



2011 ANNUAL REPORT



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|---|-------|
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| YELLOW MOUNTAIN STATE NATURAL AREA | |
| DEEP RIVER STATE TRAIL | 2007 |
| PINEOLA BOG STATE NATURAL AREA | 2006 |
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| CARVERS CREEK STATE PARK | 2005 |
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| JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK | 1975 |
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| CROWDERS MOUNTAIN STATE PARK | |
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| MOUNT MITCHELL STATE PARK | 1916 |



The cover photo of sunrise over Moore's Knob at Hanging Rock State Park is generously provided by photographer Nick D'Amato of Durham. This year marks the 75th anniversary of this beloved state park that attracted more than a half million visitors in 2010. Citizens in Stokes County amassed the original 3,096 acres for the park, deeding the tract to the state in 1936. In anticipation of this, the Civilian Conservation Corps had begun constructing park facilities on the land a year earlier.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



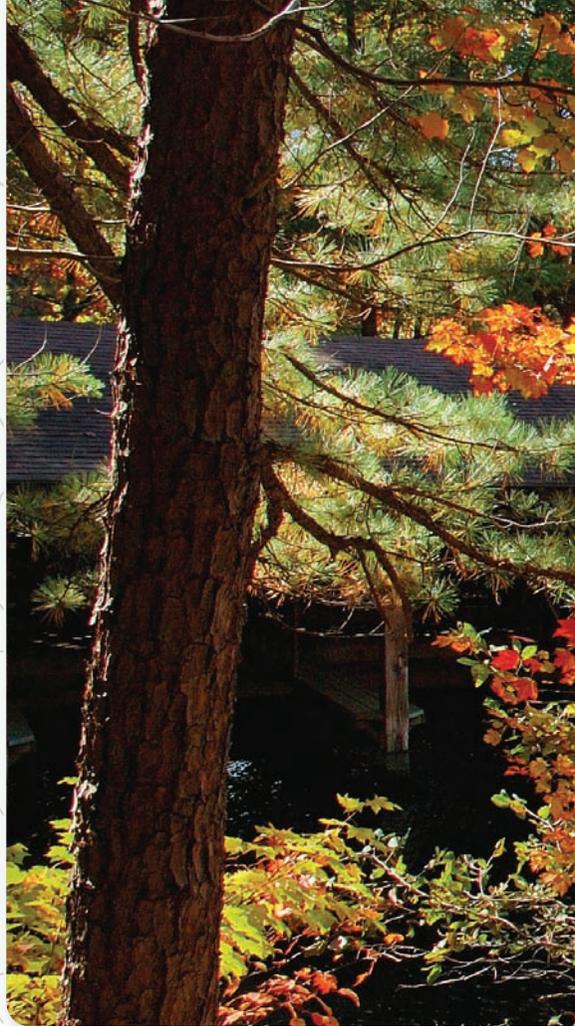
Lewis Ledford, Director of N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation

North Carolina has a deep-rooted tradition of protecting its stunning natural resources and making them accessible at low cost to citizens and visitors. The results of that tradition, which led to the acquisition of 46,340 acres during the past eight years, include healthier lifestyles, economic stimulus to communities where state parks are located and a strong conservation ethic.

During the past year, we also opened a wide variety of facilities, which include new campgrounds, trails, exhibits and visitor centers. You will be able to learn more about those and other efforts throughout this annual report.

Every visit to a state park is an opportunity for the entire family to learn and interact with natural and cultural history.

The exhibits, visitor centers, trails and other amenities complement self-discovery and interpretive programs offered by our rangers and broaden the visitor experience.



Our new visitor centers provide a focal point for the park and a gathering place for visitors. The centers are places to learn about the state park and its natural resources.

They offer an integrated exhibit hall, a teaching auditorium and classrooms.

An important part of the mission of state parks is to exemplify good stewardship of our natural resources.

The LEED gold rating which we seek for all our large facilities exceeds



Boat House at Hanging Rock

our mandate to make all new state park buildings energy efficient. It's the result of extraordinary effort by the building's designer, the contractors and the park staff.

2010 presented us with significant budgetary challenges, and the years ahead promise to be austere as well. However, I am quite confident parks advocates, staff and volunteers are up to the challenge. We will also continue to work closely with local government parks and recreation departments and the Recreation Resources Service at N.C. State University.

I hope you will take the time to read and learn more about our efforts to improve the visitor experience, parks operational efficiency, enhance natural resource management efforts,

increase planning and expand recreational opportunities across our state parks system. We are also an essential component of North Carolina's travel and tourism industry and valuable economic engines in the communities where state parks are located.

We take great pride in the work we do and hope all our citizens have the opportunity to experience something naturally wonderful in 2011.

Sincerely,

Lewis Ledford





NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS RESERVATIONS SYSTEM REPORTS BUSY YEAR

More than 250,000 visitors to North Carolina state parks used a new reservations system in its first full year of operation, with most campers preferring short visits to state parks near their homes.



Mount Mitchell State Park

By far, the most popular park for camping and picnicking by reservation was Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, which logged 14,124 reservations during the year ending July 30. It was followed by Kerr Lake State Recreation Area (6,162), Hanging Rock (5,256), Stone Mountain (5,062) and Carolina Beach (4,410) state parks. The year-end reservations report showed that the state parks system's online and call center-based system placed 61,484 reservations for campsites, picnic shelters and other amenities.



Stone Mountain State Park

In July 2009, the state partnered with Infospherix, a Clarksburg, Md.-based company, to introduce the central reservations system for its 3,000 campsites, 106 picnic shelters and community buildings, vacation cabins and visitor center auditoriums. The system is fully supported by a \$3 surcharge for each reservation or night's stay.

The state parks attracted visitors from 16 nations during the year with Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom contributing the most foreign visitors, but reservations originated in far-flung locations such as Australia, Namibia and Sweden.

North Carolinians, of course, were the most frequent visitors, and most state park campgrounds were populated by people from nearby towns, although there were exceptions. For instance, Hammocks Beach and Pilot Mountain state parks most often had campers from the Triangle area. Visitors from Charlotte most often filled Lake James, Morrow Mountain, New River and Stone Mountain state parks.

Reservations for campsites peaked in April, May and June with a smaller but noticeable spike during August. The typical camping

(Continued next page)





STATE PARKS REPORT HIGH ATTENDANCE CONTINUED IN 2010

North Carolina's state parks and state recreation areas reported near-record visitation in 2010, with 14 million visits, slightly below the all-time record of 14.2 million visits in 2009.

During the past 25 years, the state parks system has seen a 112 percent increase in visitation. In 1985, 6.6 million people visited state parks and state recreation areas.

North Carolina's state parks offer affordable, family-oriented recreation, and the state's residents and visitors have come to rely on that resource as difficult economic times continue. The state parks also continue to contribute to the economic health of local communities, particularly in rural areas and regions dependent on tourism.

A 2008 economic study revealed that travelers spend an average \$23.56-a-day to enjoy the state parks. The analysis by North Carolina State University's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management estimated the state parks system's total annual economic impact at \$412 million. The complete study can be found at www.ncparks.gov/news/media_room.

The state parks system manages more than 213,000 acres, including 35 state parks and four state recreation areas and a system of state natural areas dedicated to conservation of rare resources. The new Mayo River State Park opened to the public in April, drawing 36,772 visitors during the year. Through its New Parks for a New Century initiative, six new state parks have been added to the system since 2003.



Campers at Falls Lake State Recreational Area

trip involved three people staying two nights on a weekend. In total, 123,149 nights of camping were reserved.

State park visitors were most comfortable making reservations in person at a state park (47.6 percent), while 35.9 percent of the reservations were made online and 16.5 percent were made through a call center. Visitors can camp without a reservation if a site is available when they arrive. Reservations can be made up until 48 hours in advance of a visit, online at www.ncparks.gov or by calling toll-free 1-877-7 CAMP NC (722-6762).

Mayo River State Park





HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK HAS ACTIVE SEASON FOR SEA TURTLE NESTING

State park rangers and volunteers monitored 19 sea turtle nests this season on Bear Island at Hammocks Beach State Park in Onslow County. The number is up significantly from eight nests recorded in 2009.

While endangered loggerhead turtles regularly nest on the coastal barrier island, rangers have determined that one of the nests was created by the relatively rare green sea turtle, one of only nine green sea turtle nests in coastal North Carolina in 2010.

One of the loggerhead sea turtles visiting Bear Island was fitted by researchers with a GPS satellite tracking device and later “adopted” by the Friends of Hammocks and Bear Island Inc., a nonprofit state park support group that will help finance the research. The turtle, named Pati by researchers from the Duke University Marine Laboratory and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, did not successfully nest on Bear Island when she was tagged July 21, but returned the following night to nest on adjacent Brown’s Island. Pati’s travels can be tracked at the website www.seaturtle.org.

The research funded by the U.S. Navy allows the marine lab to record the length of time the turtles spend on the surface and underwater diving and foraging and helps calculate numbers of sea turtles in North Carolina offshore waters.

Both loggerhead and green sea turtles dig nests above the high tide line along beaches with incubation periods of roughly 60-90 days. Hatchlings emerge from the nests at night and make their way toward the brightest horizon, which on an undeveloped beach is always toward the sea. Bright, artificial lights can confuse the hatchlings.

Once the hatchlings emerge, rangers and volunteers inventory the number of eggs in each nest and the number of successful hatchlings. Hammocks Beach State Park has one of the oldest sea turtle nest monitoring programs in the United States dating from 1975 with nightly patrols to measure and tag nesting females.





HAMMOCKS BEACH STATE PARK ESTABLISHES A "TRASH-FREE" ZONE ON BEAR ISLAND

To further protect ecologically sensitive Bear Island, Hammocks Beach State Park designated the island as a “trash-free” zone.

Trash receptacles have been removed from the 892-acre barrier island and visitors have been asked to carry refuse back to collection points near the park’s visitor center on the mainland.

“Bear Island is one of the few remaining pristine barrier islands in North Carolina, and we all share a responsibility to protect this rare gem,” Park Superintendent Paul Donnelly said. “The ‘trash-free’ program will help us all be more aware of our effect on the island environment and help instill a ‘leave-no-trace’ ethic.”

Visitation at Hammocks Beach State Park in Onslow County has more than doubled in the past 14 years to more than 100,000 people annually. Most of the

visitors take the brief ferry ride to the three-mile-long island with its unspoiled beach, bathhouse, expansive dune fields and backpack camping sites.

As part of the “trash-free” program, free bio-degradable collection bags are available for visitors at several points on the island. Rangers and ferry operators explain the program and informational signs have been posted. Park staff at the bathhouse and concession area also are taking steps to reduce the amount of trash generated.

The park expects to gradually reduce the cost of commercial trash collection by as much as 50 percent. The program should enable park staff time to carry out other duties. A similar program was successfully launched on a portion of beach at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area in 2007.





AMERICA'S STATE PARKS

NORTH CAROLINA PART OF NATIONAL EFFORT TO PROTECT STATE PARKS

RALEIGH — Like other states across the country, North Carolina's funding for its state parks has been reduced in recent years due to budget cutbacks and challenging economic conditions. Some states have scheduled state park closings due to massive funding reductions.

To raise awareness about the plight of state parks systems nationwide, North Carolina joined a national effort to mobilize and educate the public and policy makers on the positive impact state parks have on public health and local economies.

Millions of Americans who rely on state parks for outdoor activities risk losing access to cherished natural and recreational assets as budgets are slashed. In response, the America's State Parks alliance (www.americasstateparks.com) was created by the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD) to counter that threat to outdoor recreation.

In North Carolina, a near record 14 million visitors went to state parks in 2010. State parks have an economic impact of \$400 million, reflecting the value North Carolinians place on affordable outdoor recreation. Nationally, more than 725 million Americans visited state parks annually, demonstrating

strong demand for budget-friendly outdoor recreation and cultural tourism within easy access to home.

The America's State Parks alliance will work collaboratively to share resources, best practices and engage in national partnerships with corporations for stewardship programs, aiding state parks during a time of budget shortfalls and strong demand for state park experiences.

Partnerships with corporations can help preserve many of America's most prized natural assets through their affiliation and sponsorship of programs such as reforestation, trail preservation and maintenance and solar-energy installations.

"Building state parks creates jobs and operating state parks stimulates outdoor recreation and tourism spending," said NASPD President Joe Elton, who is also director of Virginia State Parks. "That translates to a huge boom to our

local economies. In 2009, visitors to state parks across America helped create a \$20 billion economic impact, which is an incredible return on investment given that the overall budget expenditure nationwide is less than \$2.3 billion."

Often called "America's backyard," state parks protect many of the nation's most prized natural assets – beaches, mountains, forests and lakes – giving Americans convenient access to public lands. Also, local governments view state parks as "clean economic development" that brings tourist dollars while requiring little investment in infrastructure and services.

Division Director Lewis Ledford continues to serve on the boards of directors for the National Association of State Park Directors and the National Recreation and Parks Association.





NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS IMPLEMENTED NEW FEE SCHEDULE MAY 1

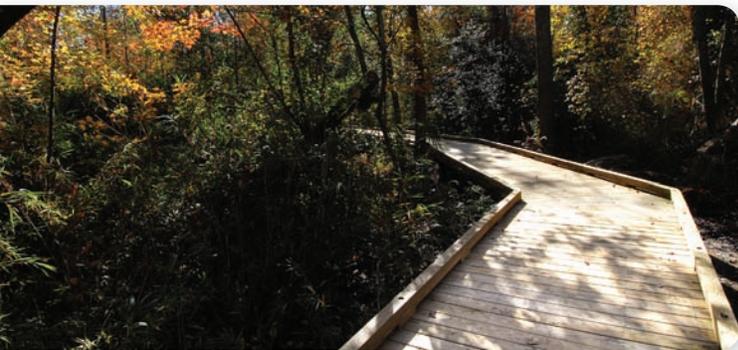
Starting May 1, 2010, North Carolina state parks implemented a new fee schedule authorized by the General Assembly in its 2009 session.

The change represented the first such increase in fees in North Carolina since 2003. The change affects visitor services, such as camping, cabin and boat rentals, admission to some swimming areas and picnic shelter rentals at all state parks and state recreation areas.

The rate of the increase varies depending on the service. For example, the fee for a standard campsite without utilities increased from \$15 to \$17 per night; admission to swim areas increased from \$4 to \$5 per day; and rental for a medium-sized picnic shelter changed from \$60 to \$70 per day.

Fees in North Carolina state parks help offset the cost of providing visitor services. There are no admission fees to the state parks, but a parking fee is charged at Jordan Lake, Falls Lake and Kerr Lake state recreation areas. That fee is \$6 per vehicle. A fee is charged for a concession operation at Chimney Rock State Park. There are no admission fees for the parks' interpretive programs or exhibit halls.

Traditionally, North Carolina state parks have implemented gradual and periodic fee adjustments that keep in step with the Consumer Price Index and are in the mid-range of similar state parks systems in the Southeast United States.



NEW BOARDWALK SYSTEM OPENED AT DISMAL SWAMP STATE PARK

An extensive boardwalk system allowing Dismal Swamp State Park visitors to more fully immerse themselves in the swamp wilderness experience opened in November.

The addition of 2,000 linear feet of boardwalk into the Great Dismal Swamp was made possible by a \$50,000 grant from the federal Recreational Trails Program administered through the Albemarle RC&D Council, and many hours of labor by volunteers working alongside staff of Dismal Swamp and Merchants Millpond state parks.

The nonprofit Friends of Dismal Swamp State Park provided labor, as did an 11-person crew from AmeriCorps, a federal program providing in-kind services by youth

volunteers. The park's two maintenance mechanics dedicated themselves to the project for nearly two years. The result was savings estimated at more than \$60,000 from a bid price.

The park opened in 2008 with a modest 300-foot-long boardwalk that has been very popular with visitors. Trails on old roadbeds allow long hikes and bicycle rides into the park, but the boardwalk that winds through the heavy vegetation and over saturated soils is the best way of observing the true swamp habitat and wildlife.



Jonathan Underwood, director of the Stanly County Historic Preservation Commission and Museum, speaks at the dedication ceremony.

MORROW MOUNTAIN DEDICATED NEW EXHIBITS ON NATURAL, CULTURAL HISTORY

Dramatic geology, an ancient river system, early settlement and American Indian culture combine to give Morrow Mountain State Park a fascinating and multi-layered history. Those aspects of the state park are explored in an array of new, museum-quality exhibits dedicated during a special ceremony in November.

The event coincided with the park's annual Old Fashioned Day, which celebrates the region's history with craft demonstrations, music, games and Civil War re-enactors.

Natural and cultural history are intertwined at Morrow Mountain, which looks out onto the Uwharrie Mountains and the Yadkin River basin. American Indians quarried the mountain's rhyolite for stone tools and weapons and regularly fished the waters, and those same natural resources drew early European settlements.

Gold mines and ferry systems predated the arrival of the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s, which ultimately led to the state park's creation.

The new exhibits in an 800-square-foot, 1960s-era stone building explore all these themes through video, hands-on displays and dioramas.

An in-depth exhibit on stone toolmaking, a scale-model of a river ferry and a computer-based, interactive bird exhibit are featured, along with a three-dimensional map of the Uwharrie Mountains.

The project represents an investment of \$220,000 from the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the principal funding source for capital projects and land acquisition in the state parks system.





FIRST FACILITIES OPENED AT MAYO RIVER STATE PARK

The new Mayo River State Park in Rockingham County opened interim facilities to the public in April.

The restoration of a pavilion-style picnic shelter designed by renowned architect Antonin Raymond is the centerpiece of the project that also includes picnic grounds, play fields, a hiking trail and a ranger contact station at the 1,961-acre state park authorized by the N.C. General Assembly in 2003.

The interim facilities are on a 398-acre site just north of Mayodan on N.C. 220 Business and known locally as Mayo Park. The site was developed in 1948 by Washington Mills as a community recreation area. The state parks system acquired the property in 2004 from Avalon Development Corp.

Land acquisition for Mayo River State Park continues within a 12-mile river corridor from Mayodan north to the Virginia state line. The state parks system owns about 400 acres contiguous to the state line, which could be developed as a second principal access to the park.

The former Mayo Park site included the picnic pavilion, a cooking shelter and a bathhouse designed by Raymond, a protégé of Frank Lloyd Wright who introduced a Japanese style of architecture to the U.S. incorporating natural materials. The pavilion and cooking shelter have been fully restored in wood and natural stone. The bathhouse was deemed too dilapidated for restoration, although portions of the structure were salvaged for potential later use as exhibits.

The site also includes two small ponds, one of which has been drained to allow dam renovation. Picnic sites and a half-mile hiking trail are in place, and volunteers and park staff are building another 1.8-mile trail.

The initial development project also included renovation of a former caretaker's quarters as a ranger contact station, a restroom building designed in a



Lindley Butler of the Dan River Basin Association speaks at ceremonies opening Mayo River State Park.



style similar to Raymond's and park infrastructure including entrance road, parking areas and utilities.

The \$1.7 million project was supported by the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Virginia State Parks are also planning for a connecting park facility along the Mayo River north of the state line.



RAVEN ROCK STATE PARK DEDICATED NEW VISITOR CENTER

A new 7,190-square-foot visitor center and related facilities at Raven Rock State Park in Harnett County, which was designed to national green building standards, was formally dedicated July 17.



Bill Ross, chairman of the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, gets help from cub scouts cutting a ribbon on the Raven Rock State Park Visitor Center. The project also included improvements to the park's picnic grounds and entrance road

Similar to visitor centers built at 20 state parks and state recreation areas since 1994, the facility at Raven Rock offers a unique design reflecting the park's character. The project also includes a picnic shelter, improvements to the picnic grounds, an accessible nature trail, a paved entrance road to the park and paved parking areas with space for 139 vehicles. The project represents an investment of \$4.3 million from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Museum-quality exhibits in the visitor center explore the natural history and the unique geologic events that resulted in the Raven Rock landscape, along with the history of Cape Fear River navigation and the river's importance to local culture and commerce. Interactive exhibits invite visitors to consider "Nature Holding the Upper Hand" in efforts to control and profit from such a large river.

The state parks system has increased its commitment to sustainability by seeking certification for all large projects by the national Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, program of the U.S. Green Building Council. Features at the Raven Rock State Park visitor center that will contribute to certification include a geothermal heat pump, solar hot water heating and low-flow water fixtures, the use of natural lighting along with low-energy lighting fixtures and solar lighting in the parking area, recycled building materials and natural landscaping.





NEW FACILITIES DEDICATED AT LAKE JAMES STATE PARK

The first public facilities on a 2,915-acre expansion of Lake James State Park in Burke County opened in September.

The new Paddy's Creek Section of the state park will initially offer a 700-foot-wide swim beach and a bathhouse built to national green building standards as well as picnic grounds with two picnic shelters and toilets, parking areas for 450 vehicles, a maintenance compound and infrastructure to support this and further development on the property acquired in 2004 from Crescent Resources Inc. The project represents a combined \$7.6 million investment by the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

The land acquisition protecting more than 30 miles of shoreline was a partnership effort with the Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina, Burke County government, a citizens group seeking improved public access and Crescent Resources, which continues to develop residential neighborhoods at the lake.

A winding, two-mile entrance road opens to the swim beach and bathhouse complex at Paddy's Creek. All were included in a master plan crafted in 2005 for the development of recreation facilities on the property. An existing swim beach on the lake's south shore frequently filled to capacity with visitors being turned away on summer days. The state park is the only public access on the 6,500-acre lake. The master plan ultimately calls for a visitor center, community building, campgrounds, vacation cabins and boating and fishing access, as well as a trail system that will connect with regional trails.

The bathhouse is among several state park capital projects built recently to standards of the U.S. Green Building Council through its Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design program. It features a solar system that provides both hot water and space heating along with low-flow water fixtures and the use of natural lighting. It is part of a long-term commitment to sustainable construction by the state parks system.



Several area legislators and community officials attended the dedication of new facilities at Lake James State Park. The project is the initial development on 2,915 acres acquired in 2004, a land purchase widely supported in the region.





FORT MACON STATE PARK FACILITY EARNS GOLD RATING FROM U.S. GREEN BUILDING COUNCIL

The new Fort Macon State Park Coastal Education and Visitor Center earned a gold rating in the Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, or LEED, program of the U.S. Green Building Council.

The Fort Macon facility is the first non-university, state-owned building to earn the distinction.

The 22,547-square-foot education and visitor center at North Carolina's second oldest state park was dedicated in 2009 and is devoted to environmental education about the state's fragile coastal ecology, offering 4,000 square feet of exhibit space, a teaching auditorium and classrooms.

The brick-and-block facility was designed by Hobbs Architecture of Pittsboro, and general contractor was Daniels & Daniels Construction Co. of Goldsboro. It is a close neighbor of the park's 183-year-old fortress and reflects that

attraction's 19th Century military architecture. Funding for the project came from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. Construction began in April 2008.

Sustainable features that contributed to the gold rating include a sophisticated rainwater collection system and stormwater runoff controls, low-energy lighting, water-saving fixtures and preferred parking for fuel-efficient vehicles. Also, several tons of concrete construction debris was collected to contribute to an artificial, offshore reef.

The coastal education and visitor center is similar in function to visitor centers built at 20 state parks and state recreation areas since 1994.



MARINA AREA RENOVATED AT CAROLINA BEACH STATE PARK

Marina and boat access facilities at Carolina Beach State Park were part of an extensive renovation project in 2010.

The renovation included construction of new floating docks, additional boat slips, boat ramp improvements, walkways, above-ground fuel tanks and a redesigned parking area with additional single-vehicle spaces. Dredging of the access channel to the marina was completed earlier. The \$2.5 million project was supported by the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.





JOCKEY'S RIDGE STATE PARK ERECTS WIND TURBINE TO SUPPLY ELECTRIC POWER

The wind that has shaped the sands at Jockey's Ridge State Park for centuries now supplies electric power to the park through a 60-foot-high wind turbine erected near the visitor center.

The wind turbine with three blades is 23 feet in diameter and is positioned on a single pole near the visitor center and several hundred yards from the 80-foot-high sand dune that gives the coastal state park in Dare County its name. Construction of the turbine was completed in late May.

"Part of our mission in the state parks system is to exemplify good stewardship and explore sustainable ways of operating and helping people enjoy the natural resources," Park Superintendent Debo Cox said. "The wind turbine will help us cut costs, and it will also serve as a working educational exhibit for visitors."

It was connected to the power grid via Dominion North Carolina Power. Park officials anticipate its power generation will offset most

of the cost of supplying the visitor center, which includes an exhibit hall, an auditorium and park offices.

Park staff worked with the town of Nags Head to secure permits and also conducted early studies with a mobile lift to assess any negative visual impact the turbine might have.

The staff and biologists with the state parks system also conducted a year-long study to ensure the turbine would not have any negative impact on coastal or migratory birds.

The monopole-style structure, which doesn't require guy wires, was chosen to reduce effects on birds in flight.

The cost of the project was \$140,000, which includes outdoor exhibits that explain its operation to park visitors. The project was supported by the Parks and Recreation



Trust Fund, the principal funding source for state parks capital projects and land acquisition.



BIG BANG!

Retracing the route of its predecessors, a replica Civil War era, 32-pounder cannon made its way down the Neuse River basin and onto the ramparts of Fort Macon in December.

Instead of Confederate soldiers, this cannon was accompanied by a group of students from Wayne Community College, who fabricated the first aluminum gun carriage to be used at the state park. The artillery piece rode on a flatbed truck making ceremonial stops at historic sites in Kinston and New Bern.

The partnership between the state park and Wayne Community College saved the state at least \$20,000 and will add realism to fort tours.

Park Superintendent Randy Newman told a local newspaper, "The fort finally has its heartbeat back."

Continued on page 38



This cannon, a prized creation of the N.C. state parks system and Wayne Community College, received a hero's welcome in December from a crowd of about 75 people at the New Bern Civil War Battlefield. Adrian O'Neal, head of the eastern district of state parks, said the project began because Fort Macon was in need of cannon carriages, which were made of wood and only lasted a few years in the elements. Johnny Johnson, of the parks service, came up with the idea of partnering with a community college to build a carriage of aluminum.

THIRTEEN STATE PARK RANGERS RECEIVE LAW ENFORCEMENT COMMISSIONS

Superior Court Judge Gary E. Trawick swore in 13 new state park rangers as law enforcement officers July 1 at a special ceremony in Raleigh. Rangers typically handle all of the law enforcement and emergency situations at the park level unless assistance is needed by other law enforcement or emergency service agencies. Often working with local, state and federal law enforcement and emergency service agencies, rangers and superintendents routinely work with agencies such

as the N.C. Division of Emergency Management, Wildlife Resources Commission, State Highway Patrol, Division of Forest Resources, county sheriff and emergency management agencies, the State Bureau of Investigation, the National Park Service and others. Beyond law enforcement training, all are trained in medical first response, search-and-rescue, wildfire suppression, natural resource management, interpretive skills and environmental education.



In 2010, 44 state park rangers and other staff became certified environmental educators. That requires more than 200 hours of training and service projects — such as a trash-free beach zone, self-guided nature walks and extensive trail improvements.





PARK PLANNING

Master plans for Chimney Rock and Carvers Creek state parks were undertaken in 2010. A state park's master plan is essentially a blueprint for long-term development of facilities and recreation opportunities and a guide for protection of natural resources. It is meant to be an organic document, evolving as the park grows and as knowledge is gained about a park's natural resources and public use.

Chimney Rock State Park was authorized by the N.C. General Assembly in 2005 and encompasses more than 4,500 acres on both sides of the Hickory Nut Gorge, including the dramatic Chimney Rock spire and surrounding nature park that was formerly a privately-run tourist destination.

In May 2010, a public planning workshop was held in Lake Lure to seek public input on three park design alternatives. A month-long public review period afforded many constructive comments, which were incorporated into the draft master plan. The draft master plan was released for public review in November 2010. Additional public comments from the draft master plan will help the division finalize the master plan in 2011.

Established in 2005, Carvers Creek State Park boasts more than 4,000 acres north of Fayetteville. The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation received approval from the Council of State to take possession of 1,420 acres of land donated to the park. The property, known as Long Valley Farm, is part of the former Rockefeller estate and was donated by The Nature Conservancy.

A public planning workshop for Carvers Creek State Park was held in August 2010. Three park design concepts were considered at the meeting. Public comments from the month-long public review period will be incorporated into the forthcoming draft park composite design. The draft master plan will be available for public review 2011. The final master plan is expected to be completed in the summer of 2011.

The State Parks Act directs the division to create General Management Plans, or GMPs, for each park in the system. The GMP is based upon a statement of purpose for each park as well as an analysis of the major resources and

facilities available to implement that park's purpose. Through this process, each state park has its management direction defined.

The GMP process uses a multi-disciplinary approach to planning that includes representation from all of the divisions' various sections and programs. Each park in the system has its GMP updated on a rotating schedule to ensure that GMPs accurately reflect the current conditions of the park and show that the park is poised to address future needs.

Routine review of GMPs gives the division the opportunity to document park needs and develop management and capital improvement priorities. GMPs also help to ensure funds are spent effectively and that new projects are designed and constructed to serve their intended purposes. Draft GMPs are reviewed by the park's advisory committee to provide valuable feedback to division staff.

In 2010, GMP meetings were held for: Fort Macon State Park, Bay Tree Lake State Park, Singletary Lake State Park, White Lake State Lake, Mount Jefferson State Natural Area and Hanging Rock State Park.



CRAFTING MEMORABLE VISITOR EXPERIENCES

NCDPR EXHIBITS PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2010

WIUM ENERGY EFFICIENCY/ EXHIBITS LIGHTING PROJECT

William B. Umstead State Park completed its energy audit of the visitor center and began replacing lighting in the interpretive exhibit spaces and other public areas as part of an exhibit maintenance project. The new LED lights save energy and reduce costs while providing a pleasantly lit public space and protecting graphics and artifacts from harmful ultraviolet light.



DEVELOPING WAYFINDING SYSTEMS

Designed for the first-time visitor, wayfinding systems integrate good directional signage with brochure, web and other park information so that visitors feel safe and comfortable

during visits. Exhibits Program staff guided several parks in evaluating and improving wayfinding systems this year, including Mount Jefferson State Natural Area, Hanging Rock State Park, Lumber River State Park and Fort Macon State Park.

NEW EXHIBITS

The Exhibits Program continues to guide new interpretive exhibits statewide as well as assist with maintaining installations. A new *exhibit on wind power* was installed in the Jockey's Ridge State Park visitor center as part of a project to install a wind turbine at the park.

The Power of Wind exhibit displays information about wind turbines as an alternative energy source. The turbine at the park provides enough energy to power the lights in the exhibit hall.



Piecing the fossil parts together has been a challenge for researchers.

Working with university researchers and Museum of Natural Sciences staff, Exhibits Program staff began development of a new exhibit of a rare fossilized whale skeleton found in Lake Waccamaw. The fossil will be temporarily displayed at the North Carolina Museum of Forestry in Whiteville, then moved to its final home at Lake Waccamaw State Park in 2011.





Two major interpretive museums were completed this year. The Morrow Mountain State Park interpretive museum describes the history and natural resources of the park in an interactive setting. The Fort Macon State Park Coastal Education Center exhibits immerse the visitor in a barrier island environment with educational activities for children and adults. History buffs will especially enjoy the 1870s vignettes that tell the story of the fort's surgeon and naturalist Elliot Coues.

Two visitor center exhibits with a new interpretive approach were under design in 2010. In an effort to highlight the role of the natural resources in the visitor experience, the Gorges State Park visitor center exhibits are integrated into the main circulation area, which includes floor to ceiling glass for stunning views of the park. To attract visitors into the park, the exhibits expand outside with educational waterfall activities along the approach to the building and interpretive graphics on the rear deck.



Morrow Mountain State Park museum



This bright and colorful exhibit highlights the unique natural communities in Morrow Mountain State Park.



This vignette shows Elliot Coues in his office surrounded by the tools of this trade.

A Lake Norman State Park interpretive exhibit takes a similar approach in engaging visitors in the natural environment. Most of the hands-on interactive opportunities for this park are to be located along a lakeside interpretive trail that starts at the new visitor center.



The video projection in the Fort Macon Coastal Education Center exhibit hall shows the rising and falling of the tides in the park.

Whaling and fishing are an integral part of the history of the North Carolina coast. This model of a right whale can be touched or even sat upon!



Barrier island plants and animals are featured in this detailed diorama at Fort Macon State Park.

NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PARTF)



The 2010-2011

Parks and Recreation

Authority members are:

Chairman Bill Ross, Jr.
Chapel Hill

C. Michael Allen
Mount Gilead

Daryle Bost
Charlotte

Loretta Clawson
Boone

Robert Epting
Chapel Hill

Ashley B. Futrell, Jr.
Washington

Cody Grasty
Maggie Valley

Walt Israel
Belmont

Boyd Lee
Greenville

Philip McKnelly
Raleigh

Jennifer Smith
Pittsboro

John S. Stevens
Asheville

Cynthia Tart
Oak Island

Hollis Wild
West Jefferson

Edward Wood
Wilmington

The benefits of parks and recreation are enjoyed by individuals, families, neighborhoods and communities. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, or PARTF, helps make possible long walks along a greenway, family picnics, fitness programs to help fight childhood obesity, community festivals on town plazas as well as protecting sensitive natural areas and breathtaking landscapes.

These public resources promote a higher quality of life, healthier lifestyles, more cohesive families, stronger communities, a cleaner environment and other things that make North Carolina a great place to live and play.

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority, a 15-member board which oversees PARTF, was created by the General Assembly with the authority's powers and duties becoming effective July 1, 1996. 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 N.C. Senate and five upon the recommendation of the Speaker of the House.

Members can serve two-consecutive three-year terms before rotating off the board. This year, the president pro tempore appointed Mayor Loretta Clawson, of Boone, to succeed Tim Aydlett. Reappointed to the board to serve a second term were Daryle Bost, Bob Epting and Phil McKnelly. Ashley "Brownie" Futrell, Jr. was appointed to his first term after serving a partial term.

Right: View of McCrae's Peak from Black Rock at Grandfather Mountain





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PARTF AND THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM

PARTF is the primary source of funding to build and renovate facilities in the state parks systems as well as buy land for new and existing parks.

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LAND ACQUISITION

For fiscal 2009-10, the Parks and Recreation Authority approved \$600,000 to cover costs associated with land acquisition funded by donations and grants. An additional \$7.2 million in PARTF revenue was used to repay certificates of participation, or COPs, used to acquire state park land in previous years. Some of these state parks are Grandfather Mountain, Chimney Rock, Lake James state parks and the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail.

State Park Land Acquisition Projects FY 2009-10

| Unit | Cost | Project Description |
|---|------------------|--|
| Costs associated with land donations across the system, | \$600,000 | The state covers title cost and survey costs for donated property; along with expenses associated with land purchases funded by grants from other sources. |
| Total | \$600,000 | |



NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PART F)

CONSTRUCTION AND RENOVATION

During fiscal 2009-10, the Parks and Recreation Authority approved state park construction and renovation projects totaling \$9,106,559.

With PARTF funds, the division continues to address a lengthy backlog of construction and renovation projects in the state parks system. However, approximately \$417.6 million is required to meet all of the needs for new construction and renovation for state parks.

State Parks Capital Projects for Fiscal Year 2009-10

| State Park Unit | Description | Costs (\$) |
|-----------------------------------|---|------------------|
| Carver's Creek State Park | Establish Operations Facilities | 500,000 |
| Chimney Rock State Park | Rocky Broad Bridge, Trail, & Facility Improvements | 700,000 |
| Gorges State Park | Visitor Center, Sewer, Picnic Area, Maintenance Area | 2,736,312 |
| Jordan Lake State Recreation Area | Park-wide Courtesy Dock Improvements | 733,017 |
| Jordan Lake State Recreation Area | Repair and Upgrade to Water System (Design & Partial Construction) | 820,636 |
| Lake Norman State Park | Visitor Center and West District Office (Design) | 593,250 |
| Pettigrew State Park | Day Use Area Improvements | 207,648 |
| Pilot Mountain State Park | Mountain Road Improvements | 431,446 |
| Park System | Major Maintenance Funds | 1,500,000 |
| Park System | Demolition Funds | 200,000 |
| Park System | Exhibit Maintenance Repair Funds | 50,000 |
| Park System | Dam Repair Funds | 134,250 |
| Park System | Trail Maintenance Funds | 500,000 |
| TOTAL FY09-10 | | 9,106,559 |





EXAMPLES OF STATE PARK CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT PROJECTS

IREDELL COUNTY - LAKE NORMAN STATE PARK

This project includes the design for a 6,500-square-foot visitor center and 3,500 square feet of space for the West District Office. The project also includes restorative site work, parking lot repaving and exhibits.

CUMBERLAND COUNTY - CARVER'S CREEK STATE PARK

The state of North Carolina took ownership of Long Valley Farm, a section of Carver's Creek State Park, this fiscal year. The funds will allow the division to construct a visitor contact station and operations areas. The project will include a trail head and parking lot at the Sandhills section of the park, stabilization of existing historical structures at Long Valley Farm, interim staff office space, and refurbishment of existing facilities for use as a park maintenance area.

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT PROJECTS FUNDED BY N.C. PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND 2009-2010

PITT COUNTY - CITY OF GREENVILLE

Drew Steele Center, when completed, will be an inclusive, multi-purpose recreation facility with a special emphasis on accessibility. Plans call for the renovation of the oldest recreational facility under Greenville's park and recreation department. It will be converted into a place where the city's special needs populations will be able to participate in various recreational programs. The community has embraced this project and all of the matching funds have been donated to the city by charitable organizations.

BRUNSWICK COUNTY - TOWN OF LELAND

Westgate Nature Park is the town's first park and will offer exciting opportunities for the public to enjoy nature's beauty through hiking and other passive recreational activities. This 149-acre site is the largest contiguous open space remaining in the town and contains scenic cypress swamps, a water lily pond, pine forest and bottomland hardwoods. With these outstanding natural resources, the park will provide quality environmental education for visitors. There will be signs and teaching tools for plant and wildlife identification as well as stormwater education.

WATAUGA COUNTY - ROCKY KNOB PARK

Rocky Knob Park, situated on Scenic U.S. 421 on the eastern edge of Boone, will provide unique and highly accessible hiking, biking and picnicking opportunities. Rocky Knob Park will serve as Watauga County's first mountain bike trail system (10-12 miles at completion). Local residents identified mountain biking trails as a top priority within the recently-adopted county parks and recreation plan. Rocky Knob Park's 170 acres will fulfill a local recreational need and further expand the county's vision of making the Boone area a top 10 outdoor recreation destination in the United States.

NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PARTF)

GRANTS AWARDED TO LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

In 2009-2010, 85 units of local government submitted PARTF applications requesting a total of \$24.7 million in PARTF assistance.

The authority awarded 38 grants for \$9,179,034.

North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Grants
Fiscal Year 2009-2010

| Applicant | County | Project | Grant Amount |
|------------------|------------|---|--------------|
| Alexander County | Alexander | Rocky Face Park | \$477,776 |
| Alleghany County | Alleghany | Sparta Parkway Park | \$172,479 |
| Angier | Harnett | Jack Marley Park Phase II | \$164,250 |
| Ashe County | Ashe | Wallace Environmental Education Center | \$135,000 |
| Bayboro | Pamlico | Bayboro Waterfront Park | \$28,513 |
| Biscoe | Montgomery | Deaton Monroe Park | \$53,354 |
| Butner | Granville | Butner Athletic Park | \$500,000 |
| Calabash | Brunswick | Community Park | \$56,700 |
| Columbus | Polk | Veterans Park Property Purchase | \$48,000 |
| Drexel | Burke | Drexel Town Park | \$141,855 |
| Duck | Dare | Soundside Boardwalk | \$225,071 |
| Enfield | Halifax | Enfield Community Park | \$298,160 |
| Gastonia | Gaston | Rankin Lake Park Renovation | \$372,381 |
| Godwin | Cumberland | Godwin Park | \$150,000 |
| Greenville | Pitt | Drew Steele Center | \$500,000 |
| Havelock | Craven | Recreation Center Renovation | \$42,540 |
| Henderson County | Henderson | Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Trail System | \$208,750 |
| Hildebran | Burke | Royal Oaks Park | \$381,866 |
| Kitty Hawk | Dare | Sandy Run Park II | \$144,890 |
| Lake Lure | Rutherford | Northern Parkland Acquisition | \$470,000 |



| Applicant | County | Project | Grant Amount |
|--------------------|-------------|---|--------------------|
| Leland | Brunswick | Westgate Nature Park | \$500,000 |
| Marshall | Madison | Blannerhassett Island Park | \$75,613 |
| McDowell County | McDowell | McDowell County Greenway Extension | \$365,285 |
| Mills River | Henderson | Mills River Park Phase I | \$499,323 |
| Morrisville | Wake | Carrington Property Land Acquisition | \$316,000 |
| Oakboro | Stanly | Oakboro District Park | \$250,000 |
| Raleigh | Wake | Neuse River Greenway Acquisition | \$500,000 |
| Rowan County | Rowan | Ellis Park Recreational Improvements | \$38,780 |
| Salisbury | Rowan | Foil-Tatum Park Development | \$78,625 |
| Saratoga | Wilson | Town Park | \$44,000 |
| Spring Lake | Cumberland | Edward Mendoza Memorial Park | \$363,150 |
| Tabor City | Columbus | Tabor City Athletic Complex | \$39,750 |
| Warren | Warren | Magnolia Ernest Recreation Park | \$68,495 |
| Washington | Beaufort | Festival Park | \$295,125 |
| Watauga County | Watauga | Rocky Knob Park – Phase 1 | \$500,000 |
| Waynesville | Haywood | Waynesville Skate Park | \$61,425 |
| Wesley Chapel | Union | Page Price Park | \$500,000 |
| Wrightsville Beach | New Hanover | Wrightsville Beach Park Improvements | \$111,878 |
| Total | | | \$9,179,034 |



STATE PARKS REACHES OUT TO KEEP PEOPLE INFORMED

The state parks system continues to explore new ways of connecting with its partners, friends and visitors through social media.

The state parks' Facebook page just completed its first full year of exposure and has more than 6,000 followers. Typically, more than 4,000 of those interact with the page in some fashion each month.



Above: Volunteers from Morrow Mountain State Park

Below: A family camps at New River State Park. Social media can suggest new ways for visitors to enjoy the state parks.

The page showcases photos and videos of informal events at individual parks, directs viewers to interesting news about natural resources and the outdoors and is a secondary outlet for formal media releases and announcements. It also provides links to photo galleries and the Facebook pages of our partners, such as conservation organizations.

During 2010, the division also began regular posts on a Twitter site and launched a Youtube channel page with short video clips.

In general, the Twitter posts are reserved for media releases and informational items about park operations. The videos on Youtube feature park tours, hiking destinations and special activities and events.

Social media outlets offer opportunities to reach park supporters and visitors and generate excitement about what's happening in the state parks.



<http://www.facebook.com/pages/Raleigh-NC/North-Carolina-State-Parks-and-Recreation/143412869029>





2010 ACCOMPLISHMENTS NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS SYSTEM LAND PROTECTION PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

In 2010, more than 4,800 acres were added to the North Carolina State Parks System with 23 transactions at 12 units for a value of \$27.8 million. State parks system conservation funding of more than \$16.7 million leveraged private donations and federal grants totaling more than \$11 million.

Initial acquisitions were completed for the recently authorized Yellow Mountain State Natural Area.

The state acquired three key tracts totaling 841 acres on Little Yellow Mountain. These tracts are in the nationally significant natural heritage area and will help protect water quality, high quality natural communities and views from the Appalachian Trail.

Major additions to Carvers Creek State Park were completed. The donation of Long Valley Farm containing 1,419 acres will protect Sandhills natural communities and a historic property. The acquisition of privately held property between existing state park ownership and Fort Bragg brings 1,262 acres of high quality Sandhills natural communities into the state park. This property

contains nesting and foraging habitat for red-cockaded woodpeckers. All of these additions also benefit Fort Bragg by providing buffers from incompatible land uses on its boundaries.

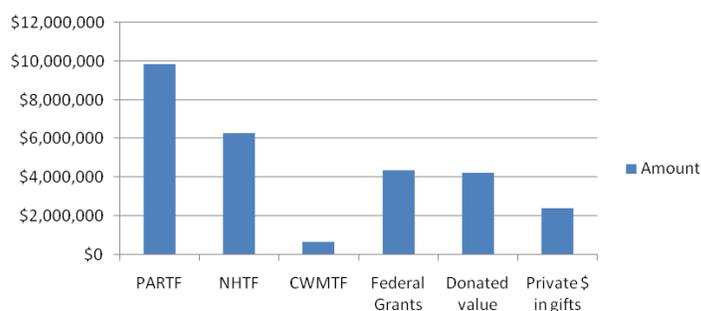
Water quality and fisheries acquisitions were completed at Lake Waccamaw and Lumber River state parks. A 400-acre tract adjacent to Lake Waccamaw and a 29-acre tract along the Lumber River were added to the state parks system.

Three leases to local governments of Mountains-to-Sea State Trail property were completed in 2010. These are keystone tracts that local government partners will develop and manage as part of their parks systems. These tracts are in Alamance, Guilford and Johnston counties.

2010 Sources for SPS Land Acquired

| Source | Amount |
|---------------------|-------------|
| PARTF | \$9,847,941 |
| NHTF | \$6,301,508 |
| CWMTF | \$677,838 |
| Federal Grants | \$4,386,177 |
| Donated value | \$4,260,000 |
| Private \$ in gifts | \$2,389,055 |

2010 State Parks System Land Funding





MASTERING TODAY'S MAINTENANCE CHALLENGES

We are living in an innovative time, and the state parks' maintenance staff is challenged with keeping up with ever changing code/certification requirements and technological advances in equipment and maintenance practices. This requires a diverse and well-trained maintenance staff in order to cover a wide range of responsibilities.

BASIC REQUIRED TRAINING FOR ALL MAINTENANCE STAFF

All division maintenance staff members are required to have first responder training, CPR, wildland fire training and wildland fire chainsaw training as a mandatory requirement for employment. Many other training programs are required of most maintenance staff such as OSHA-required forklift training, blood-borne pathogen training and fall protection training.

NORMAL DAY-TO-DAY RESPONSIBILITIES

Most maintenance staff members are typically required to have journeyman skills in at least two or three general maintenance fields. Those fields include electrical, carpentry, plumbing, painting, masonry, roofing, trail maintenance, auto mechanics, marine engine mechanics, welding or heating, ventilating and air conditioning.

ADVANCED RESPONSIBILITIES AND TRAINING

Many maintenance staff are also required to earn licenses and certifications to perform job duties such as licensed commercial truck operation, emergency medical technician services, licensed passenger ferry operation, licensed pesticide application, certified wastewater treatment plant operation and certified community well operation.

Also, maintenance staff have daily responsibilities, including cleaning facilities, lawn mowing, trash pickup, purchasing materials and supervising seasonal employees and other staff.

The division maintenance staff are required to understand all division, department, state and federal requirements



Friends of State Parks is a non-profit citizen's group dedicated to the understanding, enjoyment and protection of North Carolina's State Parks. FSP supports the mission of the N.C. Parks and Recreation Division: to protect and manage the unique biological, geological, archaeological, recreational and scenic resources of the state. Friends of the State Parks promotes public awareness of the immense contributions of these natural areas to the quality of life for North Carolinians of present and future generations. You can learn more and become a member by visiting <http://www.ncfsp.org/>.



Maintenance crew works on South Mountains State Park bridge

regarding state construction, contracting, natural resources, water quality, purchasing and other approvals and permitting requirements.

District maintenance managers support all park maintenance staff in their respective districts, tracking district budgets, submitting maintenance project requests, writing specifications for contracts, bidding of contracts, working with designers and contractors as contract administrators, coordinating division project work crews, and submitting and obtaining project approvals from the Office of State Construction.

ADVANCEMENTS IN GREEN, RENEWABLE, AND SUSTAINABLE TECHNOLOGIES

As part of their everyday responsibilities, maintenance staff must consider green, renewable and sustainable technologies when making repairs or renovations. These technologies change almost daily. The division

maintenance staff are always looking for the most innovative ways to use the most sustainable equipment and materials when completing repairs.

A few examples of sustainable projects include replacing HVAC units with Energy Star rated equipment, using waterless urinals, replacing lighting fixtures with the most efficient lighting options, and installation of natural light fixtures and the use of recycled sign stock for making park signs.

END RESULT: A SAFE, WELL MAINTAINED PARK FACILITY

Despite the daily challenges, the main objective of a division maintenance mechanic is to ensure visitors have a clean, safe and attractive state park. This results in a great experience for visitors while maintaining facilities compatible with the state's natural resources. Like so many other division employees, members of the maintenance staff truly are multi-specialists.



THE ROAD TO BECOMING A N.C. STATE PARK RANGER

Many people see a park ranger and know they are folks who are there to help, but what makes someone pursue this career and how do they get there.

It starts with an interest or love for the outdoors and protecting the environment and sharing that with other people. Typically, it continues when someone earns a college degree in an area related to natural resources, science or recreation.

Often, summer jobs or internships at state or natural resource agencies help candidates gain experience valuable to their pursuit of a career as a state park ranger.

Upon graduation or after moving on from other lines of work, future park rangers continue working seasonal jobs or as park volunteers while seeking employment with the division as a North Carolina state park ranger.

Sometimes the path to becoming a park ranger can be a long one. After selection of highly qualified candidates, hiring managers interview candidates to evaluate their knowledge, skills and competencies.

If successful in the interview and application process, a candidate may be offered a “conditional offer of employment.” Upon acceptance of the conditional offer, ranger candidates undergo an extensive criminal background check before being hired.

Since North Carolina state park rangers are full-time law enforcement officers, they must pass a thorough criminal background check similar to any law enforcement officer in North Carolina. This background check includes checking local and

state criminal history records for convictions, higher education history, driving histories, credit reports and financial statements. Candidates must pass a medical exam. They also undergo drug screenings and a psychological evaluation. Staff check with personal and work references and review the candidate’s history.

Upon successful completion of the background investigation, the candidate is hired as one of the cadre of about 160 park rangers at one of the division’s 41 state park units. At this point, the real training begins.

On the first day, a new ranger begins a lifelong learning of the job. Whether it’s taking environmental interpretation and education courses to promote and educate the public about the park’s unique ecological features or completing basic search-and-rescue courses to help locate lost people, a ranger’s job is always about learning and strengthening their diverse roles.

Typically, within 3-6 months of starting work, the ranger will start Basic Law Enforcement Training, or BLET, at a local community college. Successful completion of this basic law enforcement training, which takes at least 16 weeks, is the same training program required by





Rangers in training

all law enforcement officers in the state. During this training, rangers complete courses in constitutional law, search and seizure, motor vehicle law, firearms qualification, criminal investigation, ethics, domestic violence, driving, testifying in court and many other topics.

Following successful completion of this intensive training, rangers are then commissioned as special peace officers with the powers of arrest in all North Carolina state parks.

After completing law enforcement training, rangers expand their skill-based knowledge by completing training in cardiopulmonary resuscitation, first responder training and, in most of the mountain parks, basic emergency medical technician services.

Basic search and rescue training, such as Fundamentals of Search and Rescue or more advanced courses such as Managing Land Searches or Managing a Lost Person Incident, help a ranger search for lost hikers or participate in a more extensive search for lost children.

Prescribed fire and wildfire suppression training is incorporated in the early training development of rangers as many of the parks have a natural resource based prescribed burning program, and all parks run the risk of wildfires.

Invasive species management, Wildland Power Saw Training and other resource management based courses are completed to assist with management of a park's resources.

Basic and advanced environmental education training is a continual process throughout a ranger's career. This training plays an important role in the division's mission of environmental stewardship and interpretation of the ecological importance of the state park.

It typically takes about two years for new rangers to become trained in the fundamentals of the different

“multi-specialist” roles required of rangers. However, this training continues throughout their careers.

Annually, rangers complete CPR, first responder and/or EMT refresher training to ensure their skills and knowledge are fine tuned.

At least 24 hours of in-service law enforcement training is completed by each ranger each year. This in-service training, which is required by all law enforcement officers, includes topics such as firearms training and qualification, mental illness awareness, legal affairs, juvenile law issues, subject control and arrest tactics and career survival.

Environmental educational courses continue with rangers expanding their knowledge of ecology and natural resources to expand their abilities to educate the public.

Advanced courses in search and rescue, law enforcement and incident management are taken to help rangers participate or manage large emergencies.

Rangers also complete supervisory and personnel management courses as they advance so they may supervise and train seasonal employees and lower level rangers.

Continued on next page



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SEARCH AND RESCUE RESPONSIBILITIES

Due to rangers' extensive training and responsibilities, the division is often called to assist other agencies outside the state parks with searches and rescues, law enforcement security services during statewide disasters and wildfire suppression.

The typical perception of state park rangers that get involved in searches at parks probably involves looking for lost children, but in reality they can and are often times involved in more significant circumstances.

Many of our parks have remote and rugged terrain where hikers or climbers lose their way or get injured. These injuries can often be from falls or carelessness which, if serious enough, can leave the visitor physically unable to move or call for help. Children and adults sometimes leave marked trails to explore. As nighttime approaches, the dangers increase for lost persons and searchers, due to dangerous terrain and inclement weather.

Most of the time, lost children or hikers are quickly found on the wrong trail.

Age, health and mental capacity of lost persons can increase the urgency for searches.

Searches and rescues for despondent persons who come to the parks seeking solitude or worse have been more frequent in recent years. In many cases, park rangers are able to find these troubled persons and help them with the assistance of family members or other resources. However, in some cases, rangers must deal with the unfortunate results.

A study by the National Park Service and Center for Disease Control revealed that the Blue Ridge Parkway had the most suicides of any national park in the United States from 2003-2009.

From 2007-2010, the rangers responded to 12 confirmed suicides in and around park property and responded to at least 10 attempted suicides during the same period.

Park rangers are becoming more aware of this growing trend and many are working with local agencies to increase their abilities to train, respond and intervene during these incidents.

DIVISION HONOR GUARD



In the summer of 2010, the division developed a volunteer honor guard unit to represent the division at special events and ceremonies. With an initial cadre of six members working as a smaller color guard sub unit (flags and long guns), this team is becoming a polished unit and has performed at a few functions. With new interest by more rangers, the division hopes to expand this honor guard unit to approximately 15 members capable of handling a variety of events, including funerals and state celebrations.





OFFICE ASSISTANTS ARE MULTIFACETED PROFESSIONALS

Office Assistants frequently hear that they are the backbone of the state park system. This is sometimes said in a joking manner, but actually it is a fairly adequate description of their role in the parks and other offices. In most state parks, the office assistant is a pivotal figure. They usually know something about everything that goes on in the park.

Being an office assistant doesn't mean simply answering the phone and greeting park visitors. The position, which is often the first point of contact for visitors, basically functions as an office manager, and as such, requires a versatile, well-trained employee comfortable working in a challenging, fast-paced and changing environment. The job typically involves handling payroll, human resources, budgeting, purchasing, an on-line central reservation system and many forms and reports.

The office assistant provides confidential support for the park superintendent. The assistant also acts as a teacher when new procedures or databases are introduced, a troubleshooter or repair person when the office copier or fax machine malfunctions and interviewer who



Karen Johnson, office assistant at Chimney Rock State Park

hires and supervises temporary office assistants. Also, the office assistant must know about the park and the surrounding area because they are frequently called upon to act as vacation planner and tour guide for visitors.

Office assistants rely on the Administrative Professional Council, or APC, for support. This council, which consists of 10 administrative professionals from across the division, serves as an advocate group for all DPR administrative professionals and works closely with field staff and Raleigh staff.

The APC strives to improve staff efficiency and productivity, and provide tools that empower the administrative staff and allow them to better manage the daily challenges of the position.



MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA STATE TRAIL

North Carolina designated and opened a new 25-mile section of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail in 2010. This trail segment is in Watauga and Ashe counties and is constructed on lands managed by the National Park Service's Blue Ridge Parkway.

The trail, which opened in September, was made possible through the cooperation of the National Park Service, the Blue Ridge Parkway, the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. The trail was built and will be maintained by volunteer members of the Watauga and South Ashe Task Forces, which are members of the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail organization.

North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is an effort to connect Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to Jockey's Ridge State Park on the Outer Banks, a distance of more than 900 miles.

Today, more than 525 miles of this trail have been constructed and are open for public use. More information about the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail can be found at the Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail organization's website, www.ncmst.org.



2010-2011 North Carolina Trails Committee Members

Barbara Oslund, *Chairperson*
Pittsboro

Representing Equestrian Trail Users

Paul Elliot, *Cary* David Lee, *Wilson*

Representing Mountain Bicycle Trail Users *Representing Local Government Parks and Recreation Trails*

Joe Jacob, *Pittsboro* Leslie Love, *Weaverville*
Representing Canoe/Kayak Trail Users *Representing Hiking Trail Users*

Brian Sears, *Granite Falls*
Representing Off-Highway Vehicle Trail Users

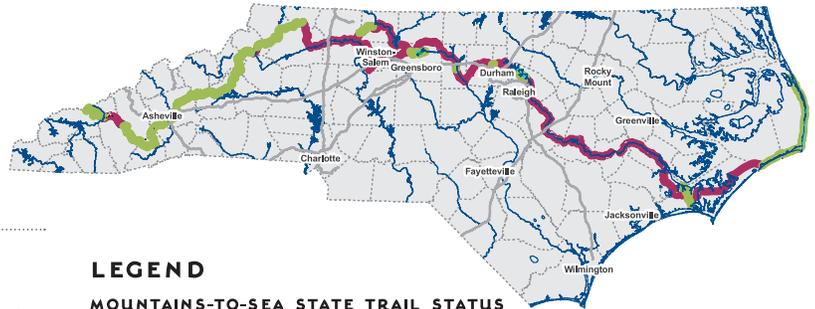
Terry Smith, *Morehead City*
Representing Hiking Trail Users

NORTH CAROLINA'S STATE TRAILS PROGRAM

The North Carolina trails program's mission is to identify the needs of constituents so the state can construct a framework to fulfill its purpose as mandated in North Carolina General Statute 113A-83, the North Carolina Trails System Act:

- » Trails should be established in natural, scenic areas, and in and near urban areas.
- » Trails should be coordinated with and complemented by existing and future local trails.





NORTH CAROLINA TRAILS COMMITTEE

The trails program is advised by the seven-member North Carolina Trails Committee appointed by the secretary of the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources. The committee advises the department, the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and the State Trails Program on all matters pertaining to trails, their use, extent and location. The committee is also responsible for making federal Recreational Trails and state Adopt-A-Trail grant award recommendations to the secretary.

The N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded 26 federal Recreational Trails Program Grants totaling more than \$1.5 million to applicants for trail and greenway projects. The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation received 41 applications totaling more than \$2.5 million in requests for the \$1.5 million available through the Recreational Trails Program.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources awarded 23 state Adopt-A-Trail grants totaling \$108,000 to applicants for trail and greenway projects. The Division of Parks and Recreation received 39 applications totaling more than \$187,000 in requests for the \$108,000 available through the State Adopt-A-Trail Grant Program.

A summary of all applications received and grants awarded can be found on the Division of Parks and Recreation's website: http://www.ncparks.gov/About/trails_grants.php.

LEGEND

MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA STATE TRAIL STATUS

-  Designated Mountains-to-Sea Trail
-  Planned Mountains-to-Sea Trail
-  Interstate

SERVICES PROVIDED BY THE NORTH CAROLINA TRAILS PROGRAM

TECHNICAL SERVICES

- » Sustainable Trail Design, Construction and Renovation Training
- » Sharing and Expanding Knowledge of Trail Design Research
- » GIS Analysis for Trail Planning
- » Trail Assessments
- » Trail Guidance for State Park General Management Plans
- » Trail Recommendations for State Park Master Plans

TRAIL PLANNING ASSISTANCE

- » Mountains-to-Sea State Trail
- » Deep River State Trail
- » Waccamaw River Trail Plan
- » Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor Plan
- » Dismal Swamp Canal Trail
- » Croatan Regional Bike and Trail Plan
- » Western Piedmont Regional Trails Plan
- » Isothermal Planning and Development Commission Regional Trails Plan
- » Dan River Basin Trails Plan



INTERPRETATION & EDUCATION: KEY PARTNERSHIPS THAT MAXIMIZE OUR EFFORTS

Partnerships in our communities may be the best way to connect people, parks and preservation. North Carolina state parks have hundreds of key partners across the state. They include scouts groups, public schools, colleges and universities, park friends groups, local businesses, county governments and nonprofit organizations.

These partnerships give our interpretation and education programs the extra boost to encourage enjoyment, appreciation and understanding of North Carolina's natural heritage. In 2010, N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation staff continued to forge partnerships for education in our state parks.

For example, division staff partnered with the Society of Hispanic Professionals to offer Hispanic 7th and 8th grade students a summer science enrichment experience at four state parks. After piloting the program in the summer of 2010, the project received a \$150,000 grant to build on its successes. During the next three summers, this partnership will engage 90 students in science studies at six state parks in an effort to overcome the underrepresentation of Hispanic students in science careers.

Forty-four staff members were honored at the Environmental Education Certification Ceremony in April 2010 for fulfilling 200 hours of training. Each honoree completed an "action partnership" service project through working with partner groups to enhance environmental education efforts at a state park.

In December 2010, North Carolina hosted the 34th Annual Southeast State Parks Program Seminar, or SSPPS, in Atlantic Beach. "Discovering Diversity," was the conference theme for this networking, sharing and training opportunity. The conference brought together more than 80 representatives from 12 states, several universities and a variety of conservation organizations. David Vela, regional director for the National Parks Service, gave a keynote address inspiring parks to connect diverse audiences with the great outdoors by reaching out to their communities.



Hispanic 7th and 8th graders collect and investigate water samples during a science enrichment camp at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, July 2010.





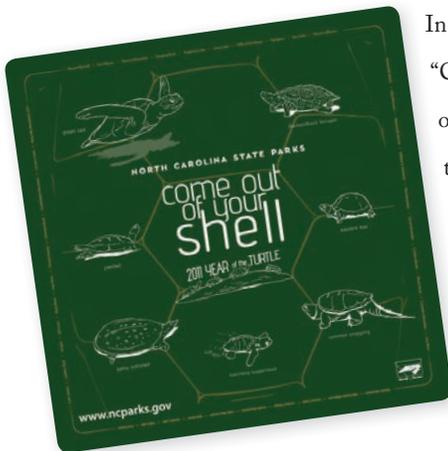
The Junior Ranger program continues to grow, thanks largely to Friends of State Parks with support from the Great Outdoor Provision Co. More than 300 youths earned their patches in 2010 by attending ranger programs, completing an activity book and doing a park stewardship project.



“Take Flight with North Carolina State Parks” was the motto in the Year of the Birds, the first annual theme for the park system. The theme helped parks build on important partnerships with Audubon North Carolina and local Audubon chapters. The focus on birds inspired more than 600 bird-themed interpretive programs, dozens of newspaper articles, radio programs and several new bird festivals at parks.



Raptor presentation during a Year of the Birds special event sponsored by the Friends of State Parks at Lake Norman State Park, August 2010.



In 2011, parks are encouraging visitors to “Come Out of Your Shell” in celebration of the Year of the Turtle. The Year of the Turtle is also being recognized by Partners in Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, or PARC.

Many parks partnered with county public school systems to offer outdoor learning experiences aligned with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. For example, more than 800 Surry County eighth graders attended Pilot Mountain State Park’s Water Festival in April.

Through partnerships with schools and other agencies, more than 1,400 educators attended full-day training workshops at parks in 2010. The outreach efforts of these trained educators will reach an estimated 280,000 people.



Fourth grade students practice hunting with spear and atlatl during Indian Heritage Week at Pettigrew State Park, September 2010.



BIG BANG!

Continued from page 16

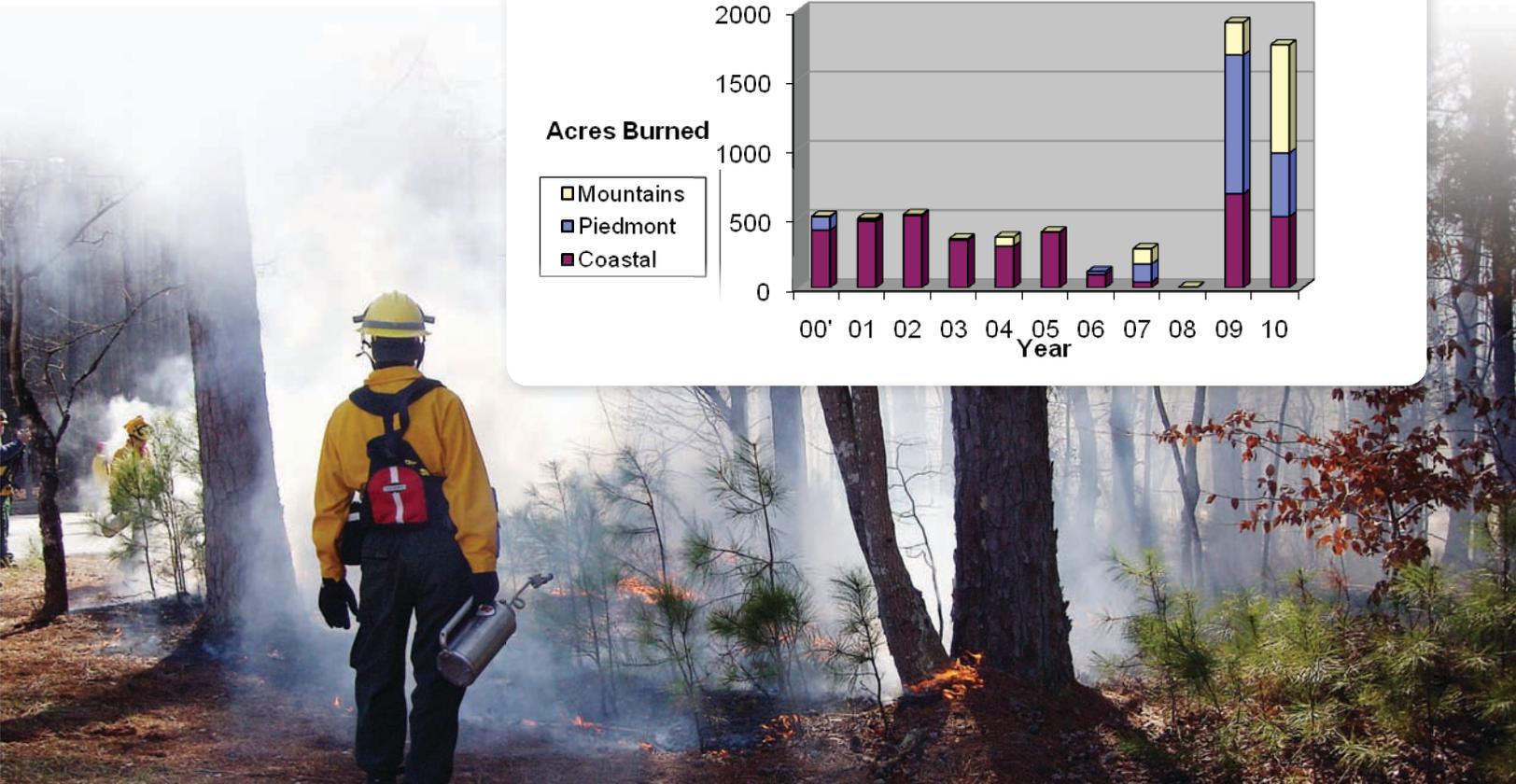
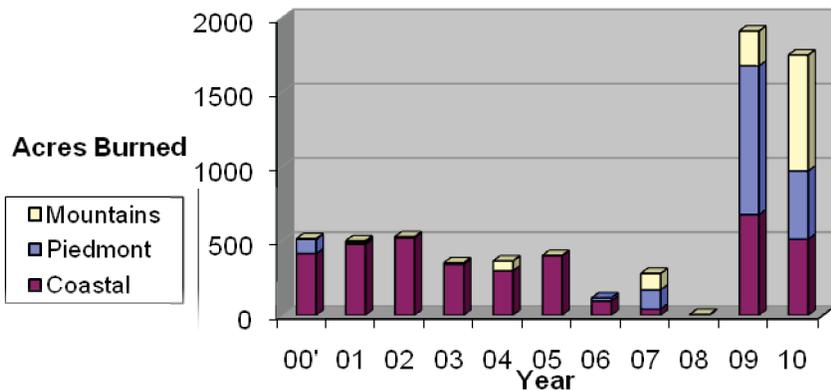
For several years, the park staff had hoped to replace two nonworking fiberglass cannon replicas on wooden carriages that have added atmosphere – but no bang – to the visitor experience. The staff was also discouraged having to periodically replace wooden gun carriages that gave way to the coastal salt spray.

Gene Peacock, the eastern district interpretation specialist and maintenance supervisor Johnny Johnson struck a deal with the mechanical engineering department at the college to create aluminum carriages similar to those used at many federal historic sites.

The project eventually involved dozens of mechanical drawing, metal fabrication, welding and painting students. The work was completed for the cost of materials, mostly rectangular aluminum tubing and wheels provided by a contractor.

PRESCRIBED FIRE SUMMARY

The 2010 fire season began with excellent weather, however, towards the end of the burn season, staff began to receive unusually wet weather that significantly limited its ability to burn. Despite the adverse weather conditions, the division continued to burn at a high level similar to 2009 with 1,752 acres burned. During periods of wet weather, the fire crew focused on preparing a number of units for burning in the 2011 fire season.





Sunset at Carolina Beach.



Fort Fisher's Basin Trail.



Left: Low-level, prescribed burns aid forest habitats and remove potential fuel for wildfires.

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