

Hello... SPRING

Get out and enjoy our state parks!

BY BONNIE DOMBROSKI
Staff Writer

With the official start of Spring just behind us and the promise of milder weather in the air, it's a good time to think about where you want to spend some of your time outdoors. When you need to take a break from yard work and household chores, what you're looking for may be found in your local park areas.

Moon Lake Park, a 700-acre Luzerne County park, will open on April 15 for camping and on April 16 for trout season. There are campsites available with or without electricity and special group rates are offered.

The pool, which is double Olympic-sized and has two diving boards, will be opened the last weekend in May if the weather permits. A separate wading pool will be ready for the youngest swimmers.

In addition to the softball field and tennis courts, a basketball court is being built this year.

Moon Lake Park offers two picnic areas, a hiking trail and a Nature Education Center.

At the lake, boats and paddleboats are available to rent and fishing supplies, bait, and snacks are on sale at the concession stand.

Park employees estimate that roughly 35,000 to 40,000 people use the facilities with over 30,000 in the pool area alone. Moon Lake Park is open from 6 a.m. until sunset.

Ricketts Glen State Park, a National Natural Registered Landmark, is open all year. A 20-mile hiking trail which showcases 33 waterfalls in beautiful Lake Jean can be found in this

13,050 acre park.

Some of the activities that can be enjoyed at Ricketts Glen are boating, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, hunting and an assortment of winter sports.

A beach, a public boat launch, and food and boat concessions are located at Lake Jean. There are two picnic areas, one along Route 118 and the other up at Lake Jean.

For campers, there are 10 family cabins, 150 tent sites, and a 120-site family camp area complete with bathroom facilities.

Each year, approximately 350,000 people come to Ricketts Glen to enjoy what nature has to offer.

Another park that is open all year is Frances Slocum State Park. Park Superintendent Dave Barrett estimates that 200,000 people use the park facilities during the course of the year.

The pool will be open on weekends starting on Memorial Day and after schools let out for the summer will be open 7 days a week.

The park is just over 1000 acres with the lake area totaling 165 acres. Hiking, picnicking, boating, and fishing are some of the activities enjoyed by visitors to the park.

Presently under construction is a new 100-site campground area which is being paid for by state and federal funds. A family camping area, group tent areas, and accommodations for tents, trailers and recreational vehicles are planned. Because of a series of change orders, Superintendent Barrett does not know when the camping area will be ready for public use.



A DOG AND HIS BOY — Colin Breazeale, 3, Shavertown, and his Great Dane, "Kaiser", take a break from a spring afternoon walk at Frances Slocum State Park. "Kaiser" and his friend are a small sampling of the hundreds of thousands of Pennsylvanians who will enjoy our local state parks this year. (Bonnie Dombroski Photo)

Angela Wassel, Park Naturalist, organizes interpretive and environmental education activities at the park. These activities include guided hikes, slide presentations, and appearances by guest resource people. Topics such as Wildlife Management, the Wetlands, and Bird Walks are scheduled from after Memorial Day until Labor Day. Usually these sessions are run on weekend afternoons and specific times are posted along park bulletin boards. Special arrangements can be made for school groups, scout troops and other organizations by calling the park office.

From June until September, one-week youth and environmental day camps will be run by Wassel for three different age groups. A "touch and grow" series will be held for pre-schoolers, ages four and five. They will go on hikes, sing songs and do arts and crafts on their way to learning more

about their environment.

For children ages six to eight, the learning experience is called Environmental Discovery. Junior Naturalist classes are made up of children from eight to 12 years old. More information can be obtained by contacting Ms. Wassel at Frances Slocum State Park.

Fresh Air Fund program to start

The Back Mountain area will again host underprivileged children from New York City from June 29 through July 13, as it serves as a Friendly Town in the vacation program sponsored by the city's Fresh Air Fund.

The program which has been in effect for the past 12 summers in the Back Mountain area is part of a 326 Friendly Towns program that makes it possible for more than 8,000 children to visit volunteer host families in 13 Northeastern seaboard states from Virginia to Maine. Since 1977, the Fresh Air Fund sponsored program has placed more than 1.6 million disadvantaged New York City children with summer vacation host families.

The children who are mostly black and hispanic will arrive in the area on June 29 and will end their visits by July 13. First time visitors range in age from six - 12 years of age and are selected, screened and registered for the program by 50 participating social service organizations located in low income neighborhoods in New York City. Each child receives a medical check-up before leaving the City, and the Fresh Air Fund provides for medical expenses for uninsured children as well as liability insurance for host families and committee volunteers.

Applications are available for anyone interested in offering their home to the Fresh Air Fund children. For further information, call Fran Williams, 696-2126, Marci Matthews, 696-4637 or Roseann Tedesco, 283-2855. Deadline for applications is May 15.

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