

Jocassee Lake Tours on the water for Labor Day



SPECIAL TO THE JOURNAL

Covering everything from butterflies to waterfalls, Jocassee Lake Tours offers scenic and educational tours — even on Labor Day.

BY STEPHANIE JADRNICKEK
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SENECA — Every tour of Lake Jocassee is different — no two days or expeditions are the same.

“The surroundings are changing all the time,” Jocassee Lake Tours co-owner Kay Wade said. “We try not to ever get into any kind of routine.”

Kay along with her husband, and co-owner Brooks, will offer a Labor Day tour of Lake Jocassee on Monday from 10 a.m.-2 p.m.

Starting from the main dock at Devil's Fork State Park, the tour will venture to waterfalls unreachable by foot, as well as wild rivers that feed the lake.

“People who list seeing all of South Carolina's waterfalls on their bucket list might want to hop on our tour, because you can't hike to some of these waterfalls,” Brooks said.

Brooks and Kay also educate their guests about the history of the lake and the region, as well as the ecosystem of the lake. They discuss the geography of the lake and how the Jocassee gorges formed.

“Depending on the crew and their interests, we'll talk about different aspects of the region,” Kay said. “We may talk about the area's first inhabitants

— the Cherokee Indians — or we also offer what history we've been able to glean about the people living here in what was Jocassee Valley, before the lake was built.”

Kay uses wildlife and vegetation along the tour to guide the conversation. If the tour passes butterflies, snakes or birds, she uses the opportunity to educate the guests about the ecosystem of the lake. She especially likes discussing how the region is important for the migratory birds.

Throughout the warm weather months, they make sure they provide the opportunity for swimming. And when they return back to the main dock at Devil's Fork State Park, Kay said they have a hard time getting everyone off of the boat because they enjoy the tour so much.

“People drop their jaws when they look at the Grand Canyon, and they drop their jaws when they look into the Jocassee gorges,” Brooks said. “The lake and the gorges have the greatest botanical diversity in North America.”

Jocassee Lake Tours may be contacted at (864) 280-5501, but be warned they're on the lake all day and return calls in the evening.