

More upgrades planned at Mile Creek

BY JASON EVANS
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PICKENS — Pickens County Council signed off on several improvements to Mile Creek Park in Six Mile on Monday night.

Council approved a \$45,000 request to pay for new docks, a gate system, security fencing and a traffic study at the park.

County administrator Gerald Wilson asked park director Tyler Merck to give an update on the park, as well as requesting the funding from accommodations tax revenue.

"I have good news to share," Merck said. "We're proud to announce that Mile Creek is now self-sufficient, 100 percent. We plan to sustain that for years to come. At the end of February, we noticed that this year alone we've had \$64,000 in profit. We're seeing a huge number of people from outside Pickens County. I'd say about half of our reservations are from outside the 864 area code."

Last year, county officials cut the ribbon on the first phase of rental cabins at the park.

"The cabins were a big hit," Merck said. "They're renting well for the summer."

In February, the park had about \$8,000 in cabin rental reservations.

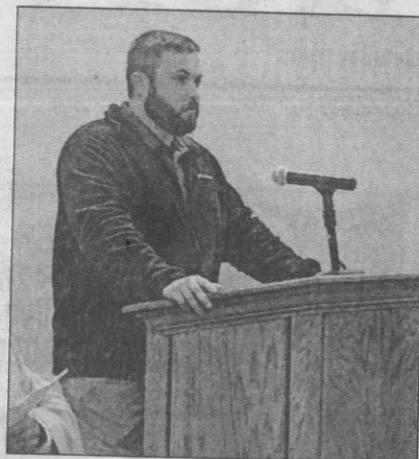
Merck said construction of a bathhouse was recently completed.

"One of the biggest complaints we had with the park was the bathhouses. It really turned out phenomenal," Merck said. "We couldn't be happier with it."

Two more bathhouses are planned to be completed next winter, he said.

Merck and Wilson asked that one dock be built in the cabin area and two more in the campground area.

"This provides a better alterna-



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Mile Creek Park director Tyler Merck outlines a \$45,000 funding request for improvements at the park at Monday night's Pickens County Council meeting.

tive than somebody parking their boat on the shore or having to take it out every evening and trailering it," Merck said. "This also gives us another stream of revenue for the park."

Merck said the park also needs a gate system.

"Our first priority is the safety and security of our visitors," he said.

Councilman Trey Whitehurst asked if there were issues with security at the park.

"It's really more for the peace of mind," Merck said.

Wilson said there have been recent incidents with people visiting the park after hours and using the bathhouse facilities.

"A gate system would solve that problem," council chairman Roy Costner said.

Wilson agreed, adding that the keycard gate system would be near the cabins and campsites.

When the cabins were first being built, officials didn't think they

needed televisions, Merck said.

"The thing that we've seen this year is it can rain, and it can rain a lot," he said. "For those people that rent the cabins for three or four days, and it rains the whole time, there's really not much to do. We want to make sure we provide the best experience for the people that are coming. It makes the cabins more rentable."

Councilman Wes Hendricks said he sees "umpteenth dozen" kayaks on vehicles along Main Street in Pickens, heading to area lakes.

"It'd be nice to get them to come to our county park, put in the water and enjoy Lake Keowee," he said.

He asked how plans to create 50-amp campsites and campsites for larger rigs were progressing.

Merck said a meeting with Duke Energy officials is set for early April.

"We're hoping that Duke will take the project on," he said.

Duke Energy holds the lease on the park property and must approve proposed improvements and additions, Wilson said.

Wilson said it's hard to present everything at once due to the necessity of getting approval from Duke Energy.

"These are things that we've pretty much got approval on and can be done now," he said.

The county's accommodations tax fund currently has enough money to cover the request, Wilson said.

Council unanimously approved the funding request.

Once the improvements are completed at the park, "we're going to be the envy of the state," Wilson said.