Upstate parks make national list

Seven parks honored as being best for camping, hiking, bird-watching

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South Carolina's state parks – including those in the Upstate – are listed among the best in America in ReserveAmerica's annual Outdoor Recreation Awards.

The annual recognition comes from camper testimonials, campground ratings and input from rangers, park management and campers at more than 4,000 parks nationwide. Reviews are based on park attributes such as educational programs, overall beauty and scenery, family beaches, visitor centers and camping amenities.

Fifteen of South Carolina's 47 state parks were honored in the seventh annual national survey. Seven of the 15 are located in the Upstate.

Here are the Upstate state parks included on the various lists:

Top 100 family campgrounds: Devils Fork State Park, Lake Greenwood State Recreation Area.

Top 50 hiking trails: Oconee State Park.

Top 25 amazing spots: Table Rock State Park.

Top 25 biking trails: Croft State Park.

Top 25 bird-watching spots: Caesars Head State Park.

Top 25 picnic areas: Jones Gap State Park.

Landrum presents an astronomy program at sunset June 13 from 7:30-11 p.m., on "Stars of the Summer Solstice." Info: www.FENCE.org

■ NATURE: Take a Firefly Twilight Tour on June 13 at the Cradle of Forestry. The group will meet at the Pink Beds Picnic Area on Highway 276 in the Pisgah National Forest to learn about these fascinating insects and explore the evening woods. Fee: $6 for for adults, $3 for youth ages 15 and under. Info: 828-877-3130 or visit: www.cradleoffor-