

'A real nice park'

Twelve Mile Recreation Area reopens to public

BY GREG OLIVER
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CLEMSON — For the first time since signing a 10-year lease with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Clemson officials opened Twelve Mile Recreation Area to the public on Memorial Day weekend — and they couldn't be more pleased with the results.

"It was slammed and packed (last) Monday," Clemson Mayor Robert Halfacre said last week. "I'm glad so many people were able to use it and thankful we were able to open it up for the holiday weekend."

Clemson parks and recreation director Jay Bennett said there were between 2,000 and 2,500 visitors at the park at the time.

"People are excited that we have it open and that we have a full-time maintenance guy who has been taking care of the place," he said.

Twelve Mile Recreation Area is predominantly used for swimming, boating and



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Twelve Mile Recreation Area, which reopened to the public on Memorial Day weekend for the first time since being taken over by the city of Clemson, is predominantly used for swimming, boating and picnics. Admission will be free at the park until construction is completed on a new entrance gate later this summer.

picnics. On Monday, Clemson City Council agreed there would be no admission charge through Labor Day. A gate will eventually be installed.

"We won't have the mechanism in place to charge so, in essence, people will have

SEE OPEN, PAGE A3

OPEN: Visitor 'can really appreciate the parks around here'

FROM PAGE A1

the ability to enjoy it for free," Halfacre said.

VISITORS IMPRESSED

Although the Memorial Day weekend has come and gone, visitors continue to venture to the park to take advantage of the many amenities it offers. Adam Cootes of Walhalla and his family visited the park Tuesday, and Cootes said he was impressed with what he saw.

"I really just like the accessibility for kids and the fact they've got it bordered off, so kids don't get too deep (in the water) and there's a nice playground right there on the beach along with picnic tables and grills," Cootes said. "It's just a great area, and being a (parks, recreation and tourism) major at Clemson — that's what I graduated in — I can really appreciate the parks around here."

Six Mile resident David Mitchell said it was his first visit to the park in nearly a decade, adding that the things he liked most about it were "fishing and swimming and picnics — the whole nine yards."

"It's a nice park — a real nice park," he said while fishing.

FUTURE VIABILITY

While the public is able to enjoy a number of activities, city officials are continuing to assess the site for future costs for improvements.

Councilman Bob Brookover said he would like to dig further into the numbers for "the things we're going to have to do to truly get it up to speed, because the Corps has left that for us to operate."

"There's (Americans with Disabilities Act) things we need to do," Brookover said. "If we're going to be the operators, it has to be at a level of service better than was previously done."

City administrator Andy Blondeau added the intention remains to ultimately make Twelve Mile Recreation Area a self-sustaining facility. He also said council plans to discuss future plans for the park so a site development plan can be presented to the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.