Legendary game warden Franklin Gravely honored with Jocassee Gorges monument

JOCASSEE — The late Franklin Gravely, called "as near to a perfect game warden" as ever existed, was honored July 9 with a monument in a scenic spot overlooking Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens County.

Gravely spent most of his life patrolling the mountainous region now known as Jocassee Gorges, and his efforts to preserve and protect the area are still bearing fruit today. The Franklin L. Gravely Wildlife Management Area was named in his honor in 1980.

A monument honoring Gravely's contribution to the conservation lands in northern Pickens County was unveiled Monday, July 9 at the Camp Adger helipad in front of a gathering of at least 75 people including Gravely's family and his many admirers from Gravely's years of service as a conservation officer between 1953 and 1988. Gravely passed away in 2000.



FOR THE JOURNAL

The Gravely family gathers around the monument dedicated to Franklin Gravely.

"He was as near to the perfect game warden as any that we have ever had," said Alvin Taylor, director of the S.C. Department of Natural Resources (DNR). "He was smart, fair and relentless. He was the ultimate woodsman. He found numerous lost individuals in the mountains. When someone was lost in the Table Rock Watershed or Horsepasture area, Franklin found them. He could track people and animals as well as anyone I have ever met.

"He was a fine person who lived his faith. I have rarely heard of anyone who did not like Franklin, even the violators that he caught," Taylor said. "We are lucky to have had him as an officer, and I hope our current staff can follow his example of how to serve the people and wildlife of South Carolina."

Gravely was instrumental in stocking deer and wild turkeys in the mountain region, as well as preserving black bear habitat, and he helped to protect conservation areas in the Upstate for future generations to enjoy. A South Carolina Wildlife magazine article called Gravely "a mountain man's mountain man, a living legend throughout the rugged wilderness of northwestern South Carolina."