

So long, summer



Jamie Kaltenbach and her daughters, 11-year-old Josie and 14-year-old Jady, right, paddle board together at South Cove County Park on Labor day.

PHOTOS SAVANNAH BLAKE | THE JOURNAL

County parks full for Labor Day weekend

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

SENECA — Margie Fulmer got her first look at South Cove County Park when taking an anniversary trip with her husband last year. The experience was so positive that Fulmer and her family returned to camp over Labor Day weekend.

"I just think it's beautiful up here," Fulmer said. "It's wonderful for our family to be together and to watch the kids be able to get on the water in their kayaks and stuff. They were excited to come up here and are really enjoying it."

Fulmer and her family are among a number of campers who chose to spend their Labor Day weekend at Oconee County parks. Although many campers could be seen leaving the parks Monday morning, South Cove County Park superintendent Stephen Schutt said the end of the holiday weekend doesn't mean the end of camping season.

"Next weekend, we're full again," Schutt said. "We have a big summer season where we've always seen a good season, but now we're seeing good crowds in the spring and fall season we had not seen prior to going to a reservation system."

Schutt added the amount of traffic can extend as late as November.

"We get a lot of football traffic now that we haven't had before," he said.

Campers at South Cove said they enjoyed the experience, particularly in an area with natural resources as pristine as one will find anywhere.

"This is a clean lake," Simpsonville resident Josh Schell said of Lake Keowee.

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Several families gathered at High Fall County Park to swim and sunbathe on Monday afternoon.

"It's great to have time to spend with friends and family that we normally wouldn't be able to spend together otherwise."

Mark Mullins, from Fayetteville, N.C., agreed.

"It's a beautiful area and we enjoy it a lot," said Mullins, adding it was his first visit. "It's fun to be on the water and just watching my kids have fun."

Debbie Karns said her family have camped at the park for years, but this year marked the first time they picked the Labor Day weekend. While enjoying a view of the lake, many passing boats and the friendly nature of the campers they met, Karns said she especially enjoyed spending quality time with family.

"With a daughter who is off to college now and coming home, to be able to spend time together and just do marshmallows and s'mores, it's really fun to be together," Karns said.

Campers at High Falls County Park also reflected on their weekend while preparing to leave.

"The lakes are wonderful and we love coming here," said Roger Hensley, of Greenville, who has frequently visited the county parks. "It's a good place to come and hang out."

Hensley added that his family enjoys tubing while out on the lakes.

"We have a lot of kids

and we take them out and let them ride the tubes and everyone has a great time," he said.

Lee Ashley, of Mauldin, said he enjoys meeting others that camp and that his family spends many weekends at the park during the summer.

"We enjoy going out in the boat and hanging out in all the beautiful areas

on the water," Ashley said. "This lake is the best lake in all of South Carolina, that's for sure."

Joe Owen, of Brevard, N.C., said he likes the cleanness of the park as well as the attention to child safety.

"They keep a pretty tight observation on the speed and the rules, and there's a really strong family atmosphere," Owen said. "My little boy, Gunner, and the guy swim-

ming next to us saw my son doing something he shouldn't, so he just hollered at him — not out of the way, but what a watchful adult or parent would do."

Owen said his children enjoy playing basketball, volleyball, softball, putt-putt and corn hole during their camping adventures. He also likes the proximity of the park to where he lives, though he crosses state lines to reach the site.

"I saw three or four different families from home we didn't know were coming down here," he said.

Schutt said visitors to the park have been "wonderful."

"We are really appreciative of that and look forward to the fall season when we start up not only football season, but programs for adults and kids," Schutt said.

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**Roger Hensley
High Falls
camper**