



NORTH CAROLINA

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



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- GORGES STATE PARK
- MOUNT JEFFERSON STATE NATURAL AREA
- MOUNT MITCHELL STATE PARK
- NEW RIVER STATE PARK
- CROWDERS MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
- HANGING ROCK STATE PARK
- LAKE JAMES STATE PARK
- LAKE NORMAN STATE PARK
- MORROW MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
- PILOT MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
- SOUTH MOUNTAINS STATE PARK
- STONE MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
- CHIMNEY ROCK STATE PARK
- ENO RIVER STATE PARK
- FALLS LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA
- JORDAN LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA
- KERR LAKE STATE RECREATION AREA
- MEDOC MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
- RAVEN ROCK STATE PARK
- WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD STATE PARK
- CAROLINA BEACH STATE PARK
- CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE STATE PARK
- FORT FISHER STATE PARK
- FORT MACON STATE PARK
- GOOSE CREEK STATE PARK
- HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK
- JONES LAKE STATE PARK
- JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK
- LAKE WACCAMAW STATE PARK
- LUMBER RIVER STATE PARK
- MERCHANTS MILLPOND STATE PARK
- PETTIGREW STATE PARK
- SINGLETARY LAKE STATE PARK
- CARVERS CREEK STATE PARK
- HICKORY NUT GORGE STATE PARK
- MAYO RIVER STATE PARK
- HAW RIVER STATE PARK
- DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK
- ELK KNOB STATE PARK
- WEYMOUTH WOODS-SANDHILLS NATURE PRESERVE

Director's Message

Without a doubt, the most newsworthy item coming from the North Carolina state parks system in 2008 was the announcement of the state's plans to acquire Grandfather Mountain from the family of Hugh Morton. But the year also included a number of other accomplishments, along with the ongoing challenges of being responsible stewards of our natural resources, making sure our parks and facilities are clean and safe and our staff is properly trained.

In 2008, the state parks system brought 4,647 acres of land into conservation at 21 units with support from the Parks and Recreation, Clean Water Management and Natural Heritage trust funds. In addition, with the help of The Conservation Fund and The Nature Conservancy, an agreement was reached for the state to purchase 2,456 acres on Grandfather Mountain for a new state park, along with a conservation easement on 749 acres to remain in Grandfather Mountain Inc. ownership. The magnificence of Grandfather Mountain is captured on the cover of this report in a painting by North Carolina artist William Mangum.

The General Assembly authorized the Yellow Mountain and Bear Paw state natural areas, both centered in Avery County. The Yellow Mountain unit will be established with an initial acquisition of 850 acres through the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy. The Bear Paw unit will be established with an initial acquisition of about 350 acres through the High Country Conservancy.

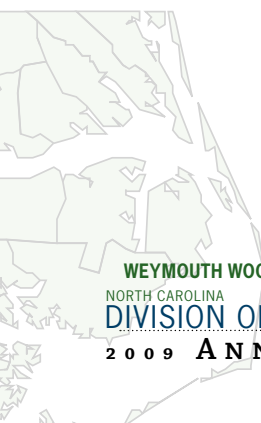
The developing Haw River State Park was expanded by 973 acres, including 692 acres that had been slated to be a residential golf community, the result of an agreement between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources and Bluegreen Corp. of Florida. Other results from more than 200 active acquisition projects include the addition of Jones Island to Hammocks Beach State Park, key river frontage tracts at Eno River State Park expanding the park by more than 240 acres and acquisition of a boating access area at Lake Waccamaw State Park.

A comprehensive study completed in partnership with North Carolina State University concluded that North Carolina's state parks contribute at least \$289 million to local economies annually as well as \$120 million to local residents' income, with traveling visitors spending an average \$23.56 a day to enjoy the outdoors.

The state parks system also set the stage for implementing an Internet- and call center-based reservations system for campsites and other facilities in 2009 by finalizing a contract with Infospherix, which operates similar systems in several states. A reservation system is one of the services most requested by visitors.

The state parks system completed master plans for South Mountains State Park and launched the master planning process for parks under development at Chimney Rock, Carvers Creek and Haw River.

The dedication of a \$3.5 million visitor center and related facilities at Dismal





Swamp State Park marked the official opening of the 14,344-acre park to visitors. During the year, the state parks system also completed a series of museum-quality exhibits at South Mountains, interim visitor facilities at Elk Knob and the infrastructure for permanent facilities at Gorges State Park, which will eventually include a visitor center, picnic grounds and campgrounds.

Projects begun during the year included a new observation tower at Mount Mitchell, visitor centers at Merchants Millpond and Raven Rock state parks, a 22,547-square-foot coastal education and visitor center at Fort Macon State Park and initial development on 3,000 acres recently acquired at Lake James State Park to include a swim beach and picnic grounds.

A total of \$16 million was channeled into local park acquisition and development projects through 44 matching grants from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, administered by the division. In the 14-year history of the fund, more than \$124 million has been awarded through 575 matching grants to municipal and county recreation programs across the state.

The declaration of October as Mountains-to-Sea Trail Month capped a year in which the division designated \$8.5 million to be used at this unit of the state parks system to purchase land for the first state properties to be dedicated to the 1,000-mile-long trail. Land is being acquired at key junctions in Johnston County in partnership with local governments and land trusts, and in Guilford County, providing a connection between Greensboro's trail system and Haw River State Park. In addition, Alamance County was awarded a \$400,000 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grant for land that will be set aside for the trail.

The division partnered with North Carolina Audubon, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Wildlife Resources Commission, the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service and N.C. Sea Grant to inaugurate the central North Carolina Birding Trail; 29 of 103 sites are state parks.

Hammocks Beach State Park was presented a 2008 Pelican Award from the N.C. Coastal Federation for its work in protecting and restoring coastal habitat. Fort Macon State Park teamed with the Division of Marine Fisheries to arrange for the addition of 83 tons of construction debris from a new coastal education and visitor center to an artificial reef in the Atlantic Ocean. The state parks system also teamed with Friends of State Parks to produce a new North Carolina State Parks Map Guide and with Niche Publications for the North Carolina State Parks; A Niche Guide, both of which are available for visitors at state parks and through a new state parks online retail outlet.

While I have only touched on the highlights from 2008, you can see that the past year has been an exciting one for the Division of Parks and Recreation. I encourage you to read about these and other efforts elsewhere in this annual report. Despite the economic challenges facing all of us in the coming months, the people of the state parks system and the natural resources we protect and enjoy will endure. We remain excited about the future and hope you will come visit so you are reminded that our state parks will always be Naturally Wonderful.

Sincerely,


Lewis R. Ledford





State Parks Make Significant Contribution to Local Economies

North Carolina's state parks potentially contribute \$289 million to local economies annually as well as \$120 million to local residents' income, according to an intensive study researchers at N.C. State University conducted for the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

READ THE WHOLE STUDY AT
[http://www.ncparks.gov/
News/special/
economic_impact.php](http://www.ncparks.gov/News/special/economic_impact.php)

Fourteen state parks examined in the yearlong study contributed at least \$139 million annually when spending by tourists was combined with direct spending in the local communities by the parks. The study found that "tourist" visitors to those parks spent an average of \$23.56 a day to enjoy the outdoors.

The study projected the total potential economic impact based on statewide attendance and assumed similar travel and spending patterns for all visitors to the system's 37 state parks and state recreation areas. For purposes of the study, "tourist" visitors were defined as those non-local visitors whose primary purpose for a trip was to visit a state park.

The researchers interviewed 852 "tourist" visitors in the 14 parks studied and found that the average group is 3.14 people and the average stay in a local community is 1.73 days. Thus, the average group spends \$127.98 during a park visit for such things as food, lodging, souvenirs, services and equipment.

"Our state parks stand on their own as stunning conservation lands representing North Carolina's rich natural heritage," said Lewis Ledford, director of state parks. "And, record visitation shows our citizens and visitors value them as such. The economic contributions revealed in this study suggest that the true value of state parks to local communities and the state is much greater than we realized."

In 2007, state parks reported record-level visitation of 13.4 million. That represents more than three times the combined attendance for the Carolina Panthers, Lowe's Motor Speedway events and Atlantic Coast Conference basketball games in North Carolina.

The study was conducted by Recreation Resources Service of the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at N.C. State University. Researchers visited each of the 14 parks between three and five times during the year interviewing 2,164 visitors to determine a percentage of "tourist" visitors. The data was then analyzed with IMPLAN modeling software, an industry standard for economic impact research.

Researchers chose parks that represent a broad cross-section of the parks system, including some with high day-use attendance as well as those popular for weekend camping trips. Large and small parks, as well as those in urban and rural communities, were studied.

The researchers noted that estimates of annual economic impact are conservative based on the narrow focus of the study. Local residents visiting the

state parks and so-called "casual" visitors who traveled primarily for other reasons were not surveyed.

The study found that the percentage of "tourist" – non-local, primary purpose – visitors varies widely at different types of parks, from 17 percent at Eno River State Park in Durham County to 75 percent at Merchants Millpond State Park in Gates County.

Analysis of the research shows that the state parks make a considerable economic contribution directly to the communities, through operations' budgets and jobs. The direct impact of the 14 parks studied was \$15 million in sales, \$10 million in personal income and 256.9 full-time equivalent jobs. The parks' capital projects were not included. Nor were park fees, such as those fees for camping, since those revenues are returned directly to North Carolina's general fund.

When this park spending is combined with the impact of "tourist" visitor spending, the annual economic impact in 2007 ranged from \$1.73 million at Eno River State Park to \$20 million at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area. In 2007, Eno River State Park had 341,646 visitors and Fort Fisher State Recreation Area had 834,544 visitors.





State Announces Plans to Buy Grandfather Mountain

On Sept. 29, 2008, Gov. Mike Easley announced that the state will acquire 2,456 acres on Grandfather Mountain to become North Carolina's newest state park.

Under an agreement with Grandfather Mountain Inc., the state parks system will acquire the undeveloped portion of the famous tourist destination as well as an easement on 749 acres that will be retained by the heirs of Hugh Morton. The purchase price is \$12 million. The Morton family will continue to operate the Grandfather Mountain attraction through a nonprofit organization supported by funding from the sale. The agreement was approved by the Council of State in January.

Funding from the acquisition will come from the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. The acquisition was arranged with the help of The Conservation Fund and one of its directors, Mike Leonard, and The Nature Conservancy, which holds conservation easements on Grandfather Mountain and surrounding properties totaling close to 4,000 acres.

"Today Grandfather Mountain and all its scenic beauty becomes a state park, which is one more step in our efforts to be One North Carolina Naturally," said Easley. "This is an extremely important habitat and we will take good care of it. The dreams of many North Carolinians and Hugh Morton will be met: North Carolina will protect and preserve Grandfather Mountain forever."

Aside from being one of the signature landmarks in our state, Grandfather Mountain is a premier natural resource, boasting 16 distinct ecological communities and 73 rare species and is an International Biosphere Reserve. The agreement outlines the intent of the Morton family to continue to operate Grandfather Mountain Park, which includes a nature center, a small zoo and the signature swinging bridge through a trust supported by funding from the sale.

The Division of Parks and Recreation will manage the undeveloped portion of Grandfather Mountain, including its 11 trails, as a state park and may seek additional acreage for traditional park facilities. Any additional tracts or facilities would be identified and prescribed through a public master planning process.

"This opportunity completes the protection of all of Grandfather Mountain in perpetuity, as it should be for a place of such significance," said Crae Morton, president of Grandfather Mountain Inc.

"The acquisition of Grandfather Mountain builds on our success at Chimney Rock, which was added to the state parks system last year, and shows again that great things can be accomplished through partnerships and a trust in the



conservation spirit of the state's citizens," said Lewis Ledford, director of North Carolina State Parks.

Hugh Morton inherited the mountain in 1952 and is credited with developing the park as a tourist destination and endowing it with a strong conservation ethic. Morton died in 2006.

The mountain, which contains the headwaters of both the Linville and Watauga rivers, is an important component of a much larger network of conservation lands. Adjacent and nearby properties include the Blue Ridge Parkway, the Pisgah National Forest and holdings by The Nature Conservancy.

The state parks system has other units important for conservation in the region including Elk Knob State Park in Watauga and Ashe counties, New River State Park in Ashe County, Lake James State Park in Burke County, Pineola Bog and Sugar Mountain Bog state natural areas in Avery County, and newly authorized state natural areas at Yellow Mountain (on the Mitchell-Avery county line) and Bear Paw (just north of the town of Seven Devils).



State, Bluegreen Corp. Announce Deal to Expand Haw River State Park

The state parks system acquired 692 acres in Guilford and Rockingham counties to expand the developing Haw River State Park.

The purchase price for three tracts initially assembled by Bluegreen Corp. for a residential golf course community was \$14 million, financed by the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

The property has been added to about 300 acres the state parks system acquired since 2004 and which include The Summit Environmental Education Center. The acquisition gave the new state park a larger land base of significant natural resource value and the potential to develop traditional state park amenities.

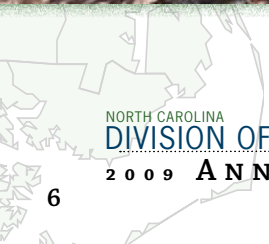
“This agreement is a reflection of Bluegreen Corp.’s good corporate citizenship in North Carolina,” Lewis Ledford, director of state parks, said. “When Bluegreen officials became aware that the state parks system had a sincere interest in this property and the means to pay fair market value, they were willing to negotiate in good faith. The result will be a vibrant state park that will offer conservation, recreation and education for future generations as this region develops.”

“Bluegreen Communities is pleased that we were able to work together with the state of North Carolina to reach this agreement, which will allow the state to proceed with plans to develop the property as a state park. Bluegreen is most interested in being a good neighbor and a good corporate citizen in the communities where we invest,” BlueGreen Communities said in a statement.

The acquisition was possible because of a commitment to conservation by the General Assembly, Ledford said.

“The legislature’s decision in its 2007 session for up to \$50 million in certificates of participation to be issued through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund allows us to respond quickly to opportunities such as this. Local park supporters, including the Friends of Haw River State Park, were strong advocates for the conservation of this property and its inclusion in the state park.”

Haw River State Park was authorized by the General Assembly in 2003 as part of the state parks system’s New Parks for a New Century initiative. The area near the Haw River headwaters was one of 12 sites in the state identified with the potential for state park development based on its natural resource value, recreation potential and proximity to urban areas under-served by the state parks system.





Boat Ramp Provides Much-Needed Access at Lake Waccamaw

Lake Waccamaw State Park began management of a 3.4-acre boat access area near the park on the lake's southeast shore after the state purchased the land from a private development group.



The change maintains a second public boating access on the lake, one that's especially popular for owners of small boats, canoes and kayaks.

Since 1993, the ramp was managed by Columbus County Parks and Recreation under a lease agreement with Federal Paper Board and more recently, International Paper Corp. The county refurbished the ramp eight years ago. In late 2007, when the surrounding property was sold, there was concern in the community that the access would be closed.

The town of Lake Waccamaw and the state parks system began to explore ways to acquire the property to keep it in the public trust. The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority allocated \$372,000 for the acquisition. This was combined with \$88,000 received from DOT for state park property used in a nearby bridge replacement project.

DPR Moves Forward With General Management Plans

North Carolina develops and manages state parks to provide stewardship for our state's most magnificent natural resources. While it sounds simple enough in concept, properly running a state park is quite a bit more complicated.

The State Parks Act, G.S. 113-44, directs the division to create general management plans (GMPs) for each park in the system. The GMP is based upon a statement of purpose for a park as well as an analysis of the resources and facilities available to implement that park's purpose.

The GMP process uses a thorough, multidisciplinary approach to planning, and all sections and programs are involved. All GMPs include:

- A statement of park purpose, including identification of the park's significant resources;
- A summary of interpretive themes;
- An analysis of demand and trends;
- Summary of laws and policy guiding park management;
- An analysis of natural and cultural resource management, including external and internal threats and research needs;
- Physical plant inventory, needs and priorities;
- Capital improvements needs, priorities and proposed facility locations;
- Operations and management issues and recommendations; and
- Land acquisition needs.

Each park has its GMP updated on a rotating schedule so that it reflects current conditions and is poised to address future needs. Revising GMPs allows the division to document needs and develop management and facility priorities. In this way, funds are spent effectively and new projects are designed and built to serve intended purposes. Draft GMPs are reviewed by each park's citizens' advisory committee to provide valuable feedback.

In 2008, GMP meetings were held for Hammocks Beach and Mount Mitchell state parks. Updated GMPs for Goose Creek, Pilot Mountain, Medoc Mountain and Pettigrew state parks are undergoing final internal review. Four updated GMPs for Fort Fisher State Recreation Area and Carolina Beach, Lake Waccamaw and Raven Rock state parks were posted on the agency's Web site and made available for public review.

In early 2009, GMP updates are planned for New River State Park and Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.



The Story Behind State Natural Areas

From its beginning, the purpose of the North Carolina state parks system has been to preserve the state's special natural resources, but early on, no distinction was made between a park and a natural area. Later, sites to be preserved solely for their natural and scientific values were placed in a different category from natural lands with recreational value, and today state natural areas are a special type of unit within the system.

North Carolina's first state park was created at Mount Mitchell in 1915 in response to threats to its natural resources. The General Assembly's reasons for the acquisition, as cited in the legislation, were to protect the beauty of the scenery, to prevent damage to the headwaters of important streams, and to provide a park for the use of the entire state.

Guidelines for a state parks system produced in the 1930s stated that areas to be acquired for state parks must have sufficient natural beauty and recreation possibilities; must preserve areas of natural beauty; must have sufficient historic or scientific value for statewide interest; and must preserve typical natural scenery near population centers.

In 1955, the Board of Conservation and Development adopted new "principles," and a distinction was made between "scenic and recreational state parks" and "state scientific sites." Although preservation of natural resources was a ma-



For the purpose of both types of park units, standards established for state parks included a minimum size of 400 acres and possession of both scenic and recreational values. State scientific sites had no minimum size and needed to possess only unique natural scientific features.

Development on a state scientific site was limited to that necessary to protect the scientific features, to provide public access, to protect public health and to provide adequate interpretive programs. Development was not to impair, damage or detract from the scientific features. The concept of a state scientific site was the forerunner of today's state natural area.





Beginning in 1956, a series of land donations added new park units to the system. Some of these better fit the description of a state scientific site than a scenic and recreational state park. At the same time, protecting unique natural areas was growing in public importance. In 1963, the Board of Conservation and Development adopted a set of *Principles for State Natural Areas* as a category separate from state parks. These principles state that the purpose of state natural areas is “to serve the people of North Carolina and their visitors by:

1. “Preserving and protecting natural areas of scientific, aesthetic or geologic value, not only for the knowledge and inspiration of the present generation, but also for generations to come; and
2. Portraying and interpreting plant and animal life, geology, and all other natural features and processes in the various natural areas.”
3. The basic principle of maintenance for a state natural area is to preserve the area in its natural state. State natural areas are to receive only such development as necessary to preserve and protect their natural values, protect public health and provide adequate interpretive programs. Development of recreational and public use facilities, such as for swimming, picnicking and camping were not to be provided. That same year, 1963, the first state natural area, Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve, was donated.



During the 1970s, the preservation of outstanding natural areas became a major issue. The state parks system received significant appropriations and established several new parks and natural areas. The Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area was donated by the heirs of Theodore Roosevelt in 1971 and became the state’s second natural area. Other natural areas were added throughout the decade: Dismal Swamp and Chowan Swamp in 1974, Hemlock Bluffs, Masonboro Island and Mitchells Mill in 1976, Bushy Lake in 1977 and Bald Head Island in 1979. Establishment of new parks and natural areas slowed in the 1980s because staffing to manage and operate the new parks had not kept pace with acquisitions. More recently, public interest in protecting state natural areas has been strong, and several have been created. Currently, there are 20 state natural areas within the North Carolina state parks system.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE NATURAL AREAS (With year of establishment)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1963 Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve (Moore County) • 1971 Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area (Carteret County) • 1974 Dismal Swamp State Natural Area (Camden County) * • 1974 Chowan Swamp State Natural Area (Gates County) • 1976 Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area (Wake County) • 1976 Masonboro Island State Natural Area (New Hanover County) • 1976 Mitchells Mill State Natural Area (Wake County) • 1977 Bushy Lake State Natural Area (Cumberland County) • 1979 Baldhead Island State Natural Area (Brunswick County) • 1993 Mount Jefferson State Natural Area (Ashe County)* • 1995 Run Hill State Natural Area (Dare County) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1997 Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area (Orange County) • 2000 Lea Island State Natural Area (Pender County) • 2000 Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area (Alleghany County) • 2002 Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area (Watauga County) • 2002 Elk Knob State Natural Area (Watauga County) * • 2004 Lower Haw River State Natural Area (Chatham County) • 2006 Pineola Bog State Natural Area (Avery County) • 2006 Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area (Avery County) • 2006 Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area (Pender County) • 2008 Bear Paw State Natural Area (Avery/Watauga counties) • 2008 Yellow Mountain State Natural Area (Mitchell/Avery counties) |
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* Later re-classified as state parks.



Survey Provides Insights on Recreational Needs

North Carolina needs to add new parks and provide more recreation opportunities, according to an overwhelming majority of participants in a recent recreational needs survey conducted by the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Over five weeks in October and November, the division conducted the survey as a component of its Systemwide Plan five-year update. The survey's intent was to seek public views and information on recreation needs in the state parks system, and feedback on how these needs should be addressed.

The survey was widely available via the state parks system Web site. Hard copies were also made available upon request. In response, 3,927 people completed the questionnaire.

The survey's questions attempted to measure the preference of park users for various park facilities and for the management direction of the state parks system as a whole.

The five **most popular** facilities (along with percent of respondents that would use) are:

- Hiking trails (79.5 percent)
- Nature trails (74.1 percent)
- Picnic table with grill (68.4 percent)
- Multi-use trail (61.2 percent)
- Observation decks (61 percent).

Other facilities receiving participant support included:

- Equestrian trails (34.9 percent)
- Recreational vehicle/trailer campsite with utilities (40.5 percent)
- Marina (47.8 percent)
- Playground (58.2 percent)
- Boat ramp/dock (63.5 percent).

Some larger themes emerged from the survey.

There is overwhelming support for adding new parks for additional recreation opportunities. A total 95.2 percent of respondents indicated a desire for an expanded park system.

Natural resource protection is very important, according to 93.7 percent of respondents who either agreed or strongly agreed that it is important for the division to acquire land to protect natural and scenic resources.

Feelings were mixed about the division's funding priorities. Slightly more than half (57.5 percent) either agreed or strongly agreed that completing land acquisition and construction plans at existing parks should take priority over adding new parks and natural areas.

Interpretation and education in parks is still considered very important for state park users with 82.6 percent of respondents saying they desire more educational opportunities at parks.

Although the survey is a low-cost method of gaining valuable insight into the opinions of 3,927 current, previous or future park users, the informal survey methodology is not scientific and does not constitute a random sample of park users.

Despite the informal nature of the survey, in several instances many of the responses matched well with North Carolina data from the USDA Forest Service National Survey on Recreation and the Environment (2002-2007).





N.C. State Parks Annual Safety Report 2008

The safety of state parks staff and visitors always ranks extremely high in division priorities.

The key to a successful safety program is proper training and equipment. Training, provided through district safety meetings and relayed to park staff through monthly safety meetings at state parks, has had a positive impact over the past three years by making all park staff aware of safety concerns and creating ownership in the program.

This process allows for safety issues and problems to be identified and corrected before an injury occurs. Success is evident in recent results of Department of Insurance inspection reports and in the reduction of employee injuries.

No safety violations were noted in two thirds of all DOI safety inspections conducted in the state parks system in 2008. Also, more than half of the violations noted had already been identified by park staff and were being corrected.

Safety equipment and training for park employees has also been a priority for the agency's Safety and Health Council and the New Equipment Safety Committee. During 2008, classes were conducted on such subjects as wildland fire suppression, chainsaw and forklift operation, medical first response and incident command.

The division also held its annual fall safety conference with a focus on outdoor safety. Randy Jackson from the Hazardous Weather Preparedness Center was the guest speaker. During November, the Industrial Commission conducted certified safety training for all certified well water and wastewater operators.

During the year, the division completed purchase of automatic external defibrillators so they are available at all state parks. More than 350 wildland fire shelters and packs were also purchased and distributed to all park staff that completed wildland fire training.

Quarterly facility audits and worksite audits are being conducted by park

superintendents. Along with regular safety audits, special audits are conducted by incident investigation teams when an accident occurs. During incident investigations conducted this year, issues were noted and addressed. None of the issues were directly related to or contributed to any of the accidents investigated.

Compliance with the department's safety program was also a focus of the parks' safety programs. The Fleet Safety Policy and Drug and Alcohol Policy as well as policies on ergonomics were among 2008 priorities.

The division also embarked on the purchase of warning lights for all park vehicles used on park and other public roads as recommended by the Secretary's Safety Committee in 2007.

Although every effort is being made to protect staff and visitors, park tragedies still occur. During 2008, 16 deaths occurred on property under state parks jurisdiction. Of these fatalities, 10 were the result of drowning, two resulted from injuries sustained in falls, one was due to cardiac arrest and three were ruled apparent suicides.

Did you know?

At Hammocks Beach State Park in 2008, teachers and other educators participated in 10 different full-day workshops including Project Aquatic Wild, Project Learning Tree, Sea Turtle Treks, Astronomy for Everyone and Invasive & Exotic Species.





Park Planning and Design In Full Bore

Master planning is at the forefront this year for the state parks planning and design program since the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund approved funding to develop master plans for new state parks at Carvers Creek, Chimney Rock and Haw River.

A master plan guides the long term growth, development and protection of a state park unit over a 20- to 25-year period. In addition to guiding facility development, the master plan also covers such items as land acquisition needs, comprehensive analyses of natural resources, operational considerations, public input, and opportunities for interpreting significant resources.

Carvers Creek

Authorized as a new state park in 2005 and located in Cumberland and Harnett counties, Carvers Creek State Park currently encompasses more than 1,300 acres surrounding Carvers Creek, the majority of which is excellent long leaf pine community.

The anticipated addition in 2009 of the 1,380-acre former Rockefeller family estate known as Long Valley Farm will add greatly to the recreational and natural resource potential of this park. The historic farm contains a scenic, 100-acre millpond, outstanding natural resources and several structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Potential activities for Carvers Creek State Park include nature study, hiking, picnicking, camping and fishing.

Looking beyond current park boundaries, master planning efforts will identify additional lands for potential inclusion in the park as well as possible regional corridor connections for both park visitors and rare species such as the red-cockaded woodpecker.

Chimney Rock

The only current public access at Chimney Rock State Park – authorized in 2005 – is the 996-acre former Chimney Rock Park acquired in 2007. As of 2008, the greater state park spanned more than 3,700 acres with parcels on both the north and south sides of Hickory Nut Gorge.

The selected master plan designer will pay particular attention to the area's rich natural heritage, unique geologic and scenic resources and high potential for natural resource-based recreation in a study area covering many thousands of acres. Although the acquisition of Chimney Rock brought with it public facilities, the proposed master plan for this park will look not only at currently-owned properties, but will also address the broader scope of the park in the larger Hickory Nut Gorge area.

Haw River

Authorized as a unit by the General Assembly in 2003, Haw River State Park currently covers about 1,200 acres centered on its namesake, the Haw River, and straddles the Guilford/Rockingham county line. The current core of this park is the 300-acre Summit Environmental Education Center property, which offers overnight interpretive and educational programming, training facilities and a conference center.

The acquisition in 2008 of significant acreage on both the east and west sides of the Summit offers a new opportunity for traditional state park amenities for picnicking, camping and hiking. Natural resources make this area particularly attractive for nature study and interpretive activities. This portion of the Haw River corridor is also on the proposed route for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.

The master plan for this park will look not only at currently owned and operating facilities and properties, but will also address the larger scope of the park in the vicinity of the Haw River headwaters.





Beyond Master Plans

In addition to comprehensive master planning, park planning and design addressed a variety of issues that are park-specific, regional and systemwide in scope, all while maintaining the critical balance between resource protection and public use.

Awarded in 2008, a Waterfront Access and Marine Industry (WAMI) grant will be used for the Dinah's Landing boat access at Goose Creek State Park. Planning and design staff provided grant proposal assistance with detailed site plans for improvements to parking, landscaping, boat ramps and docks. Created in 2007 by the General Assembly, the grant program provides for developing coastal waterfront access.

Planning and design staff actively participated in the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers update of its comprehensive master plan for Jordan Lake. This update required public input and consensus from numerous federal, state and municipal stakeholders. It addressed issues across jurisdictional boundaries near this highly valuable regional resource.

The planning staff helped identify and assess potential land acquisitions at many state park units, including Mount Jefferson, Chimney Rock, Elk Knob, Goose Creek and Pettigrew, considering facilities, viewsheds, buffers, protection of resources and long-term viability of the units within the regional landscapes.

The development of a systemwide facilities database was initiated using GIS (geographic information system) and geospatial data as a way to map and inventory all facilities within state park units. This multi-year project will involve recreation areas, parks and natural areas across the state.





Engineering and Construction Program LEEDS The Way

In 2008, the division continued efforts in environmentally sustainable building with its pursuit of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification. This certification of the U.S. Green Building Council is for new or significantly renovated buildings of at least 5,000 square feet. And, the agency continued to incorporate LEED design and construction practices into all projects where practical.

LEED certification is being sought for four projects under construction in 2008, including new visitor centers at Merchants Millpond, Fort Macon and Raven Rock state parks and initial visitor facilities at the Paddys Creek area of Lake James State Park. And, certification will be sought at three projects now in the design stage – visitor centers at Cliffs of the Neuse and Gorges state parks and a campground bathhouse at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area.

Environmentally sustainable building practices typically require a longer payback time than conventional design and construction practices. However, the division is beginning to see the payback times decrease as the “green building” industries and practices are becoming standard practices and as designers and contractors become more familiar with the techniques. While there are many types of environmentally sustainable building practices, and “green” options are growing by leaps and bounds, the division is particularly interested in technologies that address the following:

- Renewable energy: photovoltaic, geothermal pumps and wind turbines.
- Energy efficiency: efficient thermal envelopes, efficient space and water heating, lighting, controls and monitoring and appliances.
- Water efficiency, both domestic and irrigation.
- Materials and resources: durable building envelopes and long-lived materials or assemblies, recycled-content materials, safer, less toxic materials, such as alternatives to CCA -treated wood, innovative application of natural materials.
- Waste reduction: building reuse, job site recycling and efficient use of materials.
- Ecological site design: on-site erosion control, water purification/pollution reduction, and stormwater management.
- Transportation: promoting bicycle, pedestrian and transit use where possible.
- On-site management of sewage and organic wastes, such as gray water systems and biological wastewater treatment.
- Indoor environmental quality, pollution reduction, worker and occupant safety, air cleaning, humidity control and thermal comfort.
- Operations and maintenance: monitoring energy, water, waste, air quality and transportation use along with resource-efficient operation practices.

During the past five years, the Engineering and Construction Program typically has been managing 40-50 on-going capital improvement projects ranging in value from \$300,000 to \$7.5 million maintaining a total active project value of \$70-80 million.



In addition to the completed projects listed above, the following construction projects have been completed this past year:

- Dismal Swamp visitor center (dedicated left with Rep. Bill Owens);
- Jockey’s Ridge maintenance area;
- Eno River/Occoneetchee dam repairs;
- Morrow Mountain underground electric service replacement;
- Morrow Mountain ranger residence;
- Crowders Mountain Boulders Access trail head;
- Stone Mountain loop trail.

The following projects should be completed in 2009:

- Mount Mitchell tower and trail;
- Lake Norman boat ramp;
- Hammocks Beach Cow Channel dredging;
- Carolina Beach dredging and marina improvements (marina demolition and dredging only);
- Morrow Mountain building and parking improvements;
- Crowders Mountain lake dam repairs;
- Gorges Phase 1-A roads;
- Mayo River interim development and facilities.



Natural Resource Protection Program Broadens Horizons

The division's natural resources team embarked on a number of unique and effective collaborative projects and partnerships throughout the park system in 2008.

The area of rare species inventory and monitoring was a key beneficiary. On-going survey efforts for rare salamanders continued in collaboration with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission at Gorges, Hanging Rock, Chimney, New River and Pilot Mountain state parks.

At Eno River State Park, the division completed a five-year bird banding effort with the Institute for Bird Populations. Park and natural resources staff, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Park Service worked together to conduct surveys of spreading avens and rock gnome lichen at Mount Mitchell and Elk Knob state parks.

Several projects in invasive species management were conducted through partnerships. Kudzu treatment at Chimney Rock State Park was performed with the use of equipment from the N.C. DOT.

Working with the Division of Water Resources, staff conducted a survey of hydrilla, an invasive aquatic weed, at Eno River State Park. Creeping water primrose, another invasive aquatic weed, was identified at Falls Lake State Recreation Area, and a treatment plan was developed in collaboration with the city of Raleigh and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers.

At Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area, natural resources staff worked with the town of Cary to develop a control plan in the event of an infection of hemlock woolly adelgid.

Some unique restoration projects focused on both water quality and restoring pine savanna habitat. At Lake Waccamaw State Park, the division worked with the Winyah Rivers Foundation, the Division of Water Quality and UNC-Wilmington to develop a long-term water quality monitoring program for the lake.

At Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area, the division coordinated with Natural Heritage staff and UNC-Wilmington staff to develop a restoration plan for the rare pine savanna natural community. At Stone Mountain State Park, the division received a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service to continue restoration work on Big Sandy Creek.

In addition to these collaborative projects listed, natural resources staff have been active participants on the Division of Water Resources' Aquatic Weed Council, the N.C. Prescribed Fire Council, the Wildlife Resources Commission N.C. Birding Trail Steering Committee, the N.C. Sandhills Conservation Partnership, the Box Turtle Collaborative Project and the Onslow Bight Stewardship Alliance.

DPR Accelerates Prescribed Burning Program

In January 2008 the state parks system conducted the first prescribed burn at William B. Umstead State Park with a 4.5-acre blaze that lasted less than an hour. It was a modest burn but a big step for the 5,598-acre park.

Natural resources and park staff had been hoping to initiate a prescribed burn program for many years, but a number of issues and constraints had prevented it.

Prescribed burns rejuvenate forest ecosystems, transforming plant material to basic elements and fertilizing the soil. In addition, many plant species depend on the open space provided by fire, which in turn, provides more diverse food sources and habitat for wildlife. Burns also reduce hazardous fuel levels and present the opportunity to educate the public on the practice.

This method of forest management has been introduced in 20 of the division's 37 state parks and recreation areas. For a number of years, the division has worked to expand the program; however, limiting factors included staff availability, burn bans, training and funding.

In 2008, the division was awarded a Wildlife Habitat Incentives Program Grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service.

...continued on page 32

PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND

PARTF Authority Members Administer Grant Program

The North Carolina General Assembly established the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) on July 16, 1994. In 1995, the General Assembly dedicated funds from the excise stamp tax to the trust fund starting in fiscal year 1996-97.

The excise tax is the primary funding source for PARTF. The tax is levied on each “deed, instrument, or writing by which interest in real property is conveyed to another person.”

Effective July 1996, the General Assembly stipulated that 75 percent of the state's share would be allocated to PARTF. The remainder is dedicated to the Natural Heritage Trust Fund. Additional revenue to PARTF comes from a portion of the fees from personalized license plates as well as investment earnings.

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority, a 15-member board which oversees the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, was created by the general assembly with the authority's powers and duties becoming effective July 1, 1996. The membership on the board was expanded from 11 to 15 in 2007. The governor appoints five members, including the chairperson. The general assembly appoints 10 members, five upon the recommendation of the president pro tempore of the senate and five upon the recommendation of the speaker of the house.

The 2008-2009 Parks and Recreation Authority members are:

Mr. Jonathan B. Howes, Chairman
Chapel Hill

Mr. Timothy L. Aydlett <i>Elizabeth City</i>	Mr. H. Boyd Lee <i>Greenville</i>
Mr. C. Michael Allen <i>Mount Gilead</i>	Mr. Philip K. McKnelly <i>Raleigh</i>
Mr. Thomas Blue <i>Southern Pines</i>	Mr. John S. Stevens <i>Asheville</i>
Mr. Daryle L. Bost <i>Winston-Salem</i>	Ms. Cynthia Tart <i>Oak Island</i>
Mr. Robert Epting <i>Chapel Hill</i>	Ms. Lisa Weston <i>Belmont</i>
Mr. Cody Grasty <i>Maggie Valley</i>	Ms. Hollis Wild <i>West Jefferson</i>
Mr. Walt Israel <i>Belmont</i>	Mr. Edward W. Wood <i>Wilmington</i>



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Division of Parks and Recreation

PARTF Land Acquisition Projects for 2008

For fiscal year 2007-2008, the Parks and Recreation Authority approved \$13,543,122 for land acquisition projects at 10 state park units. However, it would cost an estimated \$176 million to purchase the 43,752 acres needed to complete all of the current state park units.

Unit	Acres	Description
Chimney Rock State Park	181	Tracts on Rumbling Bald, Round Top Mountain and next to Chimney Rock Park to protect natural and scenic resources
Eno River State Park	42	River corridor tracts for resource protection and public trails
Lake Norman State Park	115	Tract to expand land base for trails and to protect water quality
Lake Waccamaw State Park	3	Tract to provide public access to Lake Waccamaw on east side. Property includes boat ramp.
Mayo River State Park	350	Mayo River corridor tracts and Cedar Mountain tracts.
Medoc Mountain State Park	60	Buffer tracts and access control.
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	34	Tract for resource protection on the slopes of Mount Jefferson
New River State Park	22	River corridor tracts for resource protection and public access
Raven Rock State Park	139	Inholding near Cedar Rock and resource protection tracts on south side.
South Mountains State Park	459	Multiple tracts in Henry Fork and on the west side of the park for resource protection
Associated Expenses	n/a	Land expenses such as surveys, appraisals, title work, interest payments and other overhead expenses.
Total	1,405	

For a complete description of properties acquired by the North Carolina state park system in 2008, please turn to page 25.



PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (CONT.)

**Division Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
Capital Projects for 2008**

During fiscal year 2007-2008, the Parks and Recreation Authority approved state park construction and renovation projects totaling \$18,083,320. With PARTF funds, the division continues to address a lengthy backlog of construction and renovation projects. About \$335.4 million is required to meet all of the needs for new construction and renovation for state parks.

Park	Description	Cost
Park System	Major Maintenance Funds	\$ 1,200,000
Park System	Trail Maintenance Funds	500,000
Park System	Statewide Construction Reserve	864,550
Carolina Beach State Park	Marina Dredging/Facility Improvements	2,300,000
Chimney Rock State Park	Trail Structure, Cistern, & Emergency Generator Improvements	865,550
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park	Visitor Center & Eastern District Office	3,299,260
Gorges State Park	Phase I-B: Visitor Center, Sewer, Picnic Area, Maintenance Area (Design Only)	695,900
Haw River State Park	Brown Summit Center Repairs/Renovations (Cottage 400)	450,000
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area	Henderson Point Campground Improvements	1,769,639
Morrow Mountain State Park	Shoreline Improvements & Boathouse Replacement	1,152, 596
Mount Mitchell State Park	Water System Improvements	450,000
Pettigrew State Park	New Maintenance Area & Conversion of Existing Area to Staff/Public Space	844,889
Pettigrew State Park	Pocosin Natural Area Improvements	101,970
Raven Rock State Park	Visitor Center & Picnic Area	3,588,966
TOTAL		\$18,083,320



The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund provides dollar-for-dollar grants to local governments. A local government can request a maximum grant amount of \$500,000 in PARTF assistance.

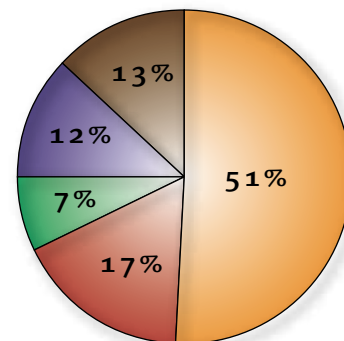
This year the Parks and Recreation Authority reviewed 89 eligible applications requesting \$27.5 million, and selected 45 projects to receive assistance. The authority awarded \$16,849,553 in grants while about \$10 million in requests could not be funded. The 45 projects selected will help local governments meet the need to provide recreational opportunities to citizens.






“The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund has been successful making more local parks and recreational opportunities available from the mountains to the coast,” said Jonathan Howes, PARTF Authority chairman. “Sound environmental stewardship, education and economic opportunities have helped create these outstanding resources for our citizens.”

Local governments use PARTF dollars to build new facilities in areas experiencing some of the fastest population growth rates in the country and provide new facilities in some towns and counties

where the tax base is so low that if PARTF assistance was not available, recreation opportunities for citizens would remain a dream. In all, 19 projects were selected this year to establish new parks for North Carolinians to enjoy. PARTF grants were also directed to five greenway systems, six land acquisition projects, and 15 projects to expand or renovate existing park facilities.

HOW 2008 PARTF ASSISTANCE WILL BE USED BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS



-  Building New Park Facilities
-  Renovating Existing Park Facilities
-  Expanding Park Facilities
-  Establishing Greenway Trail System
-  Acquiring New Park Land

Did you know?

In 2008, nearly 2,600 school students visited Eno River State Park to participate in the park’s Environmental Education Learning Experience. The program teaches about water quality through hands-on experiments. As part of the field trip, many students will hold a crayfish and most will get their feet wet.



PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (CONT.)

**North Carolina Parks and Recreation
Trust Fund Grants 2008**

Applicant	County	\$	Project Name
Alamance County	Alamance	400,000	Alamance County Greenway
Avery County	Avery	376,125	Avery Community Park
Buncombe County	Buncombe	23,127	Owen Park Renovation
Carteret County	Carteret	500,000	Newport Park
Chatham County	Chatham	500,000	Northeast Community Park
City of Albemarle	Stanly	499,979	E.E. Waddell Community Center
City of Elizabeth City	Pasquotank	500,000	South Park Sports Complex
City of Greensboro	Guilford	500,000	Gateway Gardens
City of High Shoals	Gaston	34,925	High Shoals Park
City of Marion	McDowell	167,300	Catawba River Greenway-phase I
City of Morganton	Burke	385,000	Catawba River Soccer Complex Phase II
Cleveland County	Cleveland	500,000	Kings Mountain Gateway Trail
Franklin County	Franklin	500,000	Pilot Lions Community Park
Gaston County	Gaston	500,000	Poston Park Lake Project
Harnett County	Harnett	500,000	Barbecue Creek Park Improvements
Hoke County	Hoke	500,000	Community Center Project
Lincoln County	Lincoln	500,000	Rock Springs Park
Person County	Person	327,500	Mayo Park Environmental Education Center
Pitt County	Pitt	100,000	Pitt County District Park
Polk County	Polk	500,000	Alexander's Ford Park
Surry County	Surry	477,000	Shoals Community Park
Town of Ahoskie	Hertford	500,000	Ahoskie Creek Recreational Complex
Town of Black Mountain	Buncombe	500,000	Lake Tomahawk Park
Town of Burgaw	Pender	423,504	Osgood Canal Greenway
Town of Cameron	Moore	30,000	Phillips Memorial Park
Town of Conetoe	Edgecombe	65,000	Conetoe Town Park
Town of Edenton	Chowan	500,000	Meadow View Dairy Farm Park
Town of Forest City	Rutherford	150,000	Cool Springs Recreation Center Renovation

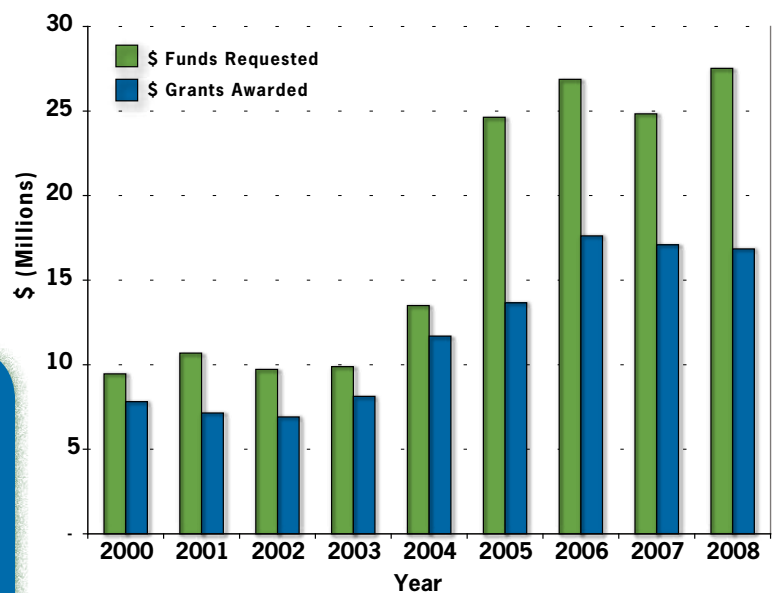




Applicant	County	\$	Project Name
Town of Gamewell	Caldwell	185,503	Gamewell Park
Town of Jamestown	Guilford	55,863	Center City Park Land Acquisition
Town of Kenansville	Duplin	267,177	Kenan Park Improvements
Town of Kure Beach	New Hanover	500,000	Oceanfront Park Property Acquisition
Town of Lillington	Harnett	500,000	Lillington Recreational Facility
Town of Mount Airy	Surry	500,000	Ararat River Greenway Phase II
Town of Nags Head	Dare	500,000	Whalebone Park
Town of Oak Island	Brunswick	500,000	Yaupon Fishing Pier
Town of Rutherfordton	Rutherford	100,000	Lights for Crestview Park Ball Field
Town of Selma	Johnston	291,000	Richard Harrison Recreation Center Improvements
Town of Smithfield	Johnston	451,950	Smithfield Recreation and Aquatic Center
Town of Stokesdale	Guilford	500,000	Stokesdale Town Park
Town of Surf City	Pender	212,950	Surf City Recreational Park
Town of Wagram	Scotland	500,000	Wagram Recreation Center
Town of Winterville	Pitt	500,000	Recreation Park Redevelopment Phase I
Transylvania County	Transylvania	325,650	Connestee Falls
Union County	Union	500,000	Jesse Helms Park Phase II

Even though the Parks and Recreation Authority awarded more than \$16.8 million to local governments, unmet requests from local governments continue to increase, as demonstrated by the chart on the right.

PARTF REVENUE VS. REQUESTS



Did you know?

In 2008, on average, each \$1 awarded in PARTF grants to local parks and recreation projects were matched with \$1.70 in local funds.



PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (CONT.)

“Having served on the Town Council of Oak Island and Long Beach for almost eight years, I have enjoyed seeing Oak Island receive numerous PARTF grants. There is absolutely no way that our town could provide what we offer our citizens without the PARTF funds. This is a community composed of a large number of youth and even more retirees in need of safe, accessible activities and facilities. PARTF grants have made it possible for small town such as Oak Island to serve our citizens in an extraordinary manner.” — MARY SNEAD, MAYOR PRO TEM, TOWN OF OAK ISLAND

“The N.C. PARTF grants have played an essential and invaluable role in providing the citizens of Gastonia with a parks system that greatly enhances the city’s quality of life. Completed PARTF grant projects have proven to be an economic shot in the arm for an area that has been hit hard with textile and manufacturing job losses. Building new and renovating existing park facilities has aided the city and the entire area in becoming more marketable in the recruitment of business and individual families. Gastonia has always been a great place to live and raise a family. The park additions and improvements as afforded through the PARTF grants have helped make it an even greater place to live, work, and play.” — MAYOR JENNIFER STULTZ, CITY OF GASTONIA, GASTONIA

“Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grants have been responsible for more than \$1.2 million in development and proposed development for Mount Airy since 2006. Being a recently formed department, Mount Airy desperately needed PARTF support to upgrade facilities and create plans for future recreational projects. I am most certain that, without these funds, it would have been years before these projects had been completed, if at all. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund monies give incentive for communities to invest in the quality of life of their citizens, thus creating ownership along with safe and accessible facilities.” — CATRINA C. ALEXANDER, MOUNT AIRY PARKS AND RECREATION, MOUNT AIRY

Asheboro Skateboard Park, 2005 PARTF Grant of \$100,000





Interpretation & Education: Telling Stories That Bring Parks to Life

A major goal of the division's interpretation and education program is to communicate with visitors in a way that fosters personal connections. North Carolina's one-of-a-kind parks system offers extraordinary natural resources: mysterious Carolina Bay lakes, a rare spruce-fir forest atop the highest mountain in the east, the native habitat of the Venus flytrap. So many of these hidden wonders require some guidance for visitors to fully appreciate their uniqueness. Interpretation and education is a principal strategic priority for our park staff.



During 2008, more than 200,000 visitors participated in organized educational programs led by state parks staff. One particularly effective way of sharing the state parks mission is through in-depth workshops for adult educators. Attendance at these full-day workshops has more than tripled in the past two years. The outreach efforts of the 1,050 adult educators trained in 2009 could reach another 200,000 people.

Engaging youth in nature continues to be a priority and passion at North Carolina state parks. Parks joined other organizations across the globe in presenting outdoor programs for children and their families during the second annual Take A Child Outside Week, September 24-30. The combined efforts of the North Carolina state park system resulted in 301 programs reaching 9,914 citizens during one week. State parks also created exciting Get Outside! Kits to provide families and small groups with do-it-yourself activities to rediscover nature's wonders. Staff of North Carolina State Parks urged more park systems and environmental organizations to join the effort, including presentations at several national conferences: National Association of State Parks Directors conference, Southeast State Parks conference, and Association of Science & Technology Centers conference. "State parks have always been safe and exciting places for people to rediscover nature, offering miles of trails, free interpretive programs by rangers and nature museums as well as opportunities just to explore independently," said Lewis Ledford, director of state parks.

The state parks' canoe/kayak education programs paddled forward in 2008. Many of our parks have spectacular natural areas that are best observed on the water. Nearly 3,000 visitors participated in a division sponsored canoe or kayak program in 2008. That number will continue to grow, as 20 staff members became American Canoe Association certified canoe/kayak instructors this year. The popularity of kayaking continues to expand as people discover it as a fun activity that almost anyone can do within an hour from their home.

In 2008, division staff found creative ways to inspire new park visitors as environmental stewards. For example:

- **Grand Camp at Haw River State Park.** Young children often need one-on-one support from a caretaker to feel comfortable away from home. While many parents do not have the time to attend overnight summer camps, grandparents often do. To engage both young children and seniors in nature, Haw River State Park held its first-ever overnight camp for children and their grandparents.
- **North Carolina State Fair.** The division sponsored an exhibit at the N.C. State Fair for the first time in several years. As part of the Green NC exhibit, the division featured a sustainable campsite and a fishing game. Rangers and other staff encouraged visitors to find a park near them.
- **Creative Events.** Parks held many exciting new events that enticed visitors to discover their nearest state park. Falls Lake State Recreation Area held a Fire Festival to teach about the important natural role of fire. Pilot Mountain State Park celebrated its 40th birthday, complete with music, activities and cake. A hike was also held to celebrate the birthday of the world's oldest longleaf pine at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve.



RRS Provides Key Support To Local Governments

Recreation Resources Service (RRS), the nation's oldest technical assistance program for local parks and recreation departments, provides an array of services, ranging from planning to grant writing to technical analysis.

The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation provided technical assistance to local parks and recreation departments as part of its mission. This is achieved through a contract with N.C. State University and provided by the RRS, which has provided assistance in each of North Carolina's 100 counties.

With six regional consultants, RRS regularly helps local governments submit grant proposals for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund grants and follows through with project inspections, application processing, conversion issues and closeout processing.

Last year, local governments submitted 89 applications for PARTF funds. RRS staff performed 159 inspections on active projects, conducted 89 pre-application inspections and closed out 42 projects. Consultants also processed 143 reimbursements for a total of \$15 million. In addition, RRS consultants addressed 68 Land and Water Conservation Fund issues including conversions, inspections and reimbursements.

Local government officials give high praise for the help they have received.

"The technical assistance we have received from our RRS regional consultants has been very beneficial to the county," said Catawba County Parks Manager Blair Rayfield. "Their expertise has helped the county create parks which are beneficial to all age groups, and avoid common pitfalls by providing insights on other community's experiences."

"I had never applied for a grant before, but our RRS representative helped to de-mystify the process and provided invaluable guidance on the process," said Rutherfordton Finance Officer Rus Scherer. "The insight and advice she provided during the preparation of our PARTF grant application also helped me to submit stronger grant applications to other organizations. This resulted in being awarded two other grants from organizations outside North Carolina to help fund our project."

Oakboro Mayor Joyce Little said, "The Recreational Resources Service has been an extremely valuable ally in our quest to build and expand the Oakboro District Park. The RRS staff has been very helpful in our applications for funds for the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and has helped us to produce what we believe to be the finest park in our area of the state."

RRS annually conducts the North Carolina Municipal and County Parks and Recreation Service Study. 2008 marked the 59th year of assessment for municipal leisure service providers and the 39th year of assessment for county leisure service agencies. The service study reviewed operating and capital budgets and received the highest response rate ever at 72 percent (165 of 225 local parks and recreation departments).

The study offers administrators an important tool for tax-supported funding trend analysis based upon changes in operating budget fund levels from year to year and compares park and recreation salaries and revenues for similar communities as a tool to evaluate levels of service. Other research initiatives include Investigating Places for Active Recreation in Communities (IPARC), a research initiative (laboratory) sponsored by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism in the College of Natural Resources at North Carolina State University.

IPARC exists to advance the science of understanding how park, recreation and sport environments promote active living. RRS is working with agencies to facilitate the application of evidence-based programs and activities in parks and recreation settings to enhance quality of life. RRS also surveyed local agencies and state parks about "green initiatives." The results will define the role RRS plays in helping parks and recreation agencies identify green solutions to improve the environment. Research was also completed on organic field maintenance practices. Initial findings were presented at a regional meeting in Apex

"RRS is a valuable resource for all Park and Recreation Departments,"

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Land Acquisition Program

In 2008, DPR acquired 4,674 acres in 60 tracts at 22 units of the state parks system. (Land cost = \$50,285,209)

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Londa Strong, director of Cabarrus County Parks, said “The services they provide at minimal or no cost are invaluable. They have assisted Cabarrus County through the provision of teleconferences; municipality/county department and salary studies; assistance with PARTF and LWCF grant applications, project development, budget payout; provision of current issue workshops; and have served as a reference for specific questions that arise periodically. RRS has developed a relationship with NCRPA that will only enhance both the park and recreation professional is who will benefit from it all.”

Annually, RRS sponsors continuing education opportunities for professionals and citizen board members.

Nine teleconferences using the North Carolina Research and Education Network drew 674 attendees, and 233 professionals received continuing education units through the teleconferences.

Topics, selected by a teleconference advisory committee, included: media relations, agency accreditation, citizen board member advocacy, parks and recreation trends, legal issues and grant writing. Statewide teleconferences were also held regarding the PARTF grant process and financial data reporting.

...continued on page 32

Year	Acres Acquired	Average Per Acre	Median Per Acre	# of Tracts
2004	5,049	\$3,062	\$4,358	22
2005	7,712	\$5,547	\$6,689	42
2006	5,335	\$7,501	\$7,233	47
2007	7,790	\$5,929	\$6,750	38
2008	4,674	\$10,819	\$10,000	60

- Major expansion of Haw River State Park with the addition of 974 acres in six tracts. This includes the Bluegreen tracts containing 692 acres.
- Initial acquisitions for Bear Paw State Natural Area. This new state natural area was authorized in the 2008 session of the General Assembly. This project is in partnership with High Country Conservancy. Funding is Parks and Recreation and Natural Heritage trust funds and a private donor.
- The addition of Jones Island to Hammocks Beach State Park. This project was a partnership with National Audubon Society and the North Carolina Coastal Federation, which received a grant from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund.
- The acquisition of a boat ramp on the east side of Lake Waccamaw, which ensures future public access to the lake.
- First state acquisitions specifically for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail. These two acquisitions are partnerships with either local government or land trusts. One is a keystone tract between the Greensboro Lakes and Haw River State Park in Guilford County. This acquisition is part of a partnership with the Guilford County Open Space Commission (GCOSC). GCOSC has been working on securing trail easements for the Mountains-to-Sea Trail to connect the existing Greensboro trails around their water supply lakes to the Haw River. Two keystone tracts were needed to complete the connection. GCOSC worked with both landowners to secure options to purchase below appraised values. GCOSC is purchasing one tract and the state is purchasing the other. The state funds for this acquisition are from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. The other keystone tract closing this year is at the confluence of Marks Creek with the Neuse River. This project has The Trust for Public Land and Triangle Land Conservancy as partners. This tract is also part of a larger Marks Creek initiative that also includes Wake County. Funding for this tract is from the Parks and Recreation and Clean Water Management trust funds.
- At Eno River State Park two tracts near Cabes Ford were acquired with funding from the Parks and Recreation and Clean Water Management trust funds. These tracts were acquired with the assistance of the Eno River Association. These are critical tracts for park trails as well as the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
- More than 1,000 acres were acquired for water quality and natural resource protection along the Scuppernong River for inclusion in Pettigrew State Park. Funding for these six transactions is from all three conservation trust funds. More than 15,000 linear feet of river frontage is protected in these properties.



DPR Sustainability Efforts

To be consistent with its mission as a responsible steward of North Carolina's most outstanding natural resources and to provide environmental education for the public, the division has embarked on a multi-pronged sustainability program.

With 480 full-time staff and as many as 600 seasonal employees and facilities on almost 203,000 acres of land and water, the division is comparable to many other state, local or federal government entities and businesses. It starts with a commitment at the top, and the rest can easily fall in line if there is integration with all program areas, projects and routine activities.

Alternative Fuels

The state parks system installed E-85, E-10 and B20 fuel storage facilities at Jordan Lake and Falls Lake state recreation areas for use by park staff there and to be a demonstration project in the area. The parks system became the first state agency other than Motor Fleet Management to offer the options.

Brochure Program

The division is printing new brochures on 100 percent recycled paper and using soy-based inks as much as possible.

Energy Efficiency, Recycling and Maintenance

The division is changing out traditional light bulbs to LED bulbs and working toward the goal of having each park with camping/overnight facilities offer plastic bottle and aluminum recycling for visitors.

Environmental Education Facility

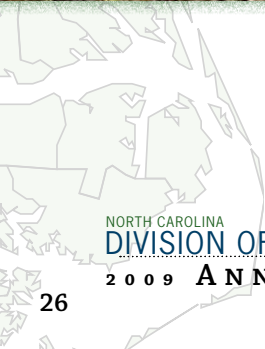
At the residential Summit Environmental Education Center at Haw River State Park, the division asked the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance to conduct a full assessment of activities, practices and facilities. Many of that agency's suggestions have been incorporated in the kitchen operation, where a composting effort is planned and reusable dishes and silverware are used.

Hammocks Beach Projects

In response to concerns about stormwater and the closure of coastal waters to swimming and shellfishing after rainstorms due to bacterial contamination, Hammocks Beach State Park staff teamed with the North Carolina Coastal Federation and the Clean Water Management Trust Fund to reduce stormwater flow from its parking lot near an area designated as Outstanding Resource Waters. Rainwater from nearby rooftops contributed to the problem. This situation was not demonstrating good stewardship for a state park.

About 40 percent of the impervious parking lot surface was removed and a natural vegetated buffer was created. Seven bio-retention areas and three bio-swales were created to neutralize stormwater from the smaller parking area. Rooftop runoff is now diverted into natural wetlands away from the estuary. The project should eliminate the direct discharge of stormwater from park property except during major storms such as hurricanes. This project will directly improve water quality in local waterways temporarily closed to shellfishing, and will help protect the approved open shellfish waters near Bear Island.

Two other water quality projects are connected to the park's objective to protect and restore natural communities and improve water quality. In 1999, the park was faced with the repair or replacement of an aging bulkhead that surrounded the shore near the old mainland ferry landing. While a hardened





shoreline can prevent erosion, it replaces the native intertidal zone and diminishes estuarine diversity. Park staff used an alternative technique to reestablish a natural shoreline and create an intertidal zone.

The project involved removing 240 feet of bulkhead and reestablishing more than an acre of coastal wetlands. A small stone sill was placed just forward of the new shoreline to create an intertidal zone that was also planted with native spartina. This “living shoreline” enhances the aquatic life and wildlife value of this area, improves water quality, promotes the public’s understanding of the importance of wetlands and saves maintenance costs. The project was a partnership effort with the Division of Water Quality’s Wetland Restoration Program and The Coastal Federation.

Hammocks Beach has been participating with the Division of Marine Fisheries to develop an oyster reef habitat along the rock sill of the marsh restoration project. With the help of the Division of Marine Fisheries, the park spread 250 bushels of oyster shells at the base of the marsh restoration site to provide hard-bottom habitat and encourage natural recruitment of oyster spat. Park staff and volunteer youth groups bagged additional oyster shells called cultch. The cultch bags were placed in the intertidal area to recruit spat that will then be scattered along the reef area.

The park is also a collection site for an oyster shell recycling program. All three projects have great educational value and are incorporated into the park’s interpretive marsh cruises. Outdoor interpretive displays will be installed to highlight wetland restoration, water quality improvement and the oyster reef habitat.

Miscellaneous Individual Park Efforts

In an effort to lessen the threat of predators to rare loggerhead sea turtles and nesting shore birds, Fort Fisher State Recreation Area established a “trash-free zone” throughout its four-wheel-drive beach access area. Trash receptacles were removed from the four-mile section of beach. Sportsmen and hikers must instead dispose of trash at an animal-proof, central collection point at the entrance to the four-wheel-drive access area. In addition, a project using solar energy to power the lights and a water pump at the restroom facility at Pilot Mountain State Park is under way.

Savings Estimate

While cumulative results have not been compiled, water usage and electrical use totals have been reduced across-the-board, and individual projects, such as those at Falls Lake and Jordan Lake state

recreation areas and Haw River, Fort Fisher and Pilot Mountain state parks have or will result in less consumption, increased use of alternative energy sources and a variety of other economic, social or community benefits. The decision to pursue LEED certification for the agency’s facilities has sparked a change in the construction industry when combined with other private and public development partners who see the value and importance of building facilities in a more environmentally responsible way. The division’s Design and Development Section reports anecdotally about those changes and the increased number of bidders who are eligible to compete for the projects.

Sharing the Message

The division, through park exhibits and environmental education programs and outreach visits, has a special opportunity to change the behavior of our visitors. The

message on the importance of being sustainable, minimizing our carbon footprint and setting an example for all North Carolinians and our guests is continually delivered to all staff, whether they be planners, administrative staff, maintenance mechanics or seasonal employees.

The agency’s primary goal is to provide environmental education and interpretive materials and programming for teachers, students and park visitors to promote understanding of and pride in the natural heritage of the state. That creates an opportunity to help generate an environmental ethic and a sense of stewardship.

Though several of the outreach environmental education materials based upon the sustainability initiative are still under development, the division is in a unique position to educate the more than 13.4 million visitors to state parks and many other North Carolinians and guests.



State Trails Program

The North Carolina Trails Committee and the staff of the State Trails Program share a vision – a statewide network of trails for all users, be they hikers, bikers, equestrians, paddlers or off-road vehicle enthusiasts.

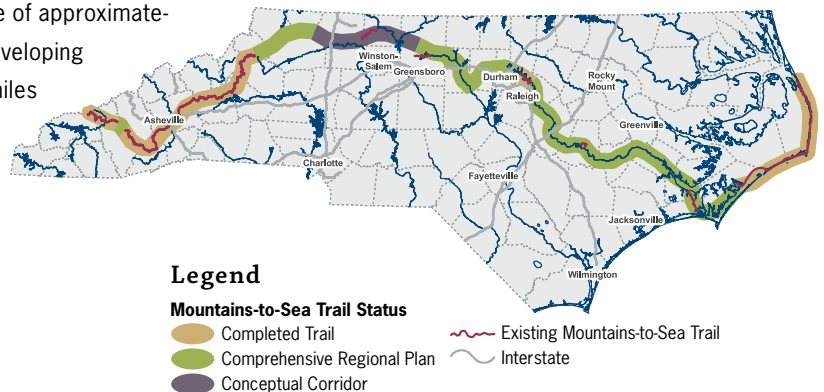
On this network, the citizens of North Carolina and visitors can experience and enjoy the state’s natural, cultural and recreational resources. Whether the trails are close to home, pass through the rural countryside or scale a rugged mountain, they should be available to all citizens.

The division strongly supports the North Carolina Trails System Act, which established the goal of a state trails system. Trails are an essential part of the state’s infrastructure and a part of the ordinary responsibility of our governments. Trails need to be seen in the larger environmental context of protecting the state’s air and water quality and wildlife. The trails program strives to promote the recreational, cultural and transportation benefits of trails to a community and increase recognition of the positive economic impact on tourism and business recruitment that trails have demonstrated.



North Carolina’s Mountains-To-Sea Trail Effort – The 1,000-Mile Partnership

North Carolina’s Mountains-to-Sea Trail, an effort to link by trail Clingman’s Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey’s Ridge State Park (a distance of approximately 1,000 miles) is the flagship project in the state’s developing statewide trails system plan. Today, more than 450 miles of this trail are open for use. The division continues to foster partnerships with governmental agencies, nonprofit organizations and volunteers to promote, plan, acquire, develop and manage this and many other state and regional trails efforts.





Secretary Designates a One-Mile Segment of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail

In 2008, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources designated as a component of the State Trails Program, a one-mile segment of the MST in the town of Swepsonville. This is the first segment of the MST designated in Alamance County and is a result of cooperative efforts of the town of Swepsonville, the Haw River Trail Governmental Partnership and the State Trails Program.

Trail Grants

Greenways, trails, boardwalks, kiosks and bridges are among the many projects made possible in 2008 through grants of the federally funded Recreational Trails Program. In 2008, North Carolina awarded 25 such grants totaling \$1.6 million.

Funding for the Recreational Trails Program comes from federal gas taxes for off-highway vehicles. Grants can be used for new trail construction, trail repair and renovation, land acquisition and trailside facilities.

The state also awarded 25 Adopt-A-Trail grants totaling \$108,000. Adopt-A-Trail Grants are part of a state-funded program to governmental agencies, nonprofits and volunteers to build, maintain and promote all types of trails.

The grant program was established by the 1987 General Assembly to provide grassroots funding for planning, developing and managing trails across North Carolina.

Deep River State Trail Planning

The addition of the Deep River State Trail to the state parks system authorized the division to collaborate with local governments, landowners, nonprofit organizations and other stakeholders to develop a comprehensive plan for the project.

State trail planners have met with land trusts active in the Deep River corridor, as well as other state agencies such as the N.C. Zoological Park, Wildlife Resources Commission, Department of Cultural Resources and Clean Water Management Trust Fund.

Community planning meetings were held in 2008 for Lee, Chatham, Moore, Randolph and Guildford counties. More than 60 stakeholders discussed their interests in the state trail including:

- Current and planned paddle access areas;
- Parks and historic sites along the river;
- Current and planned greenways and trails on the river, or leading to the river from local communities;
- Grant opportunities for facility development;
- Tourism potential for the Deep River corridor;
- Desired land acquisitions and conservation easements.

The state has purchased more than 900 acres of land on the Deep River. These targeted acquisitions in Chatham and Lee counties will serve as future paddle access areas and recreation sites.

As a result of the planning meetings, staff identified the first

two phases of the paddle trail to be developed and promoted with the assistance of regional partners. The division is developing promotional materials to highlight recreational opportunities and natural and cultural points of interest along the Deep River State Trail.

Regional Trail Plans – High Country Regional Trails Plan

The State Trails Program continued to work with governmental partners, nonprofit organizations and volunteers to develop regional trails plans. In 2008, it included a partnership with the High Country Council of Governments to develop a trails and greenways plan for seven counties in northwest North Carolina.

Included in this planning effort were the counties of Wilkes, Alleghany, Ashe, Watauga, Avery, Mitchell and Yancey and the towns/cities of Elkin, North Wilkesboro, Sparta, Jefferson, West Jefferson, Boone, Beech Mountain, Banner Elk, Sugar Mountain, Bakersville, Spruce Pines and Burnsville.

This resulted in the development of the “High Country Regional Trail Plan” that identifies 389 miles of proposed trails. The plan is being adopted by the governments as a component of their parks and recreation trails and greenway plans.



Ranger Staff Training Is Non-Stop

Training is a critical part of new and veteran state park rangers' jobs. Not only do new rangers obtain required and optional training classes, veteran rangers and superintendents must also complete annual training to either maintain their current certifications or achieve higher level certifications.

New Ranger - Training Requirements

Within 18 months of being hired, new rangers complete a variety of training courses. Among the most critical is training in providing environmental education, a key component of the agency's mission. For protection of park visitors, staff and the natural resources they are charged with protection, rangers also embark on Basic Law Enforcement Training at a local community college, a requirement for certification of any North Carolina law enforcement officer.

This four-month (602 hour minimum) regimen trains rangers and all law enforcement officers in more than 30 areas to prepare them for varied aspects of law enforcement. The topics include: arrest; search and seizure; constitutional, juvenile and criminal law; arrest and subject control tactics; motor vehicle law enforcement; ethics; firearms; dealing with mental illness; courtroom testimony; CPR; and medical first response.

Also within that first 18 months, new rangers must complete:

- Basic Wildland Fire Fighting and Introduction to Wildland Fire Behavior (approximately 24 hours). These classes provide a basic understanding of wildland fires and the techniques for their suppression.
- Fundamentals of Search and Rescue (FUNSAR) This 55-hour course provides an excellent foundation for understanding the procedures of search and rescue operations. Lost and injured persons are a common occurrence in state park, and this training is some of the most important a ranger receives.
- Wildland Power Saw Training. This 16-hour course gives instruction on the basics of chainsaw operation and safety.
- National Incident Management Systems Introduction and National Incident Management Response Framework. These six-hour online courses mandated by the Department of Homeland Security for all public safety agencies, introduce a nationwide template of how all government and non-government agencies can work together during domestic incidents
- Incident Command System Introduction, a three-hour online course, and Incident Command System Basic/Initial Action, a 16-hour course, are also mandated for front-line public safety and law enforcement officers.
- Basic Interpretive Training – The weeklong interpretation and education training gives new rangers skills needed to begin providing these crucial services to park visitors. A portion of the training involves rangers presenting talks and leading nature hikes to receive constructive feedback from their peers and education specialists. Basic Interpretive Training also serves as an orientation to the history, mission and organization of the North Carolina state park system.
- Environmental Education Certification – New rangers have three years to become North Carolina certified environmental educators. The program is administered through the N.C. Office of Environmental Education to recognize professional development, to acknowledge educators committed to environmental stewardship and to establish standards for professional excellence. The certification requires more than 200 hours of education training and an action partnership service project. Once certified, educators need to maintain their active status by completing 50 hours of training every five years. The NC state parks system represents one of the largest groups of certified environmental educators in the nation.
- Emergency Medical Service. All ranger and field staff are training in emergency medical response with a minimum of being first responder. The division also has 25 emergency medical technicians. Most are located in the western parks due to their remote and rugged topography and long response times for local emergency responders.

Most of the law enforcement (in-service), incident command system, interpretative and search and rescue training courses are taught by certified division instructors.

During 2008, 17 new rangers completed Basic Law Enforcement Training and began required new-hire training





Annual Ranger/Superintendent Training

Following their first year of employment and certification as law enforcement officers, rangers and park superintendents must also complete the following annual state- or division-required training courses to maintain law enforcement certifications:

- Annual Law Enforcement In-Service Training keeps law enforcement officers current with new laws, techniques and procedures. They include:
 - » 24 hours of in-service training mandated by the N.C. Criminal Justice Standards Division on topics such as firearms training and qualification, domestic violence, legal update, ethics, juvenile law, rapid deployment, subject control and arrest techniques, drug diversion and agency topics of choice.
 - » Also, the division requires each ranger/superintendent to complete annual CPR recertification, 16-hour first responder refresher training and an additional eight-hour session of firearms practice/training.
 - » Many rangers/superintendents get additional law enforcement/public safety training at the park level and/or on their own time from local community colleges.
- EMS Refresher Training. Those employees holding EMT certification must complete approximately 28 hours of annual training to maintain their certifications.

Advanced Level Training – Rangers/Superintendents

As rangers and superintendents progress through their careers, additional and higher level training courses and certifications are obtained to help them manage additional responsibilities. These training courses and certifications may include:

- • Advanced Interpretive Training - The Advanced Interpretive Training program supports staff as they develop their skills as park interpreters and natural resources managers throughout their careers. Staff members choose to attend six-hour workshops held throughout the state on topics including invasive species, insect identification, GIS and astronomy interpretation.
- • Supervisory Training. A variety of training courses from Introduction to Supervision of Seasonal Employees to Advanced level supervision are offered for higher-level park managers.
- • Wildland Fire Behavior and Ecological Burn Workshops. These courses provide advanced training to employees heavily involved in prescribed burns or major wildfire incidents. These courses also are prerequisites to becoming a division certified burn boss, which allows the employee to initiate and manage a prescribed burn on state park lands.
- • Intermediate Incident Command Training Courses. These courses provide training to higher level rangers/superintendents that may be required to assume a critical command role in a larger incident such as a wildfire or major search.

The majority of the interpretation, wildland fire and incident command courses are taught by certified division instructors.





Maintenance Work Is Extensive But Often Goes Unnoticed



The maintenance needed to keep a state park running smoothly is sometimes not realized by the park visitors or even by the park administrative staff. In most cases, it is due to the constant and routine types of work performed, such as mowing, painting and cleaning facilities. This routine type of maintenance usually does not achieve a high profile unless the work has not been performed.

But there is much more to maintaining state parks and their facilities. The maintenance staff performs emergency work, preventative maintenance and meets everyday requirements that are beyond the routine grind. Each park, depending on its size and visitation, determines typically how each park is staffed with maintenance employees. Some parks may have as many as 15 while others may have only one or two.

The division has a very diverse maintenance work force when it comes to duties or job responsibilities. This is essential since there are hundreds of miles of roads and trails, hundreds of buildings, thousands of picnic and camping facilities, hundreds of miles of power and water lines, etc. to maintain. The majority of the staff is typically required to work in at least two or three of the general maintenance fields, such as electrical, carpentry, plumbing, painting, roofing, welding or HVAC, as part of their park duties.

The maintenance staff is required to also be trained in wildland fire fighting and first responders. Many require specializations or certifications in their jobs. These could include licenses to drive a commercial vehicle, operate a wastewater or drinking water plant, apply herbicides, repair automobiles and trucks and some are even required to be emergency medical technicians.

Maintenance mechanics are far too often overlooked, but they are the keys to operating and safe, clean and attractive state park for visitors and the rest of the staff. Visitors would definitely notice if they weren't on the job.



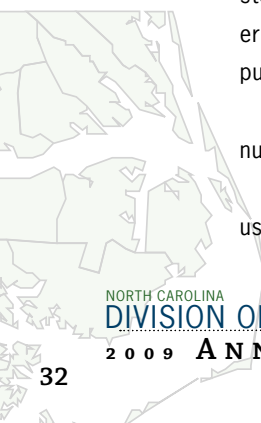
Friends of State Parks

North Carolina's Friends of State Parks is an all-volunteer 501(c)(3) nonprofit group that, for more than 30 years, has been dedicated to the understanding, enjoyment, and protection of North Carolina's State Parks.

FSP's mission is to support the division's professional staff - the stewards of our "Best in the Nation" state parks system. Our state park staff achieves national recognition with the second lowest per capita investment in state parks in the Southeast. The funding for exhibits, publications, division programs such as the Junior Ranger program, milestone recognitions – most notably the 75th and 90th anniversary celebrations – educational opportunities for ranger staff, and legislative advocacy are from membership dues, grants, private donations and the sale of FSP sponsored publications.

FSP stands in partnership with the division as it plans for and addresses the current needs of more than 12 million annual visitors to our naturally diverse park system and develops strategies to meet the challenges of the future.

We need your support in all these efforts to help us make the vision of "New Parks for a New Century" a reality. Join us today at FSP at www.ncfsp.org. Your memberships and donations are tax deductible





DPR Improves Fiscal Management System

Over the past few years, the Division of Parks and Recreation has developed a Web-based solution to manage the division's financial resources more effectively. The financial management system provides all DPR users with "real-time" budget information and customized financial reports designed to increase efficiency and accountability of the agency's financial resources.

The major objectives fulfilled by the system include:

- increased employee productivity;
- increased accuracy of accounting records;
- improved communication;
- increased accountability over financial resources, and
- increased transparency of funds allocated expended.

DPR made major strides during in 2008 to expand the budget tools available to further the major objectives of the financial management system. These changes provide real-time financial information to all parks and administrative staff throughout the state parks system.

The system's database contains 1,456 capital improvement projects funded by the trust funds. The database tracks all capital improvement projects, including vital information such as: funds allocated, funds expended, remaining balances, and project status. These projects range from small repairs at parks to large construction projects. The system also ensures that all expenditures of capital improvement funds are spent on approved projects only. Numerous reports are available to park and administrative staff to encourage pro-active management of projects.

DPR's fiscal management system promotes responsible fiscal management of the 72 park and non-park units which comprise the division's budget. The system ensures that appropriated funds are expended wisely by requiring annual requests of appropriated monies for all units and provides further oversight over those requests by requiring multi-level budget approvals at the district and division levels.

Daily updates to the fiscal management system database and customized on-line tools promote active budget management. On-line tools allow funds to be transferred easily between parks as needed to ensure that funds are spent where most needed. The system is balanced daily to the North Carolina Accounting System to ensure the accuracy of the database.

DPR's Fiscal Management System provides on-line capabilities to assist the division with paying invoices and processing purchasing transactions. In October 2007, the division implemented on-line purchasing reconcilements. For the nine months utilized the past fiscal year, the new system facilitated the efficient processing of 8,221 transactions, freeing up staff time and further enhancing the division's primary mission to serve the visitors to our state parks.

Did you know?

Cliffs of the Neuse State Park now offers beginner canoe/kayak workshops on the park's lake, as well as guided trips along the Neuse River.





The Loss of a Dear State Parks Friend

In November, North Carolina's state parks lost one of its closest friends upon the death of John Edward Graham, former president of Friends of State Parks. Graham died at home after a lengthy illness.



Upon joining the friends organization in 1996, Graham became an enthusiastic and effective supporter of the state parks and their programs as well as the natural resources they represent.

Through his involvement and leadership, his development of partnerships and his fundraising creativity, the vision and scope of the friends group expanded. John became the FOSP advocate for the group to fund the Division of Parks and Recreation's annual report

The organization enjoyed many successful projects such as expansion of the Junior Ranger Program, publication of the North Carolina State Parks Map Guide, the creation of migratory bird exhibits and development of environmental education programs by seeking and applying grants.

He was a devoted lobbyist for pay equity for park rangers and superintendents and a fixture at events such as the Eno River Festival where he promoted the state parks and recruited new members. He frequently visited state parks and made it a point to befriend parks staff and to learn about park programs and problems.

Shortly before his death, Graham was presented North Carolina's Old North State Award by Lewis Ledford, director of state parks, and a proclamation of acknowledgement and thanks from Jonathan Howes, chairman of the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority.

First Prescribed Burn A Milestone for Umstead

...continued from page 13

The \$316,000 grant will provide for the use of prescribed fire in the parks system through 2013. Most of the funding will be used for a seasonal fire crew to augment park superintendents and natural resource staff.

The grant will allow the division to increase annual burning by up to 200 percent. The division expects to break more new ground, such as the Umstead burn, in its prescribed fire program and be a leader in sound natural resource stewardship.

RRS Provides Key Support To Local Governments

...continued from page 23

RRS supported other educational opportunities by:

- Sponsoring the New Citizen Board Member Workshop at the Citizen Board Forum in Greensboro. The featured speaker was Barry Ford, USTA-National Director.
- Making six presentations at the NCRPA's annual conference in Charlotte. Topics included GIS in Parks, Citizen Board Members, Contracted vs. Payroll part-time employees, the Carolina Thread Trail and Going Green in Parks and PARTF
- Sponsoring the National Playground Safety Institute, a training course offered by the National Recreation and Park Association, attended by 82 professionals.
- Coordinating the 60th Annual Municipal and County Recreation Directors Conference with more than 125 directors and guests attending the two-day event. A feature of the Directors Conference was a special workshop for new parks and recreation directors, conducted by RRS, which drew 25 new directors.
- RRS continued to provide citizen board trainings across the state. Trainings and evaluations were conducted for 31 communities. Staff also reviewed 21 different master plans developed by communities and evaluated 16 mining permits.





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DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

2009 ANNUAL REPORT



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