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Trout Talk

Kids Free Fishing Day
coming up May 4
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May 2024

Kids Free Fishing Day coming up May 4

LCR STAFF

Each year, Bennett Spring State Park hosts special events that encourage angling as a family activity and provide novice anglers the opportunity to experience trout fishing. Kids Free Fishing Day takes place on the first Saturday in May.

For 2024, the event will be held on Saturday, May 4. This is a great opportunity for the whole family to come out and spend the day fishing at the trout park. All children age 15 and under fish for free during this annual event. There will be a special kids only fishing area to ensure that they have a successful trip. This area will extend from the hatchery outlet in Zone 2 to the Suzy Hole in Zone 3. This area will be marked with signs and will be patrolled to make sure that children are the only anglers fishing in that area.

Children need to observe the zone regulations, length limits for brown trout, and daily limits. There will be streamside volunteers to assist participants with knot tying, lure selection, and fishing advice. There will be several activities for the children and food will be provided for all participants. All anglers must abide by normal fishing hours for May, which are 6:30 a.m. to 8:15 p.m.

Volunteers will be on hand to help. Kids are encouraged to bring their own fishing equipment. Parents are welcome to help kids, but



Kids enjoy the Bennett Spring State Park Free Fishing Day held in 2019 and, above, left in 2017.

adults are also asked to let children fish by themselves as much as possible. Only one pole may be used between the helper and the child. Adults are not allowed to fish in the designated kids' fishing zone.

Volunteers are needed to help with this event. Individuals wish-

ing to volunteer do not need to be experienced anglers. To help with Kids' Fishing Day or for more information call the Bennett Spring Hatchery at 417-532-4418.



LCR file photos

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Retired art teacher inspires others at Bennett Spring

JACK SILBERBERG
REPORTER@LACLEDERECORD.COM

Deanna Stuckey teaches art on March and April Thursdays at the Bennett Spring Nature Center. Recently, she oversaw participants trying their hands at marbling and card design.

"See what you made?" Stuckey, a retired art teacher, asks a young girl as they look at a wet and multi-colored card. Teaching kids how to make art instead of what to make is important to the retired teacher.

After the girl and her family leave, Stuckey runs through the marbling process once more. She drops the gelatin paint on a layer of shaving cream, presses the card down, pulls the card out and washes the cream off. Voilà. She's impressed with the result and tries again with the same cream and a new card. The colors on the new card are surprisingly vibrant, Stuckey said.

Stuckey brought along her painting supplies in case attendance was slow, which it was. She shows a work-in-progress painting of a field covered by snow and shadowed in trees.

One of her goals as an artist was to draw running water, so she drew waterfalls until she did.

"I made water run," Stuckey said, "And that was it." Then she moved on to another goal.

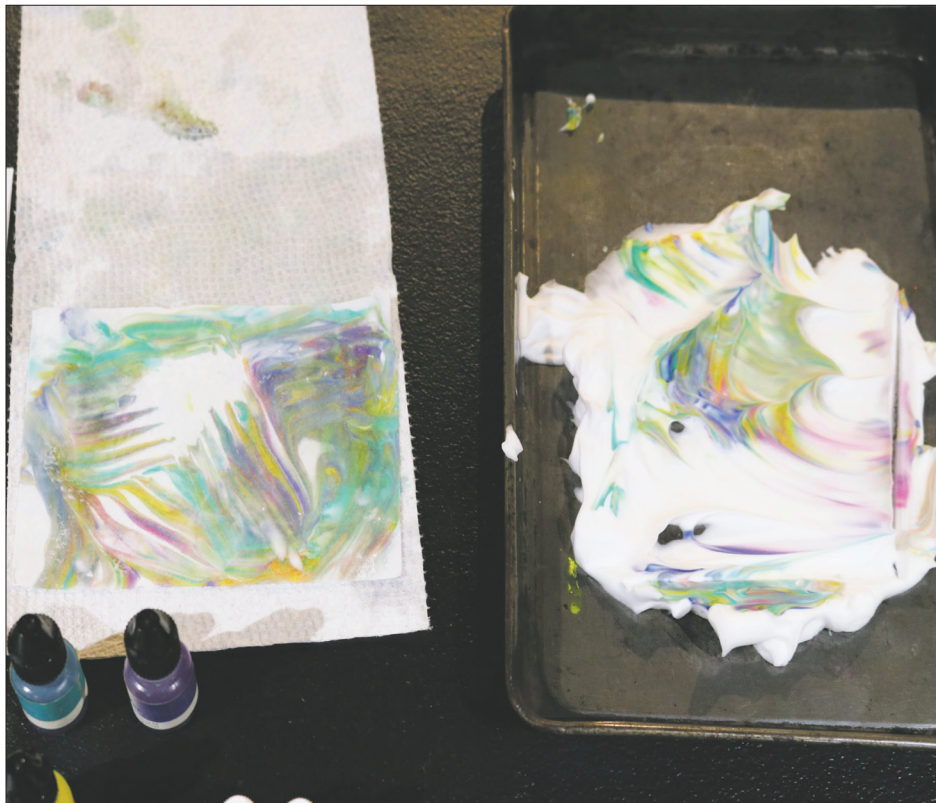
Spending time with her husband is important to Stuckey, and they try to go on several trips a year. The trips also allow her to paint in the Plein Air style, which involves painting in the presence of the subject. This creates opportunities for innovation in creation, Stuckey's stories imply.

"I figured that it was finished the way it was," Stuckey said of her decision to leave an interrupted work as is.



LCR Photo/Jack Silberberg

Fellow volunteers and visitors practice marbling with Deanna Stuckey, right.



LCR Photo/Jack Silberberg

The results of one shaving cream marbling experiment at a recent Bennett Spring art class.

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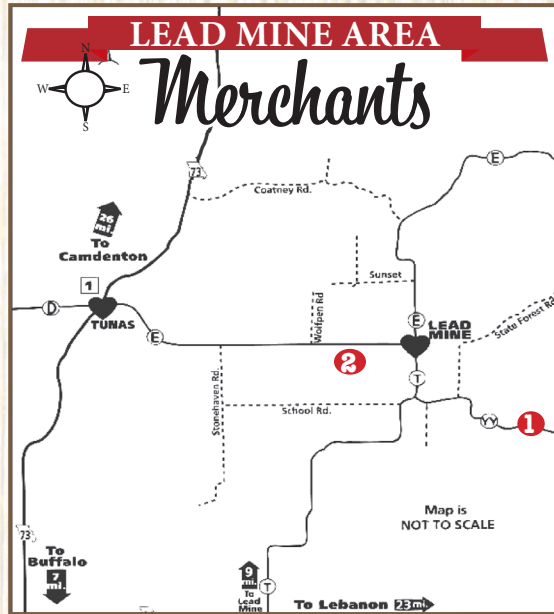
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Bennett Spring Park invites visitors to build a bridge

LCR STAFF

Many bridges have spanned Bennett Spring throughout the park's 100 years of existence. To celebrate the park's history of bridges, visitors of all ages are invited to build a bridge over a container of water behind the nature center. All are welcome to attempt various architectural designs, then use items such as Hot Wheels, army men, Barbie dolls or other items brought from home to test the functionality of their creation.

At one time, a rickety wooden footbridge was used to cross the spring. Currently, the spring has two bridges located on it: the whistle bridge and the wooden bridge. Upgrades in bridges will soon

take place, and the ability to cross water into the park in a safer, more modern way will soon be coming.

Come and apply your bridge-making skills behind the nature center during the month of May. This activity will be on your own any time during daylight hours. The nature center is open Wednesday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Bennett Spring State Park will have its 100th anniversary celebration on Oct. 5, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. More can be learned about the historic bridges at that time. More information on programs and events can be obtained by calling the park nature center at 417-532-3925.

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Park celebrates hard-working CCC tradition

LCR STAFF

As it prepares for its 100th anniversary this fall, Bennett Spring State Park invites people to learn about the legacy of Civilian Conservation Corp and its contribution to the park.

The people of the Ozarks have historically been known for their hardworking ethics, and the tradition of giving their best continues today. Bennett Spring State Park received a huge benefit when the United States park system went through its most significant period of change and development. In 1933, under the direction of President Franklin Roosevelt, Congress authorized the Civilian Conservation Corps. That fall, the men of Veterans Company 1772 of the Civilian Conservation Corps came to Bennett Spring State Park. The entire group of 200-250 members had served in the First World War. Before the Great Depression, many of them had been schoolteachers, preachers,

laborers, farmers, clerks or salesmen.

During their time at Bennett Spring State Park, the men of Company 1772 bunked in wooden barracks in a camp operated by the Army and worked on park development, which was planned and supervised by the National Park Service. From November 1933 to December 1937, Company 1772 completed hundreds of projects, including quarrying stone, laying telephone lines, digging sewers and building park structures. The group built the dining lodge, the gauge house, the original hatchery, a shelter house, and the arched stone bridge across the spring branch, along with cabins, trails, roads. In 1985, the historic nature of the park's CCC structures was recognized with the addition of two listings to the National Register of Historic Places.

Today, the park's nature center has a composite map of Bennett Spring State Park between 1933 and 1937 that

See 'CCC'/page 8



Bennett Spring State Park Photo

This shelter house at Bennett Spring State Park is one of the projects completed by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.



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We want to thank you for visiting our beautiful Bennett Spring State Park. While you are in the Bennett Spring area, we invite you to visit Historic Downtown Lebanon. Take the short, scenic 11-mile drive into the city of Lebanon. Stay straight on Jefferson until you reach Commercial. Whether you decide to turn right or left on Commercial Street, you will find lots of interesting things to do like visiting Downtown businesses or attending one of our many events.

You will find boutiques, restaurants, ice cream shops, smoothie stores, antique stores, gift shops, salons, jewelry stores, music stores, an art gallery and much more Downtown.

We hope you will make plans to visit Downtown soon or perhaps return to our area to enjoy one of our upcoming events.



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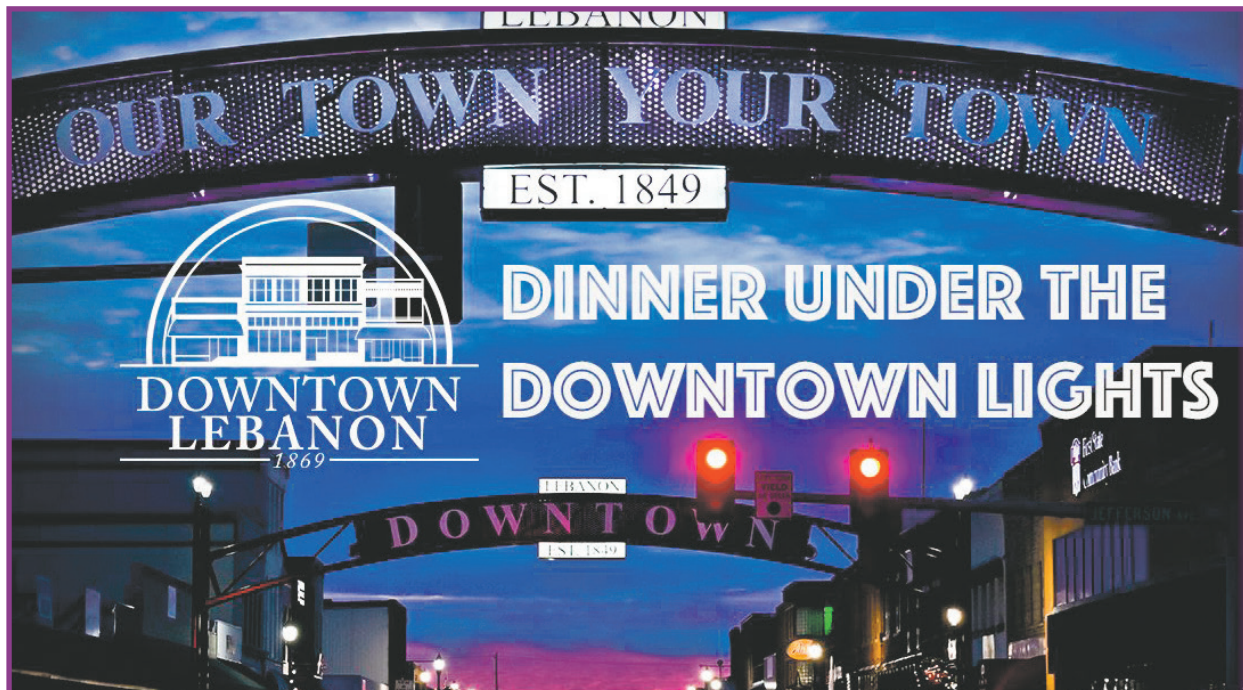
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CCC from page 5

shows CCC projects and buildings. In addition, the public can take a stroll through the park and see these structures free of charge any day of the year. The park concessionaire continues to rent out three of the original CCC cabins, although these cabins have been upgraded and modernized, and the park as a whole is currently undergoing upgrades as it enters its 100th year.

Bennett Spring State Park will have its 100th anniversary celebration on Oct. 5, 2024, from 10 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. The celebration will feature a variety of activities, including a portrayal of a CCC worker by Michael Busekrus, manager of Nathan and Olive Boone Homestead State Historic Site. For more information about the celebration, call the Bennett Spring nature center at 417-532-3925.

Visitors to Bennett Spring can find a warm welcome at Ozark Hills Lodge

LAURA L. VALENTI

Chris Benne, a corporate lawyer who grew up fishing at Bennett Spring and his wife, Heidi, a band teacher at Lebanon's Middle School and High School, are now innkeepers at Bennett Spring. They purchased the Ozark Hills Lodge from Russ and Karla Phelps a year ago this past spring and are greatly enjoying the new challenge.

Chris is originally from the Jefferson City area and came to Wright County several years ago, living on his family's Century Farm there, where his parents still reside. Heidi grew up in the O'Fallon area, just west of St. Louis but has been a teacher at Lebanon for over 20 years. She and Chris met and she says she convinced him to come to Lebanon.

"We met Russ and Karla through the

See 'LODGE'/page 9



LCR Photo/Laura Valenti

Chris and Heidi Benne are the innkeepers at Ozark Hills Lodge. They bought the business a year ago this spring.

Fishing the Missouri Trout Parks
written by Jim Washabaugh

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LODGE

from page 8

Methodist Church here and we began to visit and it all just sort of came together," she explained.

The building that is now the Ozark Hills Lodge has a long history in the area as a barbecue restaurant, last known as Ollie's. Russ and Karla were the last owners along with the well-known Ollie Kennedy. Russ had the idea to convert the restaurant into a place of lodging but a very special one. Chris called the lodge, Russ' Covid project as he spent much of 2020 building the exquisite Ozark inn, located on Highway 64, two miles east of Bennett Spring State Park.

"Every one of the rooms here," Chris explained, "is wheelchair accessible. The other thing that makes these rooms special is Russ' clever design that will accommodate up to 24 people, with interconnected rooms. Meanwhile, they can also be broken down into individual rooms

and each one is actually designed as a small suite. So, we have rooms for two or four or up to six, but guests can literally put the kids down to bed in one room while they go back to visit or play cards in the sitting room. We are also pet friendly."

As they embark on their second season in the lodging business at Bennett Spring, Heidi noted that they have already had a variety of guests from different places and with different reasons for coming to stay with them.

"We've had fishermen from Bennett of course, but also folks floating on the river that after a long day on the water, want a hot shower and to sleep in a real bed and not in a tent on a gravel bar. We've stayed busy this winter with guests who are transitioning to Lebanon and need a place to stay while they are looking to rent or buy a house in town. The thing that

is so nice about the way these rooms can interface with each other, is that we can accommodate larger groups, like a wedding party who want to visit back and forth and yet, when bedtime comes, they can close the door to a separate room."

Chris, who works from home in litigation, trusts, and estates as well as in transportation consultation, finds their lodge a most convenient place to meet his clients. And for Heidi, the schedule of the busy summer season at Bennett comes along just as the school year finishes for the year.

"I've been coming to Bennett Spring to go fishing with a friend for many years, since college," Chris concluded. "We always dreamed of owning a little resort like this and now that it's happened, we are really enjoying it!"



LCR Photo/Laura Valenti

The exterior and interior of the facilities of Ozark Hills Lodge are shown.

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Trout Talk

BENNETT SPRING STATE PARK AND SURROUNDING AREA



LUNKER CATCHES



Jeremy Elliott, Battlefield,
3 pounds, Zone 1,
using chamois



Trevor Love, 20" Brown Trout,
Zone 2, using
Hare's Ear Nymph



Dean Hasse, Sedalia, 5.4 pounds,
Zone 3, using salmon eggs



Steve M., Cottleville, Ill., 4.11
pound, Zone 2, using white
mini jig



Brett Wessling, Kansas City,
4 pound 10 ounce Rainbow
Trout, Zone 1, using
John Deere



Tyler Koenig, Perryville,
3.5 pounds, Zone 2, using jig

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