Leaf peepers, prepare

Upstate offers plenty of ways to get outdoors and see the show



FILE / STAFF

By Mike Foley
STAFF WRITER
mfoley@greenvillenews.com

Maybe you noticed leaves on the poplar in your yard have already turned yellow.

And you've spied reds in the some of the sourwoods and dogwoods while driving down the road. Those early signs mean, of course, that leaf-peeping season is coming.

Still, you've got time to make plans. Table Rock State Park interpreter Scott Stegenga said this week it's a little too early for wholesale fall colors.

"Some of the darker greens are becoming lighter," he said. "I can see here up on the slope and there's some change, but it's going to be at least a week before we see a whole lot.

"I'd say we're looking at 2½ weeks, probably around Halloween, and then it should be pretty good."

See **LEAF** on page 3D

LEAF

FROM PAGE 1D

Stegenga suggested using Table Rock's Web cam to see when the colors start to change.

Or, make plans to journey out to other state parks in the Upstate and immerse yourself in the annual display. That's the recommendation from Kenneth Reed, a state park employee who along with fellow staffer Gwen Davenport, toured the area in late September to find locations for avid leaf watchers.

For Reed, the Upstate parks were a real find.

"Jones Gap is great," he said. "And the Caesars Head overlook is great, too, very accessible for anyone."

Reed confessed to "not being much of a hiker," but even he managed the roughly 4-mile round-trip trek to the Raven Cliff Falls overlook for a look.

"That was definitely worth it," he said. "That should be on everyone's list when the leaves change."

Other must-sees, Reed said, are: Jumping Off Rock in the Jocassee Gorges, Lake Jocassee, Table Rock Park, Oconee State Park and Paris Mountain State Park.



STAFF / File

Autumn leaves in Pickens County.

"Jones Gap is great. And the Caesars Head overlook is great, too, very accessible for anyone."

KENNETH REED, state park employee

Reed and Davenport took videos and photos of their travels and posted them on the S.C. State Parks' Facebook site.

■ Staff writer Mike Foley can be reached at 864-298-4744.

FALL COLOR HIKES

■ Paris Mountain State Park hosts a leisurely walk from 1-3 p.m. Oct. 24 to Mountain Lake for those interested in feasting their eyes on the colors of fall reflected in the lake's calm waters. The park's interpretive naturalist will help visitors identify leaves and investigate reasons for their colors. The program fee is $5 per person, and the admission fee is waived. Meet at the Sulphur Springs Parking Area. To register, call the park office at: 864-244-5565, or e-mail: ctaylor@scprt.com

■ Table Rock State Park hosts a guided fall color wall Oct. 25 from 2-3:15 p.m. along a section of an old CCC trail along Pinnacle Lake. Insights about seasonal changes within the forest ecosystem will be shared along the trail.
The fee is $5. Register at least one week before the event, by calling: 864-878-9813. Meet at the Hemlock picnic shelter parking area behind the boat house.



KEN OSBURN / Staff

Fall colors in Paris Mountain State Park.

FIND FALL COLORS

■ Here are some recommended locations to find fall colors in South Carolina: www.discoversouthcarolina.com/outdoor-activities/fallfoliage.aspx

■ Download a guide to recommended spots to see the Upstate's best fall colors at: www.southcarolinaparks.com/files/State%20Parks/Fall%20-color%20tour09.pdf

■ View a constantly updated national map to see when fall foliage is hitting its peak in South Carolina or wherever you might travel: weather.com/maps/activity/fallfoliage/index_large.html

Read fall foliage updates at Table Rock State Park at: southcarolinaparks.com/beautiful-places/fall_foliage/fall_foliage_updates.aspx or take a look at the park's Web cam to judge for yourself when fall colors are ready for viewing: www.southcarolinaparks.com/beautiful-places/webcams/table_rock_webcam.aspx