

JOHN C. STEVENSON / Staff

Peggy and Wayne Howard of Westminster walk their dog along the shore of Lake Jocassee at the Devil's Fork State Park landing. The park is included on a new map and driving tour of Jocassee Gorges.

New map points the way to Jocassee's assets

18-stop driving tour takes Gorges visitors through the region

By Anna Simon
CLEMSON BUREAU
asimon@greenvillenews.com

PICKENS — A new map and driving tour now are available for residents who want to escape hot city streets and wade in mountain streams this summer, feel a waterfall's cooling spray and explore the beauty of Jocassee Gorges in northern Pickens and Oconee counties.

The new map of the 33,500-acre Jim Timmerman Natural Resources Area at Jocassee Gorges also shows portions or all of Table Rock, Devils Fork and Keowee-Toxaway state parks and North Carolina's Gamelands and Gorges State Park.

The flip side of the map includes "Driving the Jocassee Gorges," an 18-stop driving tour beginning at the Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center at Keowee-Toxaway State Natural Area on State 11 in Pickens County.



SUZIE RIDDLE / Staff

"A lot of people have shied away from exploring the Jocassee Gorges largely because they didn't know where all the roads go to," said Dennis Chastain, a northern Pickens County resident and avid outdoorsman.

"Now people have a road map they can literally follow to destinations like the Eastatoee Gorge Heritage Preserve and other waypoints that I know people have had on their to-do list but have been wary of exploring."

The approximately 70-mile driving tour is on paved roads, with some optional dirt road detours, and circles the Gorges region, said Greg Lucas, a Department of Natural Resources spokesman. The driving portion itself takes several hours without stops. "It's very easy to make an entire day of it if you stop at waypoints," Lucas said.

Copies of the new Jocassee Gorges map and driving tour are available at the Clemson DNR office, Upcountry History Museum in Greenville, Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center, Table Rock State Park, Devils Fork State Park, at the DNR Columbia headquarters in the Rembert Dennis Building at 1000 Assembly St., and at Gorges State Park in Sapphire, N.C.

The driving tour, on federal and state highways, is open to vehicles year-round, but access to dirt roads inside Jocassee Gorges is limited at this time of year. A four-mile dirt road to the Eastatoee Gorge area is open to ve-

See MAP on page 5B

MAP

FROM PAGE 1B

hicles all year, but gates are closed on all other interior roads during the summer season to protect the wilderness and wildlife, Lucas said.

Gates are open March 20-May 10 and Sept. 15-Jan. 15, Lucas said.

The fall months when gates are open is a wonderful time to see Jumping Off Rock, Laurel Fork Falls and other destinations that currently are closed to vehicles, Chastain said.

Published by the state Department of Natural Resources with funding provided by the Harry Hampton Memorial Wildlife Fund, the comprehensive 38-inch-by-27-inch map also includes information on hiking, fishing, hunting, bird-watching, wildlife, camping, botanical areas, access and overlooks, educational opportunities and resource management.

"It's sure to be the most valuable tool for anyone who visits the area. Although it shows many of the highlights within the property, it still leaves the door open for plenty of exploration," said Mark Hall, DNR's Jocassee Gorges land manager

More information on the Jocassee Gorges may be obtained on the DNR's website at www.dnr.sc.gov/managed/wild/jocassee/index.htm or by calling the Clemson DNR office at 864-654-1671, extension 22.