

# Lake James park is newest in state system

The newest state park in North Carolina is under construction on the shores of Lake James in McDowell and Burke counties.

The park is being developed on a 563-acre tract purchased by the state in the spring of 1988 from Crescent Land and Timber Company, a holding company for Duke Power.

The North Carolina General Assembly has appropriated a total of \$2.6 million thus far for the land purchase, construction of ranger's quarters on the grounds, and development of 165 acres of lakefront property — the first phase of the project.

The park is located on N.C. 126 on the southeast side of the lake, where McDowell and Burke counties meet, about 10 miles from Marion.

First-phase development includes tent sites, picnic areas, two picnic shelters for group use, a boat dock, two public-access boat landings, a swimming beach, horseshoe pits, as well as roads and water lines.

General contract for first phase construction was awarded in July; public use of the park is scheduled to begin in the spring of 1989.

Two peninsulas are currently being developed: one for day use, and the other for overnight camping. Long-range planning for development of the remaining acreage, located across the road from the lakefront property, will be drawn up by

the Lake James Advisory Committee in conjunction with the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, McDowell County Chamber of Commerce director Rod Birdsong said.

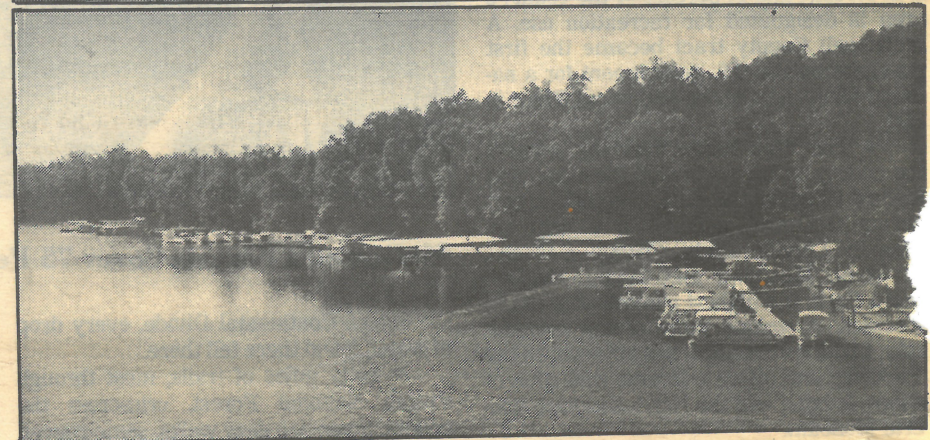
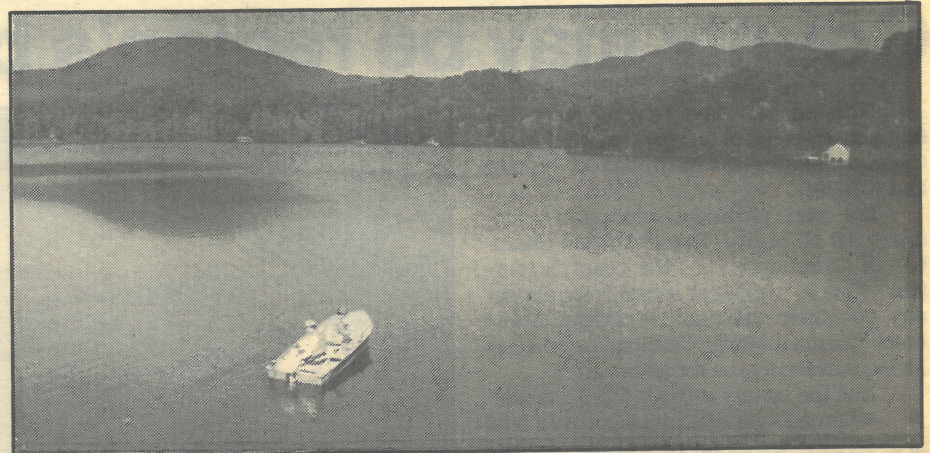
The two groups will "explore the kinds of recreation facilities that can be added to the park over the years" in developing a master plan for the entire tract, he said.

Birdsong credits a joint effort by the McDowell and Burke County chambers, working with local state representatives Ray Fletcher and Bob Hunter, with creation of the new park.

The facility is expected to boost tourism in the two counties because Western North Carolina currently contains few "lake parks. We expect visitors from the piedmont and western parts of the state, and from northern South Carolina" to make frequent use of the new park for fishing, boating, camping and day trips, Birdsong said.

The park will also enhance recreation opportunities for McDowell County residents, he said.

Citizen groups in McDowell and Burke counties have pitched in to help development of the park, clearing trails, designing and building the horseshoe pits; 33 community groups have purchased picnic tables to furnish the picnic areas, Birdsong said.



State's Newest Park To Be At Lake James