

From: Dawn Dawson <ddawson@scprt.com>
To: Dawn Dawson<ddawson@scprt.com>
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Subject: State Parks to Start the New Year with First Day Hikes

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Contact – Dawn Dawson-House, ddawson@scprt.com, 803-734-1779

State Parks Start the New Year With First Day Hikes

Columbia – Dec. 18 – More than 30 state parks in South Carolina will offer ranger-guided hikes, walks and special events on Friday, Jan. 1, to help launch the new year (and to get resolutions off to a good start.) The [First Day Hikes](#) are mostly walks along beaches and lakes, in forests or on historic trails, to help visitors learn more about the cultural and natural heritage of South Carolina and to get in some holiday exercise.

While most hikes are easy to moderate, one of the hikes at Table Rock State Park in Pickens County is a strenuous 7-mile climb to the top of the mountain. Additionally, a bike ride will be held at Santee State Park and “polar plunges” will be held at Devils Fork, Paris Mountain, Hunting Island, Aiken and Sadlers Creek state parks. Congaree National Park will join the movement for the first time in 2016, offering a twilight hike along the boardwalk trail that begins at 5 p.m.

“Traditionally, New Year’s Day is a time to recharge and restart, and we’re happy to offer ideal settings for people to do that,” said Duane Parrish, Director of the South Carolina Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism. “The trails and pathways in state parks are some of the most naturally scenic and historically significant in the state. Inspiring and re-affirming, they set the stage for enriching experiences in the South Carolina outdoors.”

Park visitors who participate in First Day Hikes are encouraged to share their experiences on social media using the hashtag [#FirstDayHikes](#).

State parks are also inviting members of the Armed Forces to a friendly competition during First Day Hikes to see which branch can cover the most miles in a single day. All personnel serving in the U.S. Marine Corps, Army, Air Force, Navy and Coast Guard must check in with park rangers when they arrive and report miles covered at the end of their hikes.

For a complete list of parks hosting hikes and events, click [here](#). Additional information about state parks can be found at www.SouthCarolinaParks.com.

The Park Service’s First Day Hikes are part of a national movement by the [America’s State Parks](#) program to get more people out into the great outdoors on New Year’s Day and to rediscover the beauty and significance of their natural heritage.

For more information, contact Dawn Dawson-House at ddawson@scprt.com or 803-734-1779.

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Dawn Dawson-House
Director of Corporate Communications
SC Department of Parks, Recreation & Tourism
1205 Pendleton Street
Columbia, SC 29201

Phone: (803) 734-1779

Cell: (803) 467-0202
ddawson@scprt.com
www.DiscoverSouthCarolina.com
www.scmmediaroom.com

SAVE THE DATE: Mark your calendar for February 15 – 17, 2016 for the 2016 Governor's Conference on Tourism & Travel. Please visit www.scgovcon.com for more information.



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