

Upcoming Events Fall 2009

Below is a complete list of the programming that our parks will be having this fall. Each walk will be limited to 20 participants and will be weather dependent. Please feel free to contact the Ranger leading the walk if you have any questions!

St. Stephens Park Grand Opening—St. Stephens Park Saturday, October 10, 2009—10 am thru 12 pm



Join Catawba County Parks in the first of three great weekends of celebration for the Grand Opening of St. Stephens Park! Catawba County Parks Division is 10 years old this year and is celebrating by hosting special events at all three of our facilities that are free and open to the public! St. Stephens Park is located just behind Clyde Campbell Elementary School off Kool Park Road in the St. Stephens/Hickory area. Amenities include a one-acre Dog Park, a large picnic shelter and meeting room that are available for reservations, horseshoe pits, a small kid's play

area, and a one-third mile natural surface walking trail. The festivities will begin at 10 am with Nick Sipes, whose Eagle Scout project was the completion of the Dog Park at St. Stephens, and Boy Scout Troop #1 presenting the colors for the Flag Ceremony. Several of the County Commissioners will be on hand for an official ribbon cutting event, and Catawba County Planning and Parks Director, Jacky Eubanks will say a few words commemorating the occasion. The Humane Society will be hosting an animal adoption program along with a rabies clinic offering both one and three-year vaccinations for \$8 each. The rabies certificate must accompany the pet for the three-year booster vaccinations—not just the rabies tag on the collar. They will also be offering micro chipping for \$20. Cash and checks will be accepted. Vicky Comer, a certified wildlife rehabilitator, will bring several of her animals out for a “touch and learn” session. Animals she will have on display are a Southern Flying Squirrel, a Prairie Dog, and ‘Surfer-dude” the blonde Gray Squirrel. There will also be a booth from NC Agriculture Extension along with free ice cream and bottled water while supplies last.

Riverbend Park 10 Year Anniversary Celebration—Riverbend Park Saturday, October 17, 2009—All Day into the Evening

Join us here at Riverbend Park to celebrate our ten-year anniversary! We will be having an all day celebration with plenty of activities for everyone to enjoy. We will be starting the day at 9 am

with a Bird walk led by Ranger Dwayne Martin. October is a great time to see various fall migrants that are passing through our area. We may see birds such as the beautiful Magnolia Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, Swainson's Thrush, or Red-headed Woodpecker. This will be a moderate two and a half hour hike. Please wear comfortable shoes, bring water and of course—do not forget to bring your binoculars!

Starting at 11 am, Ranger Lori Owenby will be taking a Wet and Wild Paddle Trip down the Catawba River. Come a little early with your canoe or kayak and we will begin at the canoe access located in the bottom parking lot, paddle past our mile of shoreline, and take out about five miles down river. We will have the opportunity to paddle around several islands, explore the flora and fauna of the river, and look for many bird species such as Bald Eagle, Osprey, and Great Blue Heron. We may also see River Otters or American Minks playing on the rocks or swimming in the shallows. This trip will take approximately three hours. Please wear appropriate attire and wear plenty of sunscreen. Canoes and kayaks are not provided.



After lunch, the fun continues with a Fall Foliage/Wildflower Identification Walk led by Ranger Dwayne Martin. The program will begin at 1 pm at the park office. The beginning of fall is when the trees begin showing off their beautiful foliage colors. The park has a variety of deciduous trees including Red and White Oaks, Hickories, Sourwoods, Sweet Gums, and Red Maples. We will also keep our eyes peeled for fall asters and goldenrods, which are plentiful throughout the park. Please wear comfortable shoes, as this will be a moderate two-hour hike.



Creek Splash, at 3 pm, with Ranger Alisha Hayes will be the exploration of one of our many streams to look for some of the many amphibians that call the park home. Dusky Salamanders are our most common salamander species here at the park—but we may get lucky and find a beautiful Spring Salamander or a Southern Two-lined Salamander. As we walk to our destination, we will be turning over rotten logs and searching under leaf litter to look for more terrestrial amphibians such as Slimy Salamander and Eastern Newt. We also have Eastern Fence Lizards, Five-lined Skinks, and Ground Skinks

that live among the forest floor. Ranger Hayes will describe the many differences between amphibians and reptiles and the different habitats in which they live. Please wear appropriate attire, as your feet may get wet. This activity will begin at the park office and will take approximately two hours.

Beginning at 5 pm at the large picnic shelter located near the river, the Rangers will be having a Kid's Fishing Tournament. This event will be open to children ages 0 through 15 years of age. There will be a "Small Fry" division for ages 0 through 6 and a "Junior" division for ages 7 through 15. This activity exposes children to the excitement of fishing and gets them involved in the great outdoors. There will be prizes awarded to the youngster who catches the biggest fish in each age category. Fishing rods and bait not provided. Please wear appropriate attire.

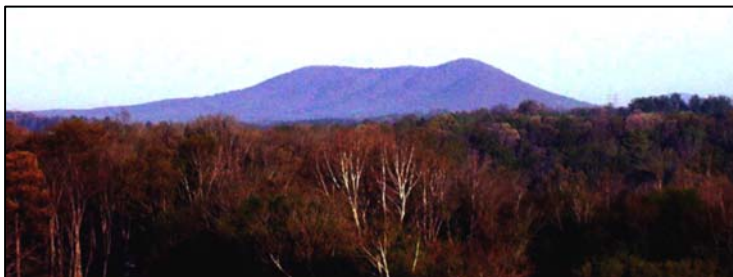
Nighttime in the outdoors is the perfect time to see certain animals because that is the only time they are active! Some of our favorite animals to find at night here at the park are owls. Starting at 7 pm Ranger Dwayne Martin and Ranger Alisha Hayes will be leading an Owl Prowl. We will meet at the Park Office and take about a two-mile hike through the park. Some of the owl species we could see are Barred Owls, Great-Horned Owls, and Eastern Screech Owls. Please bring flashlights and wear comfortable shoes.

Did you know there are over 1700 species of moths in North Carolina? Join volunteers Todd and Melody Gilbert and Ranger Lori Owenby at 7 pm for Moth Mania and a likelihood to see some of the beautiful species of moths we have here at the park. They will set up a sheet and backlight combination that will attract all kinds of night flying creatures. Some of the species we have a chance of seeing include Luna Moth, Tulip-Tree Silk Moth, and Io Moth. This event will be at the Education Building located in the upper parking lot.



Then join us as we polish off a perfect day by roasting marshmallows and making s'mores by a bonfire on the banks of the Catawba River at 8:30 pm. S'mores and marshmallow roasting sticks will be provided. Please bring a chair, bottled water, and be prepared to relax and enjoy the rest of the evening! Please contact Ranger Lori Owenby at lowenby@catawbacountync.gov or call 828-256-9157 to register for these special events.

**Bakers Mountain 10-Year Anniversary Celebration—Bakers Mountain Park
Saturday, October 24th—3 pm into the Evening**



Join in on the last of our three-park celebration commemorating the Catawba County Parks Division 10-year anniversary by coming out to Bakers Mountain Park for an evening of family fun and stargazing! We will begin the evening at 3 pm with a History Hike lead

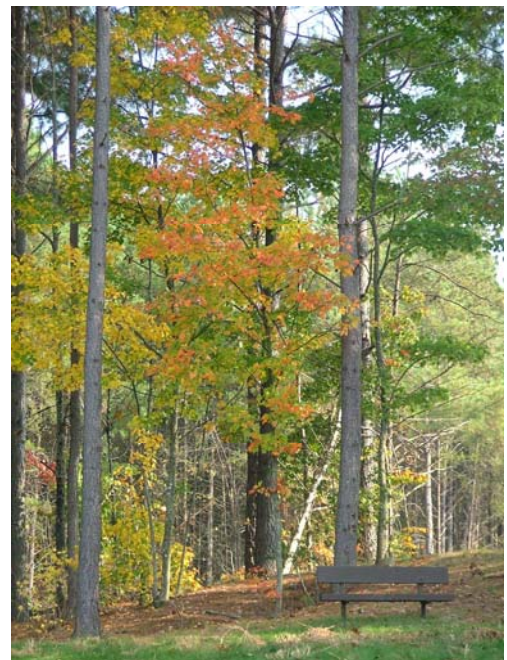
by Ranger John Sutton. We will learn about both the geological history of the mountain as well as historical information on folks who called the mountain home and used its resources in the earlier part of the last century. This will be a moderate hike lasting about one and one half hours. Please wear comfortable shoes.

Ranger John Sutton will then head for the top of the mountain around 6 pm for a Night Hike in the forest. We will just make it to the observation platform in time to see the sunset and prepare yourself for a breathtaking view of the surrounding valley! The best part is that the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club will be there with a telescope set up at the top for an even better view of the crisp, October sky! We will then make our way back down the road in the darkness to listen for owls and look for any critters that may be moving about. Please wear comfortable shoes and bring a flashlight!

At 7 pm as darkness envelopes the surrounding forest, Rangers Frank Porch and Tabitha Hope will entertain us with ghost stories around the campfire! They will spin tales of spooky happenings that are sure to keep us on the edge of our seats and make chills run down our spine while we make s'mores by the fire. If the tales are too spooky you can head over to the telescopes that will be set up near the office to gaze at the heavens and learn more about the night sky from volunteers from the Catawba Valley Astronomy Club! Bring a chair and a flashlight. Contact Ranger John Sutton at jsutton@catawbcountync.gov or call 828-324-8461 to register for any of these special events.

Fall Foliage Hike—Riverbend Park
Saturday, October 31st and Saturday, November 7th—10 am

Join us for a guided hike through the forest interior here at Riverbend Park during the peak of fall color! We will learn about different tree species as we make our way on a 2.5-mile leisurely stroll through some of the least visited and most beautiful areas of the park. Red, burgundy, orange, yellow, gold, whichever color is your favorite fall color—we are sure to find it along the way! We will also take time to look at the many aster and goldenrod species that call the park home. Bring water for drinking, wear comfortable walking shoes, and do not forget your camera! Please contact Ranger Alisha Hayes at ahayes@catawbcountync.gov or call 828-256-9157 to register.



Fall Foliage Hike—Bakers Mountain Park
Saturday, October 31st and Saturday, November 7th—10 am



Sitting high above the Catawba Valley at 1780 feet, Bakers Mountain is simply THE best place to experience fall in our area! Filled with old growth Chestnut Oaks, Black Gums, and several species of Hickories that fill the air with shades of burgundy and gold, the trails remind you that you are in a very special place. The best part of which is reaching the observation platform at the top and seeing the breathtaking colors of the valley below. The view is simply out of this world! On clear days, you can see Grandfather Mountain in Watauga County

and the Brushy Mountains in Alexander County from the platform. Bring water for drinking, wear comfortable walking shoes, and do not forget your camera! Please contact Ranger John Sutton at jsutton@catawbacountync.gov or call 828-324-8461 to register.

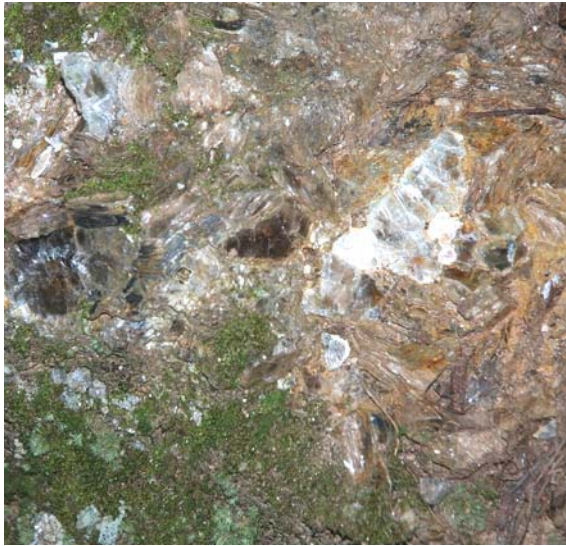
Animal Tracks—Riverbend Park
Saturday, November 21—2 pm

Join Rangers Alisha Hayes and Lori Owenby as they discuss the many animals that call the park home. We will look at some cool animal related things that we have in our collection, see a few photos of some of the animals that have been spotted here, and then walk down the River Trail to see if we can observe any signs of the animals that we discussed earlier. We will look for tracks of one or more species so we can demonstrate how to make a mold of the impression for you to take home!



Please wear comfortable shoes and bring water for drinking. Please contact Ranger Alisha Hayes at ahayes@catawbacountync.gov or call 828-256-9157 to register.

Geology Hike—Bakers Mountain Park
Saturday, November 28—2 pm



Ever wondered how old Bakers Mountain is? Or why it sits alone as the highest point in Catawba County? Then come along as Ranger John Sutton explains the unique processes that occurred for this monadnock mountain to exist and discuss its similarities to other nearby mountain chains and why it is still unique in its own right. You will explore one of the largest veins of Mica in the area, learn how useful this sheet mineral was back in the early part of the last century, and look for many of the rocks and minerals that occur on the mountain. Wear comfortable shoes and bring bottled water. Please contact Ranger John Sutton at jsutton@catawbacountync.gov or call 828-324-8461 to register.
