

Make Time For State Park Programs

Dear Editor:

I'm writing in regards to the programs held at Lake James State Park during 1994.

The programs were advertised well in advance in The McDowell News. Yet, at times few showed up. Other times there would be a good size group. One ranger, in commenting about how he never knew how many would show up, said that he would not set up the chairs for slides, videos, etc; until it was time to start.

On Dec. 17 only four of us showed up. One was my 4-year old grandson, Daniel, who wants to be a forest ranger. He became a Jr. Park Ranger while at Cades Cove in the Smokies in the summer.

As we were walking on the lake shore a few minutes before the program was to start, we met a scout leader. He was with his Eagle Scouts searching out good campsites for next year.

During our conversation I asked

him if they were staying for the tree program.

He said, "No, my boys are all Eagle Scouts and I'm sure they know all that."

I thought to myself, "What a poor attitude, someone thinking he knows all there is to know about something."

Letter To The Editor

I'm a naturalist and nature writer and have been for many years, but I don't know everything about trees.

In fact, I learned a few things from the program.

Ranger Roy Rodgers told us from the start that he did not know everything but would do his best to answer our questions.

I've heard other rangers say the same. Some of them may have been scouts where they got a preliminary education about nature, but they went

on to advanced learning. Also rangers need to have an appreciation of nature to pursue that career.

Nature is unpredictable and the public is often hard to deal with.

All the rangers I've ever talked with have been very cordial. They even take time to talk with children and answer questions. The rangers at Lake James Park take time to put together a good educational program that benefits both young and old.

It doesn't cost anything except about an hour or so of our time. I've been to several this year. I would have liked to have attended the others but other priorities had to be taken care of.

If this program continues into 1995 I sincerely recommend that more try to arrange their affairs so as to reap the benefits of this fine educational arrangement.

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