats in South Carolina. The Conservation Bank awards grants on a competitive basis to state agencies, municipal governments, non-profit land trusts and other

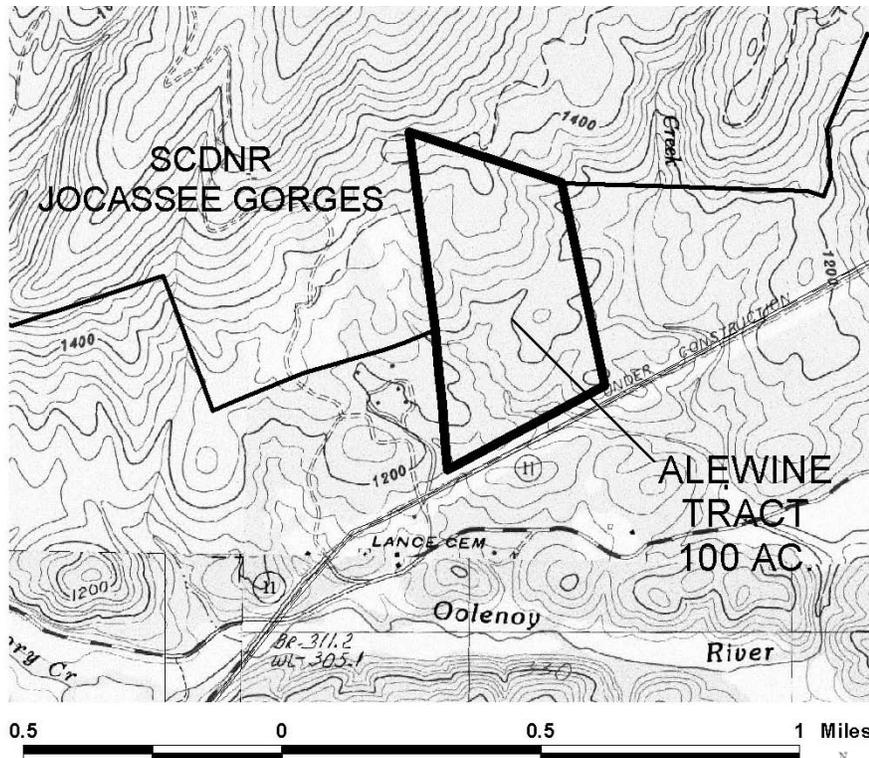
qualified conservation groups. Land that is purchased outright is used for parks, green space, public hunting areas and historical sites.

“The Conservation Bank was created by the General Assembly specifically to protect significant tracts of land like the Alewine tract in Jocassee Gorges,” said Marvin Davant, director of the Conservation Bank. “This acquisition will increase the amount of wildlife habitat and will also provide for greater recreational opportunities.”

South Carolina is one of the fastest-growing states in the country. It ranks 10th in the rate of conversion of farm and forestlands into urban uses (U.S.

Department of Agriculture, 1997). Statewide, this equals about 200 acres per day, or 70,000 acres per year. South Carolina has lost about one million acres of public hunting lands alone since the late 1970s.

Waterfalls, green salamanders, black bears, rare plants such as Oconee bells and many long-range vistas are just a few of the natural wonders that may be found in Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens and Oconee counties. More information on the Jocassee Gorges may be obtained on the DNR’s Web site at <http://www.dnr.state.sc.us/wild/jocassee/index.htm> or by calling the Clemson DNR office at (864) 654-1671, extension 22. ❁



The 100-acre Alewine tract that was recently added to the Jocassee Gorges property along SC 11 in northern Pickens County will provide public access to several thousand acres of Jocassee lands that were previously difficult to reach. (DNR map by Mark Hall)

Discover Carolina summer graduate course visits Upstate sites

Participants use Jocassee Gorges maps, aerial photos to study biodiversity

Teachers participating in the Clemson University summer graduate course entitled "Mountains to the Sea" visited the historical sites of Oconee Station State Historic Site in Oconee County where they did activities highlighting Native Americans and pioneer life at Oconee Station as well as activities highlighting medicinal plants and food gathering.

Participants used maps and aerial photographs of the Jocassee Gorges region to document the biodiversity of the area and to better understand the many challenges this rugged countryside presented to early settlers. The teachers also traveled to Paris Mountain State Park in Greenville County where they looked at activities highlighting Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) era buildings, reservoirs and dam. The two-week course continued with visits to other sites throughout the state.

Teachers were able to experience first hand many of the important cultural and historical sites located throughout the state. Several of these sites are a part of the Discover Carolina educational program of the State Park Service designed to teach visiting third through eighth graders about South Carolina's many natural and cultural resources.



Oconee Station State Historic Site in Oconee County was one of the places that teachers visited while participating in the Clemson University summer graduate course entitled "Mountains to the Sea."

Teachers participating in the course also were able to combine map study with their field experiences by performing activities from the SC MAPS Program.

This year, the graduate course concentrated on S.C. State Parks that were historical in nature and would relate well to Social Studies curricula. This Discover Carolina course was funded by the S.C. State Park Service, the SC LIFE Project, and the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education. A similar course is planned for next summer and registrations will soon be accepted for the course. For more information on Discover Carolina programs, contact the State Park Service toll-free at 1-888-88-PARKS or visit the Discover Carolina Web site at www.DiscoverCarolina.com. To find out more about the "Mountains to the Sea" graduate course or information about other related course and workshop offerings, contact the SC MAPS office by phone at (864) 656-4579, by e-mail to scmaps@clemson.edu, or by visiting the SC MAPS Web site at www.clemson.edu/scmaps. ❁

New state studies program to feature Blue Ridge

One unit will study Native Americans, early European settlers who lived in Jocassee Gorges

A new program funded by the South Carolina Commission on Higher Education and developed jointly by Dr. John Wagner, project director for the SC MAPS Program, and Dr. Bob Horton of the Secondary Mathematics Education Department at Clemson University, is in the second year of pilot testing materials.

The South Carolina Studies Program is being developed for use in the eighth-grade level as an

inter-disciplinary program ideal for team teaching. There are six thematic units of study, one of which will feature the folklore and folk art common to the Native Americans and early European settlers who lived in the Jocassee Gorges area of the Blue Ridge region.

Lessons and loaner materials for the South Carolina Studies Program will be available for the 2006/2007 academic year for all interested schools to participate.

For more information, contact SC MAPS at (864) 656-4579, by e-mail to scmaps@clemson.edu, or by visiting the SC MAPS Web site at www.clemson.edu/scmaps. ❁

New Foothills Trail chairman named during annual meeting

Hikes, trail maintenance and awards banquet mark Table Rock gathering

Greenville attorney Robert J. Stephenson was named the new chairman of the Foothills Trail Conference during the organization's recent annual meeting at Table Rock State Park in northern Pickens County.

Stephenson replaces Heyward Douglass of Seneca, a Clemson University pilot who has served as chairman of the Foothills Trail Conference since 1999. Douglass, who presided over tremendous growth in the trails organization during his tenure as chairman, will remain on the Foothills Trail board.

The Foothills Trail, a 76-mile woodland path along the Blue Ridge Escarpment in South Carolina and North Carolina, runs from Oconee State Park in the west to Table Rock State Park in the east. Among the many natural wonders in between Oconee and Table Rock state parks on the Foothills Trail are National Wild and Scenic Rivers Chattooga and Horsepasture, more than 40 miles in the scenic Jocassee Gorges, and the summit of Sassafras Mountain, the highest point in South Carolina at 3,554 feet.

About 125 people attended the three-day annual meeting of the Foothills Trail Conference, held Oct. 28-30 at Table Rock State Park. Activities during the weekend included numerous hikes,

maintenance on the Foothills Trail and the awards banquet.

New Foothills Trail Chairman Stephenson is a Greenville native and has been a member of the Foothills Trail Conference since 1990 and a member of the board since 1997. Stephenson is an

attorney in Greenville, an adjunct professor at a local university, a board member of the Saint Andrews Society of Upper South Carolina and an advocate for outdoor recreation and land conservation in the Southern Appalachians.

Douglass, outgoing chairman of the Foothills Trail, was elected to the board in 1990 after providing considerable leadership in the maintenance of the trail. Among the many accomplishments during Douglass' tenure as chairman are his leadership in creation of the Foothills Trail map, the growth and attendance at annual meetings and enhanced partnerships with the U.S. Forest Service, S.C. Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism, S.C. Department of Natural Resources and Duke Power.

Tom Brown, a Greenville accountant, was re-elected as treasurer of the Foothills Trail

Conference. Brown is a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Financial Planner who has been practicing in Greenville since 1976. A member of the Foothills Trail Conference since its inception in 1974 and a board member since 1984, Brown has hiked the trail in its entirety.

The mission of the Foothills Trail Conference is to coordinate the trail's proper use, construction and maintenance, and to promote the Foothills Trail for the benefit and use of the general public. 🌿



John Garton (left) of the Foothills Trail Conference helps young people look for aquatic insects in Carrick Creek during a children's hike at the Foothills Trail Conference annual meeting at Table Rock State Park.

Jocassee Outdoor Center

New owner transforms grocery and tackle store into Lake Jocassee recreational haven

In 1979, just a few years after Lake Jocassee was established, Hoyett Ingle had the foresight to establish the lake's only grocery, bait and tackle shop and promptly named the store "Hoyett's Grocery & Tackle." Over 25 years and three different owners later, Hoyett's remained as the only store serving the lake and had grown into a full-service operation offering boat rentals, guided fishing, lake tours and boat storage. It could be argued, however, that Hoyett's was best known for its infamous "Hoyt" dog.



Over the last couple of years, Hoyett's has experienced some significant changes including new ownership, expansion with a facelift, new products and services and a new name—the Jocassee Outdoor Center. The new owner, Ken Sloan, explains the acquisition of Hoyett's as a moment of destiny.

"My first exposure to Lake Jocassee was in 1985 and I fell in love with it," Sloan said. "I took my future wife on a couple of dates to the lake, and after we got married, I brought my family and neighbors to the lake at least a few times a year and we always rented a boat from Hoyett's. After spending over 20 years as a consultant in the high



The look and feel of Jocassee Outdoor Center, formerly Hoyett's, has changed dramatically. The business now offers Lake Jocassee visitors a variety of services including boat rentals, kayak instruction and guided paddling.



Lake Jocassee pontoon boat tours are one of the many services offered at Jocassee Outdoor Center, located near Devils Fork State Park.

tech industry and traveling on average of over 40 weeks per year, I was ready for a change and argued my case with my wife. One Saturday afternoon we had a very serious discussion about changing our lifestyles and trading in the corporate life for something simpler and less stressful. She finally caved in and agreed to research business ownership, but her only fear was that I would want to buy that little bait shop at Lake Jocassee. The next morning as we were getting ready for church, I took a peek at the classifieds and there it was; bait shop at Lake Jocassee for sale. You can probably guess where we spent that afternoon, and of course the rest is history."

Since acquiring the business in June 2003, Sloan has been busy building and marketing the new Jocassee Outdoor Center image. "I did not purchase Hoyett's so that I could be the proud owner of a

ter: 'Living the Dream'



known as Hoyett's Grocery & Tackle, has changed
offers a full range of outdoor recreational activities,
paddling tours and hiking trips.

grocery store,” Sloan said. “My vision was more specific to becoming known as the knowledge center and one-stop-shop for Lake Jocassee and Lake Keowee fishing and recreational services. Since buying the business we have expanded our rental operations and added kayak instruction and guided paddling tours of the lake, and we have guided Foothills Trail hiking. This past spring we introduced something unique to the area, which is our Jocassee/Keowee Boat Club. Our club members have unlimited access to our fleet of boats, which includes a 25-foot Cobalt, a pontoon, jet skis and kayaks. We will continue to add to the fleet as the membership grows.

“One other addition to the operation is the lakefront pavilion that is owned by Devils Fork State Park, but leased to us,” Sloan said. “This past summer we opened it up with general concessions

along with kayak, jet ski and electric boat rentals, and on Saturday nights throughout the summer we featured live bluegrass music.”

The look and feel of the store has changed dramatically. Today, the Hoyett's signs have been replaced with Jocassee Outdoor Center signs, and the exterior now has a rustic, outdoors look and feel with welcoming chairs on the front porch where the locals can be found “shootin' the bull” on any given morning. Inside, visitors will find a significant improvement in the product selection including a respectable selection of shirts and caps, hiking and camping gear, jewelry and a large selection of fishing lures and equipment.

The food menu has changed a little, but rest assured the infamous “Hoyt” dogs will remain a permanent fixture. Sloan said, “The first question I was asked was if I had intentions of changing the chili recipe. I knew before I bought the place that food was in high demand and low supply so we added hamburgers and barbecue, boiled peanuts, hand-dipped Mayfield ice cream and homemade fudge. We are currently looking into making pizzas and maybe cooking some homemade lunch specials such as pinto beans and corn bread or spaghetti and meat sauce. Ultimately, I just want to meet the demand and provide my customers with some dining alternatives.”

Sloan is having the time of his life in his new venture. In fact, the locals have given him a nickname; “LTD”—Living the Dream. You don't have to visit with him long to agree that he is truly living a dream. “What more could you ask for?” Sloan said. “I am in the most beautiful country in the world, I have full access to the most beautiful lake in the world, I have the best neighbors in the world and I get to work with a staff that feels more like family than employees. No doubt, I am living the dream!” ❁

Correction

The Spring/Summer 2005 article “Education center hosts environmental programs, fishing rodeos” failed to recognize one of the major contributors to the Wood Magic Forest Fair.

The S.C. Forestry Association and forest industry representatives supply both financial help and volunteers to this worthy forestry education program. We regret not recognizing their contributions. ❁

Jocassee road system greatly improved

DNR crew credited with stellar work in stabilizing Jocassee roads

The big date of Sept. 15 rolled around, and for the first time in five years, all the Jocassee main access roads were opened as planned.

“Every year we have had to close at least one road main access road due to poor condition related to either environmental impacts or safety concerns,” said Mark Hall, DNR Jocassee Gorges manager. “Folks have been upset for some reason or another every year, but this year I think most users will be happy. We even have access all the way down the Dawkins Flat Road and very close to the famed Laurel Fork Falls.”

The Jocassee Gorges contains more than 40 miles of main access roads that are open to the public during the spring and fall.

“Some folks have the misconception that the gates are only opened to accommodate hunters,” Hall said. “The fact of the matter is that the gates are open for about five and a half months out of the year, and almost 50 of those days are days when hunting is not permitted.” DNR’s

approach is to balance the opportunities for different uses during the spring and summer. Hunting pressure in general is fairly light, and DNR has found that many activities take place without much interference between users.

The main road that enters Jocassee Gorges—Horsepasture Road—begins at US 178 and is open year-round for about four miles. It provides access to the Laurel Fork Creek and Eastatoee Creek heritage preserves and affords a good jumping-off spot for the wild interior of Jocassee. The gates for the remaining 35 miles or so of main access roads are closed during summer and late winter. In the summer, the roadsides are allowed to develop a lush growth of vegetation that provides some of the best diversity in wildlife habitat on the property. Winter uses are restricted due to the typical wet winter conditions and heavy impacts on the road system when it is saturated with water. Bears, birds

and other animals are able to use the undisturbed road system during the closed periods except for the occasional passing biologist or wildlife technician.

DNR has a limited staff to care for the Jocassee road system. Jimmy Kluge and Ronnie Gravely are full-time wildlife technicians who are familiar with every rock, tree, twist and turn in the roads. Ed Stovall was hired on a part-time basis to help with road maintenance. Stovall helped build many of the roads back in the 1970s when he was employed by the former owner of the land, Crescent Resources. “I’ll put those men up against any crew,” Hall said. “They are responsible for the many miles of good roads that have withstood the heavy rains this year.”

DNR also secures expert engineering guidance from Ross Stewart of the U.S. Department

of Agriculture’s Natural Resource Conservation Service. “Hub Smith and the S.C. Forestry Commission step in when things get real bad, such as after a hurricane,” said Hall. Duke Energy and Crescent Resources also recently entered into a formal agreement with DNR to

‘Some folks have the misconception that the gates are only opened to accommodate hunters. The fact of the matter is that the gates are open for about five and a half months out of the year, and almost 50 of those days are days when hunting is not permitted.’

—Mark Hall

collaborate on road maintenance on Jocassee.

“McNeeley Trucking of North Carolina has gone the extra mile for DNR to get road gravel delivered on time,” Hall said. “Owner Mack McNeely spent time hunting and fishing on Jocassee as a boy and he wants to see DNR make the land available to as many people as possible.”

The combination of good partners and hard-working technicians has resulted in a good main access road system on Jocassee. Access is the key to management. The main roads have allowed DNR to focus time on wildlife openings, food plots and prescribed burning. “We have spent the last four years developing access to the point where we can finally move ahead with more active management,” Hall said. “This year visitors with the discerning eye will be able to spot some of the practices such as soil stabilization with wildlife-friendly grains, roller chopping and prescribed burns.” 



Officers with the S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Pickens County Sheriff's Department, State Law Enforcement Division and S.C. Forestry Commission raided a marijuana field in the Camp Adger section of Jocassee Gorges, seizing more than 2,100 plants with a street value of more than \$660,000. (DNR photos)

Marijuana field discovered in Jocassee Gorges

Value of seized plants estimated at \$660,000 in sophisticated operation on site for months

Law enforcement officials found marijuana planted in a mountainous area about three-quarters the length of a football field in Jocassee Gorges.

Officers from the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR), Pickens County Sheriff's Department, State Law Enforcement Division and S.C. Forestry Commission on Oct. 2 seized 2,100 marijuana plants, living and in various stages of processing, after receiving an anonymous tip. Officers hiked about two and a half miles to the

field, located near the Camp Adger area of Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens County, and found a relatively sophisticated marijuana operation. The field had been cultivated, and a makeshift camp was found along with a high-powered rifle. A gravity-flow irrigation system had been created from tubing that ran from a mountain spring to the marijuana field.

The Pickens County Sheriff's Department placed one subject in custody, although others were thought to have escaped. The street value of the marijuana seized was estimated at more than \$660,000. The amount of marijuana that had already been harvested and processed at the site was at least that much or more, officials said. The marijuana plants had been growing at the site for several months. ✿

A Lake Jocassee camping experience

Father and son find happiness, adventure in a canoe and remote campsite

By Randy Arthur

I borrowed a Grumman aluminum canoe from an old friend, and the canoe looked very familiar to the ones I had used as a youth (except it had no massive dents). Bought the little foam blocks kit to help transport the canoe (\$20 versus \$200-plus for roof racks) and put it on my car. The canoe was actually longer than the car!

Well, that was the first experience. The friend whose boat we were borrowing was not home when I got the boat, and my 9-year-old son Jake was not any help getting it onto the car. Clean and jerk on a canoe was an experience—thought I might head straight to the chiropractor—but no, we were going camping! The tie-down straps for the canoe roared so loud that we could not listen to the radio on the way down. Oh, well, chalk it up to using the inexpensive option.

10 o'clock Saturday morning before we got out of town, and about 1 p.m. before we got to Lake Jocassee—the bridge was out on the short-cut road between Pickens and Jocassee, added about 10 miles—ah, adventure. Checked in to the State Park office and YES, there were primitive sites available. Went back down to Jocassee Outdoor Center and talked about fishing, etc. Looked at a canoe paddle (my friend only had one) but decided not to spend \$20 on a heavy wooden paddle I might use once—we were only going to paddle a short ways, right? More on that later.

Went to the remote boat ramp and unloaded all our gear (Jake could help getting the boat off, thank goodness!). Finally on the water about 2 p.m. after eating lunch on the rocks at the ramp. Got halfway across the lake (20 minutes) with excitement setting in until I realized I did not purchase my South Carolina fishing license! Now I wish I had the other paddle!

Headed back to the boat ramp with vigor (read “anger and frustration”). Left Jake with the boat and gear and ran up the hill to the car in the remote lot, rushed to Jocassee Outdoor Center, got my license and was back in 25 minutes. Headed out again—blisters appeared on paddling hands. Note to self: Buy the extra paddle!

Arrived at the site, and everything after that was great! Set up camp, grabbed our life jackets and just floated around in the cove for 30 minutes to decompress. Gathered firewood (kind of a challenge



Jake Arthur of Charlotte relaxes at the Double Springs remote campsite along the shore of Lake Jocassee during a camping trip with his father. (Photo by Randy Arthur)

as the sites were well used). Most entertaining was throwing a rope up into a tree across a dead branch and breaking it off—imagine a monkey with a football! Went fishing a little about sunset and caught a few small ones, nothing big, but we had fun.

I let it get a little late, and being in the woods, it got dark quickly, making it a challenge to do dinner (hot dogs, marshmallows) by campfire and flashlight—some interesting times with a 9-year-old who has never been in the woods in the dark. But we got through it, and he actually was outwardly calm about sleeping although he confessed to his mom later he did not get much sleep.

The next day we spent an easy morning swimming and fishing and got back on the road about 2 p.m. That stick that Jake used as a paddle actually worked pretty well! If I had thought about it, we would have “built” some kind of paddle as a camp project! Thankfully there were folks at the ramp who helped me get the boat on the car. Funny, no “roar” from the tie downs—guess we put them on right that time! Jake slept most of the way home, and we finally arrived home about 7 p.m. What a great experience, and Jake has made me promise that we will go camping at least twice a year! As my wife, Jane, says, I’m reliving my glory days!

(Camden native Randy Arthur lives in Charlotte with his family and is an executive with a tire distribution company. He spends more time talking about camping, canoeing, golfing, etc., than he does doing them!) ❁

Wildlife habitat diversified in Jocassee Gorges

Prescribed burning, drum chopper, wildlife plantings improving diversity of area

From 1998 to 2005, DNR expended most of its manpower and financial resources on repairing the road system it inherited in Jocassee Gorges. The U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service documented that some roads were losing about 100 tons of soil per year, and the DNR stepped up to the challenge of changing that statistic. Most roads are now down to the point where soil loss can be measured in terms of a few pounds per year, instead of tons.

"The extensive road system is one of the most valuable assets we acquired when DNR bought the land," said Mark Hall, DNR Jocassee Gorges manager. "The previous owner spent hundreds of thousands of dollars to create the road system on Jocassee. But roads take

maintenance and repair, especially up here in the mountains. We have spent almost all of our time repairing roads, reducing erosion and sedimentation into the streams. Our wildlife technicians are experts at managing wildlife habitat, and it has been hard for me to direct them to work on dusty roads, grading and gravel every day for years on end. However, we turned the corner this year, and they have finally been able to exercise their muscles in areas where they excel!"

The Jocassee field crew burned the understory in about 150 acres of pine woodlands off the Shooting Tree Ridge Road, which now provides main access from the south. Songbirds and wild turkey seemed to welcome the new look and readily took to the freshly burned woodlands that exhibited a new growth of hardwood sprouts and a diversity of herbaceous vegetation as a result of the fire.

DNR purchased a machine called a "drum chopper" to aid in managing areas that will support early stages of vegetation. A drum chopper is a giant steel drum with hundreds of cutting teeth that protrude perpendicularly from the drum. It is pulled along by a small bulldozer, and as it rolls, it chops small trees and shrubs.

"It is sort of like having your own private army of beavers," said Jimmy Kluge, DNR wildlife technician who used the 8,000-pound chopper that is filled with water to make it cut more effectively. Areas treated included the old logging operation centers within the Shooting Tree Ridge section as well as some flatter areas that were heavily choked with the invading yellow poplar and red maple seedlings along the Cane Creek Road. Some drum-chopped areas were seeded with browntop millet to help make sure the soil stayed in place.



A "drum chopper" aids the DNR in managing Jocassee Gorges areas that will support early stages of vegetation. A drum chopper is a giant steel drum with hundreds of cutting teeth that protrude from the drum, and as it is pulled along by a small bulldozer, it chops down small trees and shrubs, Habitat consisting of early stages of vegetation is beneficial to many wildlife species. (DNR photo by Jimmy Kluge)

DNR wildlife technicians also planted small grains in many of the wildlife food plots that had traditionally been maintained over the past years. Some plots are along the Cane Creek road, and some are within the powerline lands of Duke Power. Duke recently pledged to enter the approximately 1,200 acres of powerline lands within Jocassee into the Wildlife Management Area public hunting and recreation system.

"Next year, we plan to burn some areas on the high ridges along the Horsepasture Road," Hall said. "We plan to reclaim more of the yellow poplar and red maple thickets as well with the drum chopper. Those areas will provide diversity in wildlife habitat for the present and will also set the stage for hardwood reforestation, perhaps even American chestnut plantings, down the road. Small openings for viewing areas will also be created at strategic points along the main roads. We'll still have to dedicate a lot of time to roadwork, but if we are able to maintain the pace with a few hundred acres burned, chopped or planted each year, we will eventually have a significant impact on habitat diversity across the property." ❁

Partnership to restore habitat in Jocassee Gorges trout stream

Project will divert water under lake and back into Reedy Cove Creek

A conservation partnership of private landowners, conservation organizations and government agencies will restore trout habitat to Reedy Cove Creek in Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens County.

Currently, Reedy Cove Creek is too warm to support trout in summer due to the Lake Chilly Water impoundment at Camp McCall, a Southern Baptist Convention boy's camp on US 178. Camp McCall is a partner in the project to divert water under the lake and back into the stream that would reclaim two miles of wild trout habitat in Reedy Cove Creek in Jocassee Gorges. The project should also have a positive influence on water temperatures and trout habitat from where Reedy Cove Creek flows into the Eastatoee River downstream to where the Eastatoee flows into Lake Keowee.

The conservation partnership responsible for the Reedy Cove Creek project includes Camp McCall and the Southern Baptist Convention, Partners for Trout, Natural Resources Conservation Service, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, Conservation Districts, Trout Unlimited, private landowners and The Cliffs Communities. Jim Anthony, president of Cliffs Communities,



Reedy Cove Creek flows over Twin Falls in Eastatoee Valley. A public-private partnership is working to restore the trout fishery in Reedy Cove Creek by diverting water under the lake a Camp McCall and back into the stream, reclaiming two miles of wild trout habitat. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

contributed \$100,000 in private money that will serve as match for the federal funds that will be used

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Jim Anthony (center), president of Cliffs Communities, presents a check for \$100,000 to a project that will restore trout habitat to a section of Reedy Cove Creek in Jocassee gorges. Attending the check presentation on the Eastatoee River bridge in Eastatoee Valley were (from left) state Sen. Larry Martin of Pickens; Dr. Jim Carter of Trout Unlimited; Mark Hall of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources; Susan Guynn of the Natural Resources Conservation Services; Jim Anthony; Eddie Petit, Camp McCall director; Don Nickell of Cliffs Communities; Dennis Chastain, Pickens County naturalist; and state Rep. Davey Hiott of Pickens. (DNR photo by Greg Lucas)

Project to transform Reedy Cove Creek

Continued from page 14

for the Reedy Cove Creek project.

Mark Hall, S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR) wildlife biologist and forest planner who manages the Jocassee Gorges lands in South Carolina, said he will work with DNR Upstate regional fisheries biologist Dan Rankin to provide better access for the public to Reedy Cove Creek and to stock the stream with trout.

“Within a year or two,” Hall said, “Reedy Cove Creek could be South Carolina’s premier trout

stream.”

Waterfalls, green salamanders, black bear, rare plants such as Oconee bells and many long-range vistas are just a few of the natural wonders that may be found in the Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens and Oconee counties. More information on the Jocassee Gorges may be obtained on the DNR’s Web site at www.dnr.state.sc.us/wild/jocassee/index.htm or by calling the Clemson DNR office at (864) 654-1671, extension 22. 



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Greg Lucas, DNR
153 Hopewell Road, Pendleton, SC 29670-9512
Phone: (864) 654-1671, ext. 22
Fax: (864) 654-9168
e-mail: lucasg@dnr.sc.gov
Web site:

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Land protection partnership active in Jocassee Gorges area

Partnership for the Blue Ridge brings together coalition of conservation groups, agencies

The Partnership for the Blue Ridge, a group of private conservation organizations and public agencies, is working to protect special places in the mountains of South Carolina.

The Partnership for the Blue Ridge (PBR) was formed to protect natural resources and special places in the Blue Ridge Mountains of South Carolina for public benefit. It works to promote land protection, land stewardship and cooperation among conservation groups.

Established in September 2004, the partnership works to plan and implement conservation actions in the upper portions of Greenville, Pickens and Oconee counties. It consists of conservation groups including The Nature

Conservancy (TNC), Upstate Forever, Chattooga Conservancy and Naturaland Trust working with public agencies that own and manage land in the Upstate. The governmental agencies are the S.C. Park Service, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, S.C. Forestry Commission and the U.S. Forest Service.

“We hope to protect special places and work cooperatively to help everyone manage natural lands effectively,” said Kristen Austin, PBR coordinator and project leader director in TNC’s Greenville office. “The group is informal and committed to promoting voluntary actions rather than any governmental regulation. We believe that cooperation beats confrontation, and that people working together can make a difference.”

For more information on the Partnership for the Blue Ridge, contact Austin at the TNC office in Greenville at (864) 233-4988 or e-mail her at kaustin@tnc.org.