

Celebrate spring at Friends Day

Free event this month showcases Paris Mountain with fun, food

By Mike Foley

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Mark your calendar for April 30, and then get ready. Paris Mountain State Park is having its annual open house, Friends Day.

There's a little of everything and a lot of some things that Saturday from 11 a.m.-3 p.m. But mainly, the event is a chance for both the park itself and the Friends of Paris Mountain to thank everyone.

"We actually lose money on this," said Jason Daly, president of the Friends association. "But it's worth it. The main reason we do this is as an appreciation day.

"We can show an appreciation for the people that use the park and all the organizations that support the park.

"It's really a great way to help promote the park."

And have fun.

The day includes live entertainment, boating on Lake Placid, children's activities, interactive nature exhibits from several local groups, a 1½ hour aquatic ecology hike at noon from Park Center to Mountain Creek, food and more.

While Paris Mountain now has unprecedented popularity, it wasn't always that way, Daly said. Even as recently as a decade ago, it was "less traveled," he said.

"There's a lot more exposure today," he said. "There was no focus on outdoor activities. But now we have a lot more to offer. There are all the new trails. Mountain biking has just exploded out there."

And the park has attracted a new breed of park-goer.



File

Friends Day at Paris Mountain State Park gives visitors a chance to see all of the park's amenities.

"It's sort of an urban park-goer," Daly said. "It's so close to downtown Greenville, so the users are a little different than what you'd find at a typical state park. It's so convenient."

In one afternoon, Daly said, those who come to Friends Day can see a little bit of all the park has to offer.

"We do the Friends Day to promote the park and give everyone a fun day," he said. "There's everything from kayaks to wildlife rehab."

Admission is free on Friends Day at the park, al-

PARIS MOUNTAIN FRIENDS

For more information, call 864-244-5565 during office hours from 11 a.m.-5 p.m. The park's website is www.SouthCarolinaParks.com. The Friends of Paris Mountain Web site is www.pmspf.org.

though donations to the Paris Mountain State Park Friends will be accepted. In case of bad weather, the rain date is May 1. Paris Mountain State Park is located off S.C. Highway 253 (State Park Road), six miles north of downtown Greenville.