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Features

Washington Jonquil Festival welcomes spring

WASHINGTON, Ark. — Jonquils and daffodils have been blooming and beautifying Historic Washington State Park, which soon celebrates spring's wonderful arrival.

by [Aaron Brand](#) Mar. 11 2020 @ 9:07pm



Historic Washington holds its 52nd annual Jonquil Festival Friday, March 20, through Sunday, March 22. Photo by Submitted photo

By Aaron Brand

Texarkana Gazette

WASHINGTON, Ark. — Jonquils and daffodils have been blooming and beautifying Historic Washington State Park, which soon celebrates spring's wonderful arrival.

Historic Washington holds its 52nd annual Jonquil Festival Friday, March 20, through Sunday, March 22, with those natural beauties hopefully in abundance.

Park visitors will be able to enjoy the flowers, food and crafts vendors, live music and other sorts of entertainment, tours and more during the festival.

"They're in full bloom right now. They're gorgeous," said Historic Washington State Park's Shelia Little, the sales and promotions director, about those emblems of spring. She hopes the rainy weather will keep them blooming for the festival about a week away.

"There are different varieties planted here. We have daffodils and jonquils both they bloom at different times," Little said.

Festival hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. that Friday and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. that Sunday.

"It's an introduction to spring. It's one of the first events that comes in Southwest Arkansas that signals the beginning of spring," Little said. "One of the great things is creating memories." There's a sense of history, she says.

"We will have guided tours going on, in period clothing doing tours," Little said. That and the jonquils dotting the landscape make for a unique ambiance.

Friday's festivities include the Four States Iron Munchers at the Blacksmith Shop; they'll attend Saturday, too. That first day includes music at the entertainment tent from 11 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. On Saturday, runners and walkers can participate in the Jonquil 5K Run/Walk, in its 4th annual rendition with registration starting at 6:30 a.m. and a 7 a.m. start.

Also Saturday, enjoy the 4H BBQ Chicken Cook Off at the 1914 School Pavilion, the Tex-Ark Antique Auto Club and the Rusty Wheels Engines club, a ham radio group, the Danctastics dancers, a Dillan Cate concert, and a karaoke contest (1:30 p.m. registration).

"Our free concert this year is going to be Dillan Cate and he is a young man from Arkansas that's coming up. He's from Jonesboro," Little said. She suspects he'll be a nice draw because he's a young singer making his name in the industry with country, gospel and alternative rock music.

On Sunday, enjoy a game of town ball (a baseball precursor) at 2 p.m. and then vintage dancers performing at 3 p.m.

This spring festival wouldn't be the same without festival fare dining options ranging from Mexican food to funnel cakes, corn dogs to kettle corn, homemade root beer and more.

"Everything on a stick basically," said Ashley Martin, Historic Washington's event coordinator, who also mentioned the many vendors attending, in addition to a kid's zone, bloodmobile and screening station for breast cancer.

"I've got many this year. I've got around 120," Martin said of the vendors. They include homemade jewelry — "my favorite is the copper jewelry maker," she said. Woodworkers with kids' toys to cutting boards, art for the home

and outdoors, a local honey maker, outdoor furniture like benches and chairs ("they're really gorgeous," Martin said), boutique clothing, candles, spices and jellies — vendors will have all of this and more.

(Festival admission is free; parking is \$5 per vehicle with tours at regular prices. More info: arkansasstateparks.com/parks/historic-washington-state-park or 870-983-2684.)

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