

# **VI. NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT**

## **NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT POLICY**

The Division of Parks and Recreation's approach to natural resource management is directed by the North Carolina Constitution and the State Parks Act, both of which require the prudent management of natural resources. The constitution sets the overall policy by broadly defining the conservation and protection of natural resources and the acquisition of such resources as a proper function of government. The State Parks Act states that unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic and recreational resources are a part of the heritage of the people that "*...should be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants.*"

The North Carolina state parks system plays an important role in maintaining, rehabilitating and perpetuating the state's natural heritage. The natural resources of the state parks system are: high quality, rare or representative examples of natural communities; native plants and animals; geological features and landforms; water resources; and the natural processes that affect these resources. The primary objective in natural resource management will be the protection of natural resources for their inherent integrity and for appropriate types of enjoyment while ensuring their availability for future generations.

It is the Division's policy that natural resources will be managed by allowing natural environments to evolve through natural processes with minimal human influence. Natural resource management will not attempt solely to preserve individual species or processes; rather, it will attempt to maintain all the components and processes of a park's naturally evolving ecosystems. When intervention is necessary, direct or secondary effects on park resources will be minimized to the greatest extent possible. Intervention of natural processes may occur:

1. To correct or compensate for the previous human disruption of natural processes;
2. To protect, restore or enhance rare species and natural communities;
3. To protect, restore or enhance significant archaeological resources;
4. To construct, maintain, improve or protect park facilities; and,
5. To prevent danger to human health or safety around park facilities.

All park facilities will be designed, constructed and maintained to avoid adverse impacts to high quality natural communities, rare plant and animal species, major archaeological sites and other significant natural and cultural resources.

## NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Division of Parks and Recreation staff identifies natural and cultural resource management issues as a component of the general management plan process and groups them according to the categories shown below. Staff assigns a high, medium or low priority to each issue using the criteria described at the end of this section. The Division's Natural Resources Program is responsible for all actions unless otherwise noted.

Category	Subcategory	Project	Priority
Water Resources	River bank Erosion	River bank erosion is occurring along the East Loop of the bridle trail. Repairs should be made to the trail to reduce erosion.	High
		Ford along Avents Creek should be armored to reduce river bank erosion.	Medium
		Hanging culvert near the confluence of Mill and Avents Creek should be replaced with an arched culvert.	Low
	Riparian Buffer Zone Protection	Increased Siltation along Campbell Creek due to timber harvesting operations needs to be addressed.	Medium
		River ford along Moccasin Branch contributes to sedimentation, road closure should be examined.	Medium
Botanical Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Develop a natural community map of the park.	Medium
	Restoration	Restoration of pine plantation on approximately 675 acres of Weyerhaeuser property.	High
		Piedmont longleaf pine restoration on Hanson Aggregate property- approximately 40 acres.	Medium
	Exotic Species	Exotic species identified in the 2000 Exotic Species Survey should be addressed. High quality natural communities should receive the highest priority.	High
Animal Resource Management	Inventory Deficiencies	Small mammal and invertebrate (e.g. snails) inventories are needed.	High
		Reptile/amphibian inventory is needed.	High
	Exotic Species	Fire ants have increased at the park and need to be controlled.	Medium
		The presence of coyotes on the park have increased, the population should be monitored and impacts should be determined.	Low
Cultural Resource Management	Cultural Resource Management	Two homesites need to be demolished. Each site will need an asbestos survey.	Medium

		One site is located near a boundary and the exact location of the boundary needs to be determined.	
Land Use Management	Fire Management	Current acreage under prescription is not being burned on a proper rotation.	High
		Additional acreage in the northern portion of the park needs to be under prescription.	High
	Boundary Management	5,000 feet of boundary needs to be re-surveyed and marked.	High
	Right of Way	Right of way to the wilderness camping area needs to be resolved.	High
	Buffer Zone to the State Park Property	There is a mobile home moving business located adjacent to the park entrance. The business impacts the aesthetic qualities of the park.	High
		Proximity of chicken houses and associated odor needs to be addressed.	Medium
	Trash and Debris Disposal	There are two trash/debris disposal areas that need minor cleaning	Low
Visitor and Recreational Resource Management	Soil Compaction	Soil compaction is occurring under the raven rock on the south side of the park.	Low
	Trails Management	Current horse trail is seriously impacting resources. Trail is currently being rehabilitated to minimize impacts to the natural resources. A trail closure policy that restricts usage during wet conditions should be implemented.	High
	Vista Management	Need to maintain a vista on the overlook of the south section of the park.	High
Resource Management Training	Training	Prescribe fire, inventory/monitoring, and exotic species. General natural resource management training should be developed for new rangers.	Medium

\*Explanation of priority codes

**HIGH** If the resource management activity is not undertaken in the near future there is a distinct possibility that natural resources will be compromised. These issues should be addressed in the next five years.

**MEDIUM** Although there is a possibility that resources could be compromised, the priority is not as critical as the high priority projects.

**LOW** Projects with low priority have significantly less chance for compromise of the natural resources if the project is not undertaken in a timely fashion or the project may depend on completion of other projects.

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