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Get out: Events celebrate hunting, fishing

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Whether you want to learn how to fly fish or fry fish, the annual National Hunting and Fishing Day event at the Cohen Campbell Fish Hatchery has something for you.

And if you want to get away to the mountains for the weekend, a similar event will be held at Duke Energy's World of Energy near Seneca.

Here's the best part: If you can afford the gas to get to them, both events are free.

The Midlands event runs from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Campbell facility at 2726 Fish Hatchery Road in Pine Ridge. Officially dubbed "An Outdoor Family Adventure," the program is aimed at children and their parents.

Participants can try their hand at fishing, archery, kayaking, bird watching, wall climbing and air rifle and shotgun shooting. Or they can watch presentations on hunting safety, fish cooking, primitive technology, reptiles and geology.

The S.C. Department of Natural Resources has been coordinating an event at the fish hatchery for years. This is the second year for the Upstate event, which features similar hands-on activities and demonstrations from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.

If you make the drive to the Upstate, you could turn it into a weekend outing with a Sunday hike on one of the many trails in Sumter National Forest or a fishing trip to the Chattooga River.

The events' sponsors want to encourage more children to put down their video-game controllers and explore the outdoors.

"If the children of today are afraid of nature and the great outdoors, where will we find the conservationists of tomorrow?" said Angela Viney, coordinator of the Seneca event for Upstate Forever.

South Carolina has a rich outdoors tradition. The nearly 600,000 hunters and anglers in the state spend nearly \$1.8 billion a year on hunting and fishing, according to the S.C. Wildlife Federation.

For more information on the two events, call (803) 256-0670.

Fall lecture series: S.C. Department of Natural Resources scientist Steve Bennett will discuss amphibian and reptile conservation issues Wednesday night at Congaree National Park.

The 7 p.m. lecture is part of a new after-hour series at the park in Lower Richland. Additional programs are scheduled on champion trees on Nov. 5 and freshwater mussels on Dec. 3.

For information on the lectures, call (803) 776-4396.

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