Tree Identification Course Offered

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The public will get a chance to learn first-hand the art of identifying trees Saturday when Lake James State Park hosts the interpretive program "Knock On Wood."

The 45-minute talk and 30- to 45-minute hike are all part of a statewide program to educate the public, according to Park Ranger Roy Rodgers.

All local residents are invited to the free program, which begins at 2 p.m. on Saturday, no preregistration required. According to Rodgers, children from sixth-grade up to adults of all ages stand to benefit much from what will be taught on Saturday.

"Knowing how to identify trees wil be useful information for anyone who has any contact with the woods," said Rodgers.

A handout with pictures of 95 leaves will be given to the participants, who will then try to identify as many trees as possible.

The participants will also be taught good and bad conditions of the forest for trees, how seeds take root, and how trees serve as members of the forest community, Rodgers said.

The program is one of three planned quarterly by the park. The next event will take place Jan. 19, when attendees will learn to identify tracks of animals in the wild.

Perhaps the most exciting program this quarter, according to Rodgers, is the Feb. 9 "Who's Who in the Dark" program, which will take place in the evening. Participants will hike in the dark, using owl calls and recorded owl tapings to draw the creatures into view.

"As well as educating the public, these programs serve to show people how to interpret the uses of the park," explained Rodgers. "We are having better and better responses to these programs, as the public becomes more aware of them."

Lake James State Park opened in the summer of 1989. Open every day except Christmas, the park features camping, swimming, picnic, horseshoe, and hiking facilities. Last summer, volunteers gave free swimming lessons in the new beach area.

Park Ranger – Roy Rodgers of Lake James State Park will host the interpretive program "Knock on Wood" this Saturday at the park, beginning at 2 p.m. The program is free to the public and will teach attendees how to identify trees of the area.