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Keowee River Scarecrow Fest under way

By Chad Dorsett WSNW/Special to Anderson Independent-Mail

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SENECA — The scarecrows have returned to Seneca, marking the fall season as well as the second annual Keowee River Scarecrow Fest. This whimsical fall celebration of the scarecrow supports the Foothills Area Family YMCA and builds community spirit along the waters of Lake Keowee.

Hundreds of scarecrows are part of the Keowee River Scarecrow Contest, for which artists of all ages made scarecrows for display and cash prizes. All scarecrows are placed in a silent auction and the proceeds are donated to the Foothills Area Family YMCA.

This year's event features a combination of visual artistry, live music, distinctive flavors, along with numerous opportunities to participate in outdoor adventures around the lake.

"We have the kids' adventure quest, sponsored by the Foothills Area Family YMCA, everything from big hay slides to corn boxes, just all kinds of kid activities," said Scott Vick, event promoter. "They are not the big carnival-type stuff; its more back to nature. We also have kayaking, electric ATVs, and all kinds of artists."

A popular new attraction is a nature-based mud run. Tabbed the "Wild Thang," the mud run is actually three different races, a one-mile fun run, a 5K and a 10K. The trail consists of a series of natural obstacles that are sure to challenge.

The mud run is Saturday with the 10K individual and team run starting at 9 a.m., the 5K individual and team race beginning at 10 a.m. and the one-mile fun run starting at 11 a.m. Registration opens 30 minutes before each race and the cost is $35 per person to enter.

Runners are encouraged to take extra clothes and possibly a bag to hold muddy clothes after the races. Attendees may check their bag in at a complimentary bag-check area. There will also be a recycling station, so muddy clothes can be cleaned and donated to a local charity.

Merchandise will be on sale for those wanting a souvenir or needing a clean T-Shirt. Both Scarecrow Festival and "Wild Thang" products will be available for sale at the Keowee River merchandise tent.

Local and Nashville-based musicians will perform in the Foothills Area Family YMCA's new amphitheater overlooking the lake. Visitors are encouraged to take chairs and blankets to enjoy the live music on the lawn. No coolers are allowed at the event.

The headlining artists Friday night are Angela Easterling at 7 o'clock followed by Ella Mae Bowen at 8:45. Music on the amphitheater stage begins at 1 p.m. on Saturday

with headliners Emily Lynch performing at 7 p.m. and Drew Holcomb and the Neighbors at 8:45 p.m.

The festival, which began on Thursday, runs Friday from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and Saturday from 7:30 a.m. to 10:30 p.m. at the Foothills Area Family YMCA off Highway 130. Admission is $25 per carload per day or $35 a car for the weekend.

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