

# Unicoi Springs Camp Resort

Celebrating two decades in the Georgia mountains

**T**HERE WAS NO BIG CELEBRATION DURING 2004, BUT THE 2,300 members of Unicoi Springs Camp Resort, near the picturesque mountain community of Helen in northeast Georgia, can point with pride to the park's 20 years of continuing success.

It was in 1983 that Joseph Vandergriff of Tollgate Properties purchased some 40 acres of land and fulfilled his dream of establishing a serene mountain getaway for nearby residents as well as visitors from across the country. By the following year, the resort had 48 campsites and 10 rental units. For the convenience of visitors, there was a bathhouse, a lodge and a building for activities and social events.

By 1987, those who'd bought into the resort expressed a desire for a place of worship. Responding to their request, Joseph deeded a portion of the property to the owners and built a shell. Then nearly 300 owners procured a bank loan and, with volunteer help, completed the non-denominational chapel. Furnishings were donated by members, and after many fundraisers and potluck dinners, the loan was repaid in full by a proud membership. The chapel was dedicated in 1988, and today this labor of love stands as a landmark at the resort.

In 1990, the Unicoi Springs Owners Association assumed operation of the facility and groomed it to become a prime Coast to Coast facility that now welcomes members to the 300 full-hookup campsites and 21 rental units.

The chapel was only the beginning of the amenities offered at the resort. Today, there are two swimming pools, a tennis court and facilities for minia-

ture golf, basketball, badminton, shuffleboard and horseshoes. There's a state-of-the-art playground for young children and a pavilion for teenagers.

The activity calendar includes plenty of events for all ages. Throughout the summer, paid staff members as well as volunteers see that every mem-

The center of many activities is the rustic two-story clubhouse, which features a complete kitchen and a large front porch. You never know when someone's going to pick up a fiddle or guitar and use the porch as an impromptu stage to entertain and maybe conduct a sing-along.

There are ample opportunities for those who like fishing and boating on a number of nearby lakes, and miles of hiking and biking trails surround the area. The Bavarian village of Helen is



TWENTY YEARS AND COUNTING AT UNICOI SPRINGS' SERENE MOUNTAIN RETREAT.

ber of the family is kept busy. For the younger set, there's vacation Bible school. For adults, there are pool tournaments, aerobics—both in and out of the water—and craft classes. A group of property owners cooks at least one meal a week, and there's a potluck on the first Friday of every month.

The grounds are beautifully tended by a paid maintenance crew, but when additional work needs to be done, like weeding or putting out new plants, volunteers pitch in and keep the place neat and trim. Every campsite has a patio, a picnic table, a barbecue grill and cable hookup. Five bathhouses mean there's one near every campsite.

popular for dining and shopping. Other nearby attractions are Chattahoochee National Forest, Anna Ruby Falls and Brasstown Bald, the highest point in Georgia.

The resort isn't open to the public, but Coast to Coast members are welcome on all but the three major summer holiday weekends. In addition to RV campsites, cabins and trailers are available for \$30 to \$50 a night. Reservations are advised and may be made up to 60 days in advance of your visit.

—BEVERLY EDWARDS

**Unicoi Springs Camp Resort**  
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