Get out for a waterfall hike this fall

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If you're looking for scenic vistas and the sights nd sounds of the Upate's many waterfalls, hen the Palmetto Conseration Foundation has ikes for you.

The Duke Energy Waerfall Trek Series is happening again this fall. All ikes are led by Dan Whitn, a master naturalist and vid hiker, who shares inormation about fauna and ora as well as historical nd geological facts about ach waterfall.

Participants must be 12 r older and are urged to ring water and a heavy nack. Each hike begins at) a.m. Register in advance y calling 803-771-0870.

For more information, visit www.palmettoconservation.org

Here is the schedule:

■ Saturday – A moderate, 30-minute, one-way hike to Blue Hole Falls. These 75-foot falls are named for the beautiful blue pool at its base.

Directions: From Walhalla, drive west on SC 28 for 6.6 miles and turn left onto Whetstone Road (Oconee County S-37-193) just before the Mountain Top Trading Post. Drive 0.8 mile and turn left onto Cassidy Bridge Road (Oconee County S-37-290). Drive 0.9 mile and turn left onto Rich Mountain Road. Go 3.3 miles and turn right onto Cedar Creek Road. Drive 2.5 miles to FS 2658 (right side of the road) and park by an earth mound, which partially blocks access to FS 2658.

■ Nov. 14 – Licklog and Pigpen falls. This easy, 30-minute, one-way hike offers hikers the chance to visit two falls in one trip. Licklog is an 80-foot falls and Pigpen has a 25-foot drop.

Directions: From Walhalla, drive northwest on SC 28 for 8.4 miles and bear right (north) onto S.C. 107. Drive 3.1 miles and turn left onto Village Creek Road, just past the entrance to Oconee State Park. Drive 1.7 miles and turn right onto Nicholson Ford Road. Drive 2.2 miles to a parking area on the right. Park and access the Foothills Trail at the northwest corner of the lot.

■ Nov. 21 – Jones Gap Falls (and Rainbow Falls option). The hike to Jones Gap Falls is a moderate 30-minute, one-way hike. The trek to Rainbow Falls is a moderately difficult 45-minute, one-way hike.

Jones Gap Falls is a 50-foot cascade over over a staircase of stone into the Middle Saluda River. But Rainbow Falls is a 100-foot plummet nestled in a rugged gorge, surrounded by steep granite walls.

Directions: From Greenville take U.S. Highway 276 toward Table Rock State Park, Marietta and Cleveland. North of Marietta, U.S. 276 and S.C. 11 intersect and join together for a few miles. After a couple miles, look the F-Mart store on th right. Turn right onto Riv er Falls Road and look fo the sign for Jones Ga State Park. Follow Rive Falls Road and park sign for about four miles t Jones Gap State Park.

■ Dec. 5 – Station Cov Falls and Oconee Statio This is a 2-hour easy hik that includes seeing th Oconee station. This hik features a gorgeous hik through Appalachian cov forest and the destinatio is the 60-foot waterfall.

Directions: From the in tersection of S.C. 28 an S.C. 11 in Walhalla, driv north on S.C. 11 for 6. miles and turn left ont Oconee Station Roa (Oconee County S-37-95) Drive 2.4 miles to the trai head on the left.

NATURE BECKONS

Compiled by Scott Keepfer, Outdoors Editor



Super salmon: The "mini maple" leaves of the maple leaf vibernum turn a beautiful salmon color in fall, making this shrub stand out in woodland nderstories. Usually growing 6 to 7 feet ıll, this shrub also is topped with clusers of black berries.



Hidden plants: Thanks to clusters of conspicuous red berries, this is about the only time of year when a novice woodsman can find ginseng in the mountains. These plants, coveted for medicinal value, grow about 10 inches tall on the north sides of ridges.



Winter resident: One of our first feathered friends to arrive from the north is the white-throated sparrow. Having white or tan eyebrows and a white patch in the throat area, these birds have a beautiful song and already are gathering around Upstate feeders.



Cool change: About 3.5 degrees are lost with every 1,000 feet of elevation gained, which translates into an 8- to 10-degree difference between downtown Greenville and Caesar's Head. So pack a windbreaker and hat when heading for the hills.



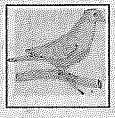
Sluggish lizards: Many lizards remain active, but they're going about their activities a bit more sluggishly now. Green anoles may be found wandering in ıaf litter, and can be caught and exmıed readily thanks to the chill in the air nd in their bodies.



Miniature beavers: Those small fresh-cut hickory limbs on the ground are the work of the tree girdler. These beetles lay eggs in the wood of the limbs, then methodically gnaw them off like a miniature beaver so that the beetle grubs will have easy access to the ground.



More color: The leaves of oak trees are the latest to join the parade of fall colors. Most abundant are the reds of red oaks and yellows and tans of white oaks. Red oaks have leaves with lobes that are sharply pointed; white oak leaves have rounded lobes.



Moving in: Herring gulls are populating the Upstate, moving inland for the upcoming winter. You'll see the gulls, which are white with gray wings, on most larger waters, including lakes Murray, Wateree and Hartwell and the Catawba and Savannah Rivers.