

First Day Hikes 2014

On New Year's Day, hikers in all 50 states will hit the trails for ranger-guided hikes designed to rejuvenate the mind and body and burn off all of those tasty holiday treats. This year, more than half of South Carolina's state parks will be participating in the event, so there's no excuse not to lace up your boots and get moving. Below is a list of participating parks, contact information and information about each hike.

Be sure to wear comfortable shoes, dress appropriately for the weather and bring plenty of water and bug spray if necessary.

Aiken State Park

803-649-2857 | aiken@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Aiken State Park and enjoy a 3-mile hike around Jungle Trail! We'll observe beautiful scenery, look and listen for wildlife, and just have fun with some other motivated park enthusiasts.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is in the picnic area. Hike begins at 10a.m. and will last approximately one hour.

Andrew Jackson State Park

803-285-3344 | andrewjackson@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Andrew Jackson State Park and hike the mile-long Garden of the Waxhaws Trail. We'll open the gates early to give you a unique opportunity to see the natural beauty of Andrew Jackson State Park. We'll meet at the boat dock and hike around the lake, hopefully seeing waterfowl on the water and other wildlife around the park.

Event is free with park admission. Hike will be held from 7:30 a.m. until 8:30 a.m.

Caesars Head State Park

864-836-6115 | caesarshead@scprt.com

This easy one-mile hike through the forest takes us past two waterfalls and the ruins of the original Greenville Wayside Park.

Event is free. Call ahead two days before hike to register. Meeting place will be at the Wildcat Wayside parking lot off of Highway 276, between Caesars Head and Jones Gap state parks. Hike begins at 10a.m. and will last about an hour.

Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site

843-852-4200 | charlestowne@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Charles Towne Landing State Historic Site and enjoy a walk through history and nature. Improve your health and your knowledge. We'll walk rain or shine, so dress for the weather.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is in the Visitor Center lobby and hike will begin at 10 a.m. and last approximately one hour.

Cheraw State Park

843-537-9656 | cheraw@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Cheraw State Park and enjoy the short loop of the Turkey Oak Trail. This two mile hike will get rid of the guilt of that extra piece of pie! If you feel like a harder hike, you're welcome to continue on and hike the entire trail.

Event is free with park admission. Hikers must register by 5 p.m. on Dec. 29, and should meet at the Turkey Oak Trailhead on the day of the hike. Hike begins at 10 a.m. and is expected to last until 11 a.m.

Croft State Park

864-585-1283 | croft@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Croft State Park and hike the 1.5 mile nature trail. Event is free with park admission. Hike will depart from the nature trail parking lot at 9a.m. and last about an hour.

Devils Fork State Park

864-944-2639 | devilsfork@scprt.com

Start your new year's resolutions off right with the First Day 5K fun-run event at Devils Fork State Park! Come out and walk, jog, or run inside the park on the first day of the new year. Go at your own pace or see if you can beat a park ranger! There will also be a ranger-led nature hike as an alternative to the race.

Be sure to register by Dec. 31. Admission is free for all runners and their families. Meeting place will be in the picnic area parking lot. Event begins at 10a.m. and will last until noon.

Edisto Beach State Park

843-869-2156 | edistobeach@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Edisto Beach State Park and enjoy the Spanish Mount Trail, a trail full of history and culture. We'll hike about three miles through the beautiful maritime forest with creek and salt marsh views along the way. This hike should take about two hours and is an easy hike on a hard-packed surface.

Meeting place will be at the Ranger Station in Live Oak Campground. Hike begins at 8:30 a.m. Event is free with park admission.

Givhans Ferry State Park

843-873-0692 | givhansferry@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Givhans Ferry State Park and enjoy a walk in the woods along the beautiful Edisto River.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is at Riverfront Hall. Hike departs at 2p.m. and will last approximately an hour and a half.

Hampton Plantation State Historic Site

843-546-9361 | hampton@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Hampton Plantation State Historic Site for a fun 1.25-mile guided hike along the nature trail loop. While taking in the sights and sounds of the forest, we will explore the history of the former rice plantation and its impact on the landscape.

Event is free, as is admission to the park grounds. Meeting place is at the ranger station. Hike will depart at 9:30 a.m. and last approximately one hour.

Hickory Knob State Park

864-391-2450 | hickoryknob@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Hickory Knob State Park and enjoy the moderately strenuous, two mile Beaver Run Trail as it wanders through the beautiful hardwood forest along Strom Thurmond Lake. Be sure to register by 5p.m. on Dec. 29.

Meeting place will be in the Great Room at the Lodge/Park Office. Hike will be held from 10 a.m. until 11:30 a.m.

Huntington Beach State Park

843-237-4440 | huntingtonbeach@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Huntington Beach State Park and enjoy the Sandpiper Pond Trail and beach walk. We will meet at the North Beach (Jetty) parking lot to take a hike along the Sandpiper Pond Nature Trail, meandering along the edge of a freshwater marsh and through the lush maritime forest. At the halfway point we will make a quick pit stop at the Nature Center to check out the exhibits and live animals, and then continue our journey back with a walk along the beach. The total length will be about 2.25 miles. Binoculars and a small bag for beach treasures are optional.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place will be at the North Beach (Jetty) parking lot. Hike will last from 11a.m. until 1p.m.

Jones Gap State Park

864-836-3647 | jonesgap@scprt.com

This easy one-mile hike through the forest takes us past two waterfalls and the ruins of the original Greenville Wayside Park.

Event is free. Call ahead two days before hike to register. Meeting place will be at the Wildcat Wayside parking lot off of Highway 276, between Caesars Head and Jones Gap state parks. Hike begins at 10a.m. and will last about an hour.

Keowee-Toxaway State Park

864-868-2605 | keoweetoxaway@scprt.com

Join a park ranger at Keowee-Toxaway State Park and hike the Natural Bridge Nature Trail. This 1.4-mile hike highlights the natural beauty of the park including the natural land feature that it's named after. The terrain is uneven and moderately strenuous. Hiking boots and walking sticks are recommended. Stick around for some hot chocolate after the hike! Please remember to bring your own mug.

Event is free. Meeting place is at the Jocassee Gorges Visitor Center at the park. Hike departs at 10a.m. and will last about an hour and a half.

Kings Mountain State Park

803-222-3209 | kmountainsp@scprt.com

Start your New Year's resolution off on the right foot and hit a state park trail. Join a ranger at Crowders Mountain State Park in North Carolina and enjoy a moderately strenuous hike from the park's Boulder Access area, across the state border to South Carolina's Kings Mountain State Park. This hike is approximately six miles round trip, but if you only want to hike one way, please make arrangements for pick up at Kings Mountain. We will cancel the hike in the event of rain or other inclement weather. Call the park office at before you leave if the weather is questionable.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is at the park office, and hike will depart at 9:30 a.m. and last about three hours.

Lake Warren State Park

803-943-5051 | lakewarren@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Lake Warren State Park and enjoy a leisurely walk around the 1.25-mile Discovery Trail. The trail is stroller friendly, but they may have to be lifted over one step at the bridge. After the hike, stick around for some hot beverages.

Event is free with park admission.

Landsford Canal State Park

803-789-5800 | landsfordcanal@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Landsford Canal State Park and enjoy the Nature Trail along the banks of the Catawba River. This easy, 1.5-mile trail will take you past the eagle viewing area and the spider lily overlook deck and old lock structure, discussing the history and natural beauty of the area along the way. This will be a great opportunity to see our resident eagle pair on their nest.

Event is free with park admission. Hikers should plan to meet near the information kiosk in the main parking lot. Hike departs at 9:30 a.m. and will last approximately one hour.

Little Pee Dee

843-774-8872 | littlepeedee@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Little Pee Dee State Park and enjoy a hike on the Beaver Pond Nature Trail as it winds through the woods and along the shore of Lake Norton. Who knows what we'll see, but one thing's for sure, we will feel better at the end of the hike.

Admission is free and the meeting place is at the park office. The hike will depart at 9 a.m. and last for approximately two hours.

Myrtle Beach State Park

843-238-5325 | mbeachsp@scprt.com

Get outside at Myrtle Beach State Park on the first day of this new year and resolve to spend more time enjoying the natural world. Feel, see, hear and smell your way through a diversity of coastal habitats as we enjoy a leisurely 1.5-mile stroll and appreciate the serenity that nature provides. This program is designed for adults. Please leave your pets at home.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is at the nature center and the hike will be held from 10 a.m. until noon.

Looking to do a First Day Hike with the kids?

Grab your kids, head outside and take a short hike to absorb some fun life lessons from nature! Inspired by the "Advice from Nature" series, have a blast learning about plants and animals that live in the park. In our quest to gain some wisdom from nature, we will imitate our animal and plant neighbors through motions, sounds and activities. This program is designed for families with kids. Animals don't need cell phones, so be like an animal and turn yours off! Please leave your pets at home.

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place will be at the nature center. Hike will be held from 1:30 p.m. until 3:00 p.m.

Oconee State Park

864-638-5353 | oconee@scprt.com

Join a park ranger at Oconee State Park and explore several Civilian Conservation Corps structures. We'll honor the past as we welcome the New Year!

Event is free with park admission. Meeting place is on the front porch of the park office. Hike will begin at 2 p.m. and last approximately one hour.

Oconee Station State Historic Site

864-638-0079 | oconeestation@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Oconee Station State Historic Site and hike the Station Cove Falls Trail. Wind through a mixed hardwood forest on this 3-mile round trip hike. When we get to the falls, we'll hope to see the winter-blooming flower hepatica. The trail is fairly easy to hike with a gentle slope.

Event and park admission are free and hikers should plan to meet at the park office. Hike will be held from 9:30 a.m. until noon.

Paris Mountain State Park

864-244-5565 | parismountain@scprt.com

Join Ranger Cathy Taylor at Paris Mountain State Park for a one-mile hike around Turtle Trail. During the hike, Cathy will inspire you with many life lessons that we can learn from nature as we enter the New Year.

You must register by Dec. 30, and registration is limited. Event is free with park admission. Meeting place will be at the park center. Hike will take place from 2 p.m. until 3:30 p.m.

Poinsett State Park

803-494-8177 | poinsett@scprt.com

Step into the New Year as we kick off 2013 with a guided hike around the lake at Poinsett State Park. The hike will start at the office and follow the Coquina Trail for 1.5 miles around the lake. Hikers are encouraged to be aware of and prepared for inclement weather.

Meeting place will be at the park office and is free with park admission. Hike begins at 8 a.m., and is expected to last about an hour and a half.

Rivers Bridge State Historic Site
803-267-3675 | riversbridge@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Rivers Bridge State Historic Site and walk in the footsteps of Civil War soldiers. Take an easy two mile hike from the memorial grounds to the battlefield. See the natural beauty of the Salkahatchie swamp and hear how the soldiers endured bad weather during battle that took place in February 1865.

Event is free with park admission. Plan to meet at the memorial grounds and depart by 10 a.m. Hike will last approximately two hours.

Sadlers Creek State Park
864-226-8950 | sadlerscreek@scprt.com

Join a ranger at Sadlers Creek State Park at the park pavilion before we head down the Pine Grove Nature Trail. This hike will be a great opportunity to start off the New Year on the right foot. Check out Sadlers Creek and check off "start exercising" on your resolutions list!

Hikers will meet at picnic shelter #2 in the picnic area, and the hike will depart at 9 a.m. and last about two hours. Participants ages 16 and older will need to pay the \$2 entrance fee to participate.

Sesquicentennial State Park
803-788-2706 | sesquicentennial@scprt.com

Start the New Year off right by joining us at Sesquicentennial State Park for a guided walk on our two-mile Sandhills Hiking Trail. Enjoy the sights and sounds of the forest in this unique sandhills ecosystem. The terrain is relatively flat with boardwalks crossing wetland areas. The trail surface is paved for a short distance with recycled asphalt on the rest. We'll enjoy stops and views of the 30-acre lake along the way.

Make sure to register before Dec. 30 by 5 p.m. Event is free with park admission. Meeting place will be at the park office and hike will be held from 1 p.m. until 3 p.m.

Table Rock State Park
864-878-9813 | tablerock@scprt.com

Begin your new year on top - the top of Table Rock Mountain! Rangers will lead you through rugged mountain terrain to the spectacular vistas that await you at the top of the mountain. If you are ready for a challenge that will leave you breathless, put on your hiking boots and head to Table Rock State Park for this 7.2-mile hike that will take you to 3,124 feet and back.

Hikers should plan to bring a minimum of two liters of water and good hiking boots/shoes, and expect the trip to last about six hours. Hikers will meet at the Table Rock Nature Center and depart at 9a.m. Event is free with park admission.

Looking for a shorter hike?

Begin your new year looking into the past. A ranger will lead you on a 1.6-mile hike around Lake Pinnacle for great scenic views and a glimpse into the creation of Table Rock State Park. Learn about the Civilian Conservation Corps - CCC - and its legacy as you examine CCC structures along your hike.

Register by Dec. 28. Event is free with park admission. Meeting place will be in the Shelters 1 and 2 parking lot. Hike begins at 10a.m. and will last until 11:30 a.m.