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**Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park**

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**For Immediate Release:**

**Krazy with Kudzu**

**Chimney Rock event centers around “the foot a day” weed**

The sight of kudzu creeping up mountain sides—or any object for that matter-- is a sure sign of summer.

From 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, Aug. 12, visitors to Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park will learn the good, the bad and the ugly about kudzu during the Park’s Krazy with Kudzu event.

State Park Rangers will discuss how the noxious invasive poses a threat to native plants. They’ll also explain the different methods used to manage the weed that’s known as “the vine that ate the south.”

A representative from Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy will talk to visitors about the slithering weed and the tactics that the conservancy are using to fight it in the region.

“Since 2012, Weed Action Coalition of the Hickory Nut Gorge has used a variety of kudzu control techniques, including hand pulling, chemical control, and even goats,” said Jen Adams, AmeriCorps Habitat Restoration Associate at Carolina Mountain Land Conservancy. “Kudzu infestations may seem overwhelming, but there are things everyone can do to help control them!”

Along with presentations from authorities fighting the weed, visitors to the Park will have a chance to meet one of Kudzu’s natural predators--- goats. Goat farmer Ron Searcy, of Wells Farm in Horse Shoe, N.C., will bring some of his animals and share fun facts about the critters that make kudzu eating their business.

“Many people don’t realize how fast a few goats can clear a piece of land,” said Searcy. “I’ll bring some of my goats and people can see them eating kudzu and learn about their uses in clearing land.”

While exploring the world of kudzu control, guests can enjoy tunes from the Kollard Kings from Charlotte, N.C. The string band is known for their old-time songs and mountain sound.

They’ll also have a chance to visit with the Kudzu Queen, Edith Edwards, and a crew of kudzu enthusiasts to share the many ways that they use kudzu. Edwards will have kudzu jelly that can be sampled as well as some of her signature deep-fried kudzu leaves.

Edwards and her husband, Henry, began growing and harvesting the vine for their cows in the ‘70s during a drought. Since then, Edwards has grown to love the weed that’s used frequently in eastern medicine. She’s also learned to cook and make various crafts with the leaves and vines.

“You can do a lot with kudzu,” said Edwards. “I’ve deep fried kudzu leaves and I’ve also made tea, syrup and jelly. You can make wreaths and baskets with it. It’s really an amazing plant”

On the arts side of things, three different crafters that harvest and use the vine for their work will be on site to discuss their efforts to use the weed for something positive.

Justin Holt and Zev Friedman will demonstrate how Kudzu vine is stripped and turned into usable fibers for artists. The two will also have some of the fibers that they have created with kudzu for sale on site.

Crafters interested in learning how to make the weed into something fabulous can sign up for a Kudzu Basketmaking class with Nancy Basket.

“Using kudzu vine, students will create one of two baskets,” said Baskets. “No experience or supplies are needed for this class. Participants should just come with an open mind and be ready to have some fun.”

The South Carolina artists will guide students of all levels through a two-hour course that provides step-by-step instructions to create a bird nest or flower gathering kudzu basket from 10 a.m. to noon. Advance registration is required to attend this class. Cost is $25.

To register, call 828-625-9611. Registration is due by Friday, Aug. 4.

More information about Krazy with Kudzu can be found at chimneyrockpark.com or at facebook.com/chimneyrockparknc

**About Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park**

[Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park](http://chimneyrockpark.com/index.php) is a still-developing international outdoor destination located 25 miles southeast of Asheville on Highway 64/74A in Chimney Rock, N.C. It is recognized as one of the Southeast’s most iconic sites and popular travel destinations. The Park’s 535-million-year-old monolith called Chimney Rock can be accessed via the 500-step Outcroppings Trail and offers guests 75-mile panoramic views of Hickory Nut Gorge and Lake Lure. The Park features one of the highest waterfalls of its kind east of the Mississippi River, Hickory Nut Falls, at 404 feet. Hickory Nut Gorge, one of the state’s most significant centers of biodiversity, is home to 36 rare plant species and 14 rare animal species. The Rumbling Bald section of the greater State Park off of Boys Camp Road in Chimney Rock is the only other area of the Park that is currently open to the public. A destination for travel groups, weddings and special events, the Chimney Rock section of the Park also hosts innovative [educational programs](http://chimneyrockpark.com/education/) for schools, homeschoolers, scouts and summer camps. Visit Chimney Rock’s website at [chimneyrockpark.com](http://www.chimneyrockpark.com).

Cutlines:

Nancy Basket

Artist Nancy Basket will have her kudzu artwork on display and teach a kudzu basketmaking class during the event.

Kollard Kings

The Kollard Kings will play a variety of old-time string songs for Krazy with Kudzu guests.

Chimney with Kudzu

A wonderful view of Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State’s Parks Chimney surrounded by the “vine that ate the south”—kudzu.