

2015 ANNUAL REPORT

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS AND RECREATION

GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN STATE PARK	2009
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MORROW MOUNTAIN STATE PARK
SALTERS LAKE	1929
WHITE LAKE
FORT MACON STATE PARK	1924
MOUNT MITCHELL STATE PARK	1916

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



Dear Friends:

Upon becoming director in mid-2014, I embarked on a six-month whirlwind tour of all our state parks and recreation areas. What I found was spectacular natural resources, clean, well-kept facilities and an energetic and dedicated staff of superintendents, rangers, maintenance mechanics, office assistants, seasonal workers and volunteers.

I saw and experienced the same things that drew a record-setting 15.6 million visitors to our state parks in 2014. I have also learned why I have the best job in state government. I am so very proud and humbled to be working so closely with such a dedicated group of individuals who strive each and every day to make sure our state parks remain *naturally wonderful*.

In addition, I have witnessed the growing enthusiasm and energy being generated as the North Carolina Centennial

Celebration approaches. Our great state will celebrate the state parks system's 100th anniversary in 2016. The General Assembly authorized Mount Mitchell as the first state park March 3, 1915 and land to start the

park was acquired the following year. Conservation, recreation and education have been and continue to be what North Carolina state parks are all about.

We plan on celebrating and commemorating our first 100 years through a series of events across the state and will also use it as a springboard to a renewed commitment to state parks in the next century. To assist us in the effort, the division is working with MSA, a Raleigh-based marketing firm, to develop a plan to help us increase public support and appreciation of the park system, to create and build public-private and corporate partnerships and to strengthen and grow friends and volunteer groups for individual parks and the system as a whole.

Elsewhere in this annual report, you will learn more about our record-setting attendance, the addition of the Vade Mecum property at Hanging Rock State Park, our on-going efforts to complete the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail, the expansion of visitor experiences through environmental education programs, retail opportunities, increased recreational options and so many other significant achievements. Please take the time to read about the many efforts that led Lake James to be named as state park of the year. You can also find descriptions, facts and figures describing our continued efforts to be responsible stewards of the natural and economic resources entrusted to us.

I encourage you to pour over this document and learn more about the places and the people that make our state parks system so special. More importantly, I encourage you to come visit your state parks and connect with North Carolina's natural and cultural heritage. I am sure you will be amazed by what you can find in your own backyard.

Sincerely,

Mike Murphy



The cover photo of Lake James, the 2014 State Park of the Year, was taken by N. McGrath.



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www.ncfsp.org

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LAKE JAMES STATE PARK IS THE NORTH CAROLINA 2014 STATE PARK OF THE YEAR

Lake James State Park in Burke and McDowell counties has been named the North Carolina 2014 State Park of the Year by the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

The park was chosen for its “exemplary contribution to the North Carolina state parks mission of stewardship, public service and education,” and specifically recognized for initiatives in managing natural resources, recruiting volunteers and expanding recreation opportunities.

During the year, Lake James State Park opened a 15-mile network of mountain biking trails, began offering kayak and canoe rentals and staged multiple special events including an ultra-marathon and the popular Catawba Riverfest.

The park’s rangers reached more than 4,000 visitors with special interpretive programs, and guided volunteers for more than 1,100 hours, a 400 percent increase over the previous year. The maintenance staff continued trail construction and launched a project to build canoe-in campsites. The division’s natural resource staff and park rangers initiated prescribed burn and kudzu management programs, and staged a 24-hour “bioblitz” to inventory hundreds of plant and animal species in the park.

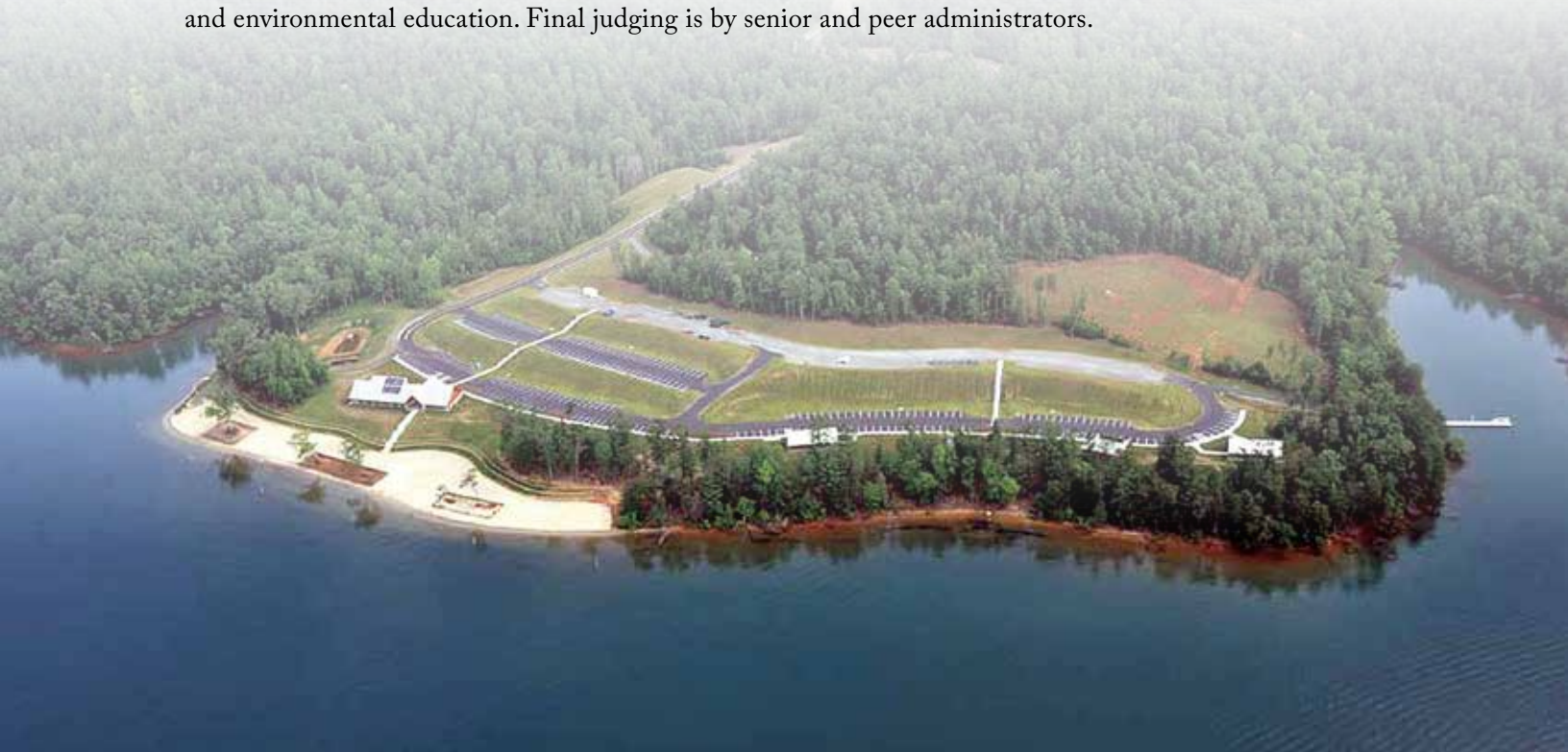
The state parks system began choosing a State Park of the Year in 2010 with nominations from each of four districts. Each of the state parks and recreation areas submits an annual report that is objectively scored on progress in recreation, natural resource protection, sustainability, public safety and environmental education. Final judging is by senior and peer administrators.



Bridge over Paddy's Creek has become a signature landmark.



Picnic area at Lake James.



NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS REPORT RECORD VISITATION OF 15.6 MILLION IN 2014



The North Carolina Paddle Festival included some kayak tours of Hammocks Beach State Park.

North Carolina's state parks and state recreation areas experienced record attendance in 2014, with 15.6 million visitors, a 10 percent increase from the 14.2 million visitors the previous year.

Among 39 state parks and state recreation areas, 27 reported increases in attendance in 2014. William B. Umstead State Park in Wake County reported the highest attendance at 1.29 million visits, and was among six state park units logging more than 1 million visitors. The others were Fort Macon and Jockey's Ridge state parks and Falls Lake, Jordan Lake and Kerr Lake state recreation areas.

During the past 25 years, attendance at state parks has nearly doubled. In 1989, eight million people visited state parks and recreation areas.



Lake James State Park opened a 15-mile network of mountain biking trails in 2014.



As part of First Day Hikes, Park Superintendent Kelley King leads hikers along a new trail at Haw River State Park.

A number of factors likely contributed to the record visitation, including First Day Hikes on Jan. 1 and a long list of other special events at the parks throughout the year. More than two dozen events were scheduled for National Trails Day in June, and every park held special interpretive programs during Take a Child Outside Week in September. Newly created events began to gain traction, including a paddle festival at Hammocks Beach State Park and a long-distance hiking challenge at Hanging Rock State Park. Additionally, no parks were closed for extended periods due to weather emergencies or construction.

The state parks system manages more than 224,000 acres within state parks, state recreation areas and a system of state natural areas dedicated to the conservation of rare resources.



Kids helped dedicate a new TRACK Trail at Grandfather Mountain State Park.

IDEAS FROM PUBLIC WILL CONTRIBUTE TO MOUNTAINS-TO-SEA STATE TRAIL MASTER PLAN

The state parks system has been hearing from partners, stakeholders and the public as part of a master planning process underway to guide completion of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail.

The 1,000-mile trail corridor will ultimately link Clingman's Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains to Jockey's Ridge State Park on the coast. Nearly two thirds of the cross-state route has been completed as a continuous, off-road trail experience, offering opportunities for hiking, biking and horseback riding through some of North Carolina's most scenic landscapes. Where the trail has not yet been completed, detours along secondary roads allow ambitious hikers to complete the trek.

A completed master plan will lead toward official designation of remaining portions by setting priorities for completing trail subsections. It will also unify regional planning efforts, identify potential new partners and funding strategies, and establish guidelines for signs and publicity. The state parks system hired Planning Communities, LLC to prepare a detailed master plan by late 2015 at a contract price of \$120,000 supported through the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

A unit of the state parks system, the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is envisioned as the backbone of a network of regional hiking, paddling and multi-use trails across the state, which could be easily connected to local trail and greenway efforts. Eventually, the trail will link 33 of North Carolina's 100 counties and offer local access to 40 percent of the state's population. The

state parks system, other state agencies, federal agencies, local governments and volunteers organized by Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail have built sections of the trail, representing a partnership that includes hundreds of citizens and every level of government.



In western N.C., the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail makes use of the Blue Ridge Parkway corridor.



INTERPRETATION AND EDUCATION:

Connecting Our People with Our Amazing Places

State parks offer visitors a chance to experience North Carolina's most unique natural and cultural resources. Park interpretation - through hikes, guided programs and exhibits, helps visitors find meaning and create memories in these amazing public lands. Park educators offer science-based environmental education programming through school field trips, teacher-training workshops and the Junior Ranger program. In 2014, 353,138 visitors joined a North Carolina state parks interpretation and education program.

The 2014 educational theme was "Year of the Lepidoptera." Lepidoptera, which means scale-wing, includes at least 176 North Carolina species of butterflies and several thousand species of moths. Across the state, more than 2,000 visitors joined an education program to explore butterflies, moths and caterpillars. Teachers and park rangers joined scientists for



2014 - Year of the Lepidoptera.

National Moth Week investigations at Haw River State Park in July. Among the 261 species of moths they encountered was a variety that had never before been found in North Carolina.

A partnership with the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation has helped state parks open 26 new self-guided trails geared specifically for children. These Kids In Parks trails (www.kidsinparks.com) offer brochures full of scavenger hunts and games. After completing a trail and registering their hike online, kids earn incentives such as patches, nature journals and hiking sticks. Funded largely by Blue Cross Blue Shield of North Carolina, the Kids In Parks trails program fosters partnerships for healthy kids, healthy parks and healthy communities.

State parks rely on great partnerships with Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts and other youth groups to promote education and volunteerism. The Girl



A park ranger leads a GPS program.

Scouts Carolina Coastal Pines Council joined forces with state parks in 2014 to bring more than 400 explorers to nine different special events. The events, called "SPARKLE Days" (State Park Lady Explorers), offer crafts, hikes and service projects that highlight the special and unique qualities of each park.

Since 2004, the state parks system has awarded approximately 10,000 kids ages 5-12 with a Junior Ranger patch. It is a national award-winning program where kids complete outdoor challenges in a workbook and give back with a park stewardship project. The program is sponsored by Friends of State Parks and it received three private grants in 2014 to support program costs. Friends of State Parks celebrated the 10th year of the program with games, crafts, fishing and "s'mores" at a Junior Ranger Earth Day Celebration in William B. Umstead State Park.



Junior Rangers study animals with photos.

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2014

Completed construction projects in 2014

- An exhibit pavilion at Fort Macon State Park was completed in February 2014. The architecture of the pavilion complements the existing fort and coastal education center while providing interpretation and education about the fort. The nonprofit Friends of Fort Macon provided \$90,000 toward the construction of this facility.
- In 2013, winter rains and floods caused a significant failure of the road into Chimney Rock State Park. With help from the N.C. Department of Transportation, an emergency repair was designed and constructed in an expedited manner. The road reopened in early March 2014.
- Campground improvements at the Jacobs Fork Section of South Mountains State Park were completed in May 2014. The campground was expanded from 11 primitive sites to 18 sites and all sites were refurbished. A new shower facility was completed. Two of the 18 sites are suitable for RV's.
- The final phase of the Lake James State Park mountain bike trail network was completed, extending the trail distance to over 15 miles. This phase included the construction of four bridges. Park staff and volunteers built three of the four bridges which created cost savings for the project. A small gravel parking lot/trail head and vault toilet building were included with the project.
- Major water system improvements were completed at Pilot Mountain State Park in September 2014. The project included demolition of two aging water storage tanks, installation of a single 20,000-gallon water storage tank, replacement of water lines throughout the park, and a new well. (Two unproductive wells were abandoned.)

*Fort Macon Exhibit Pavilion
architectural rendering
courtesy Hobbs Architects.*



- The main underground electrical transmission line at Morrow Mountain State Park supplying power to the summit was replaced. This work was completed in December 2014.
- The exterior of the Lake Norman State Park Visitor Center and West District Office building, as well as an educational trail and miscellaneous improvements to the picnic area and shelters, will be completed in 2015.



*The new visitor center and west
district office at Lake Norman State
Park will be completed in 2015.*

CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS IN 2014

Under construction

- Youth cabin renovations at Haw River State Park started in late December 2014 and were expected to be completed in June 2015.
- Major repairs and renovations were begun at Fort Macon State Park's bathhouse. The repairs should be completed in 2015.
- One phase of trail structure improvements at Chimney Rock State Park began in December 2014. The project is scheduled for completion in late spring 2015. The improvements will provide access to Pulpit Rock, the Grotto, and the Subway which have been closed for several years to the condition of the trail structures.



2014 LAND ACQUISITIONS

In 2014, 2,146 acres were added to the North Carolina state parks system in 14 transactions at eight units. Acreage at two state parks increased by the transfer of existing state-owned property. Lumber River State Park increased by 144 acres through an allocation of property from the N.C. Indian Cultural Center along the Lumber River near Maxton. Hanging Rock State Park increased by 717 acres with the transfer of Camp Sertoma from the 4-H program and North Carolina State University to the state park.

The federal Land and Water Conservation Fund was instrumental in the acquisition of two key properties, one at Chimney Rock State Park and the other at Yellow Mountain State Natural Area.

Shumont Mountain, the highest peak on Rumbling Bald, was added to Chimney Rock State Park with the assistance of LWCF, two state conservation trust funds and a private donation. This peak is visible from many locations within Hickory Nut Gorge and is a future destination point for proposed trails on Rumbling Bald.

At Yellow Mountain, the Grassy Ridge property now connects the state natural area to the Pisgah National Forest in the Roan Highlands. This 560-acre parcel was acquired by the state from the Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy with the assistance of LWCF, private funds, and the Clean Water Management and Parks and Recreation trust funds. In the future, a hiking trail connecting the state natural to the Appalachian Trail will be developed.



STATE PARK'S NEW WASTE SYSTEM KEEPS HAW RIVER CLEANER AND SMELLS BETTER

At the end of March, Haw River State Park sent its old wastewater treatment plant packing and replaced it with a “subsurface field treatment” system. The new system reduces environmental impacts and operating costs.



A 2010 plan was to renovate the 25-year-old plant. But, concerns about proposed water quality rules for the Jordan Lake watershed led to the decision to keep the park's treated wastewater out of the Haw River altogether.

As the parks system's first residential environmental education center, it's vitally important that the park operates with a commitment to environmental protection. Having a failing treatment plant that fed indirectly into the Haw River (and ultimately Jordan Lake) simply was not acceptable. In addition, the amount of water and energy needed to operate the aging plant was substantial.

Water consumption is somewhat challenging to calculate since the park is served by well water. But, there is a very clear picture of energy use and cost savings. Comparing 2013 to 2014, energy costs are now 1/13th the amount for the old system.

Haw River State Park strives to be green, but it's also good

to save some green. The park is saving over \$450 a month on its power bill, but the savings do not stop there. County and state regulations require daily inspections of a wastewater treatment plant by a certified technician. That had cost the state park \$1,700 a month. The plant's advanced age and seasonal fluctuations in the number of guests were significant factors affecting compliance.

Without getting too much into the nitty-gritty (and somewhat smelly) side of running a wastewater treatment plant, bacteria living in the plant serve to break down everything that flows through. During low-visitation periods, such as mid-winter, the bacteria could die off because they aren't being fed enough. In order to maintain the bacteria, staff would purchase large bags of dog food to keep them alive or introduce sludge brought to the park. Neither option was inexpensive. When the park was at capacity, staff would have to hire another company to pump out what the plant couldn't handle, costing up to \$3,000 a year.

The bottom-line savings considering power bills, technicians and additional costs is nearly \$30,000 a year

using the new subsurface system.

The subsurface system requires very little maintenance, since an old farm field is perfectly suited for spray application. The field must be kept clear of trees, but staff was already regularly clearing it with a bush-hog, so that hasn't added to the workload.

The last benefit of the new subsurface system isn't monetary or physical, but one of aesthetics. The old plant was not only an eyesore, but considering the noise and foul smells, passing it while walking along one of the park's main trails to the lake was sometimes not as serene as one would like. That experience has been improved tremendously.



The old wastewater treatment plant was retired and removed.



Old farm field for subsurface system was replanted, but trees aren't allowed.

VOLUNTEERS MAKE BIG CONTRIBUTIONS IN NC STATE PARKS



South Mountains State Park volunteers hard at work

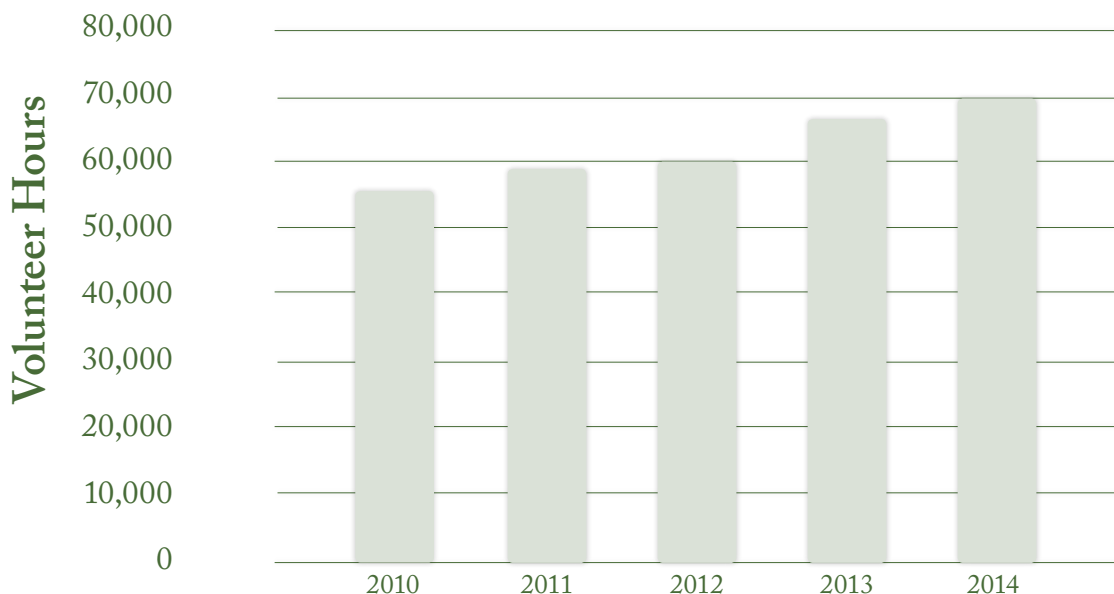
South Mountains State Park volunteers help with projects like trail construction and maintenance, construction of benches for the trails and treating hemlock trees to fight the hemlock wooly adelgid.

In general terms, volunteering is the practice of people working on behalf of others or a particular cause without payment for their time and services.

People seek to volunteer because it is a worthwhile activity or it is something of importance to them. Volunteers are critical partners of and participants in our parks. They are vital in helping us protect our natural resources and natural heritage. They build community by demonstrating strong park stewardship and commitment to public lands.

Volunteers serve our state parks in many ways, including oyster shell bagging, constructing picnic tables, working special events, tree planting and removing invasive species. Some familiar organizations are behind our volunteers such as AmeriCorps, Big Sweep, Girl Scouts, Eagle Scouts and local universities and colleges.

The average value of volunteer time was estimated at \$22.55/hr. in 2013 by the Independent Sector, a nationally known provider that studies charitable impacts. Volunteers contributed about 74,090 hours to state parks. That equates to a value of \$1,670,729 in volunteer hours.



NORTH CAROLINA PARKS AND RECREATION TRUST FUND (PARTF)

PARTF GRANT AND OUTREACH PROGRAM

PARTF Members

Jason Kay, Chairman
Mecklenburg County

Ann Babcock
Buncombe County

Lydia Boesch
Moore County

Paul Herbert
Mecklenburg County

Neal Lewis
New Hanover County

Cynthia Tart
Brunswick County

Lisa Wolff
Alamance County

Edward W. Wood
Chowan County

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, administered by the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation is funded through an appropriation by the N.C. General Assembly. These funds are used for state parks (65 percent) and as dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments for park and recreation purposes (30 percent). In addition, 5 percent of the funds are distributed to the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program. During the 2013-14 fiscal year, the total revenue available for allocation was \$11,163,500. The state parks system received \$7,256,275; local governments received \$3,349,050; and the Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program received \$558,175.

Sixty-four local governments applied for the available funds and 17 were funded for projects such as a community center in Cofield, swimming pool renovations in Mars Hill, and for a preserve and educational forest development in Spencer. State parks used available funds to purchase 383 acres of land, as well as complete a number of important maintenance and renovation projects at 10 sites. The Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program used funds to assist eight

coastal communities with projects such as access improvements in Windsor, public restrooms in Oriental, and a pavilion in Morehead City.

Staff is completing the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP), a planning document revised every five years for the state to continue to receive LWCF Funds from the federal government. The SCORP is also a meaningful evaluation of state and local government public outdoor recreation facilities, including supply and demand.



NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT



Before and after photos from alder removal at Pineola Bog.

The type of ecological disturbance in rare mountain bogs is not entirely clear. However, it's evident that in the absence of disturbances such as fire, grazing, or heavy flooding, herbaceous plants are out-competed. A team from Elk Knob State Park and the natural resources program removed alders from Pineola

Bog, and the results speak for themselves as shown in the photos above.

The division had the best year ever for prescribed fire. A record 3,852 acres were successfully burned at 15 separate parks. Noteworthy was the interagency cooperation used to achieve this record. With the help of the N.C. Forest Service, burns

were introduced in parks that had not had a prescribed fire in many years, including 197 acres at Lake James State Park and an amazing 1,240 acres at Morrow Mountain State Park. Other partners included The Nature Conservancy and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, who partnered at South Mountains State Park to burn 1,132 acres in a single fire.

Prescribed burns are used as a resource management tool in many locations by the state parks system. Some plant communities and animal species rely on periodic fire for their existence. The prescribed burns also reduce the amount of potential wildfire fuel and help protect a park's resources and neighboring landowners if lightning, arson or carelessness sparks a wildfire.

Longleaf pine restoration accelerated in the coastal plain. Hardwood control projects were undertaken at Singletary Lake, Lake Waccamaw, Cliffs of the Neuse, Jones Lake and Weymouth Woods. Over the

years, fire was suppressed at many of the longleaf sites, resulting in an overabundance of hardwoods. By reducing the height and quantity of hardwoods, the grasses necessary to a healthy longleaf

pine stand benefit. The results at Jones Lake were so great that the site has been chosen by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service as a reintroduction site for the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.



Biologist drilling a new cavity to reintroduce the endangered red-cockaded woodpecker.





Wiregrass seed collection at Carvers Creek State Park.



Volunteers from HRB Movement ready to plant longleaf pine trees at Lake Waccamaw State Park.

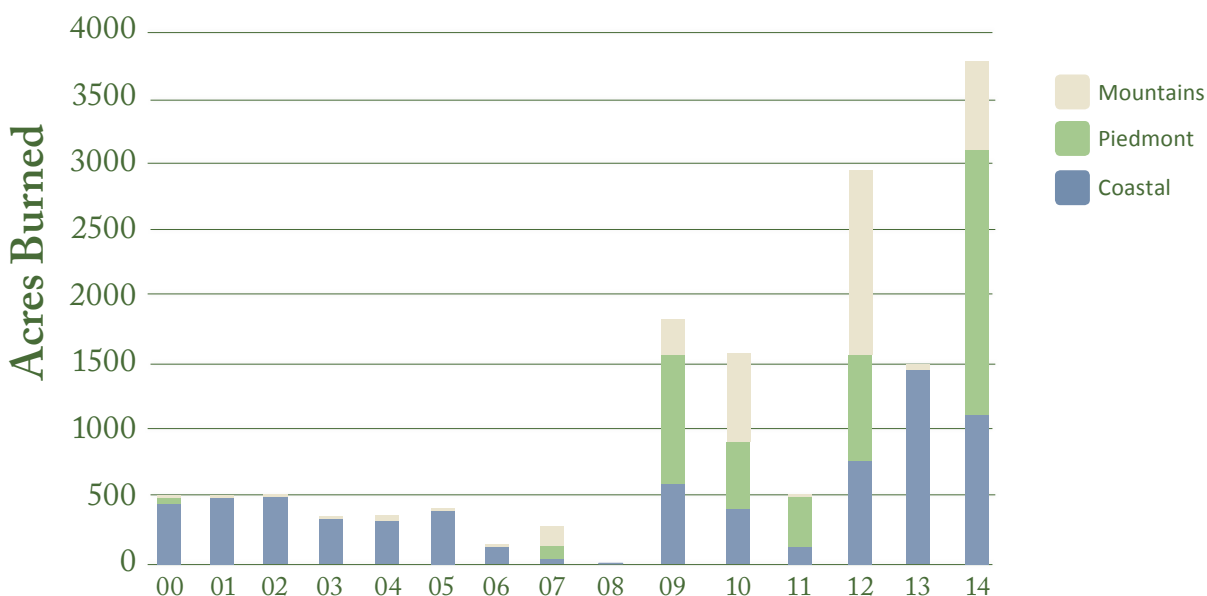
Grass and herbaceous seed harvesting were conducted at Carvers Creek State Park, and research began for a restoration project. For seed to be collected, the site must have been burned at the right time during the summer. This is the first time seed has been collected on state parks for use on state parks.

For the second year in a row, the coastal region biologist worked with HRB Movement, a Wilmington sustainable clothing company, to plant longleaf seedlings at Lake Waccamaw State Park. HRB Movement promises its customers to plant one tree for

every product purchased. Eighteen volunteers organized by HRB Movement planted 2,100 longleaf seedlings on 20 acres of the park undergoing restoration.

Prior to the planting, the biologist conducted a short program on the natural history of longleaf communities and the importance of fire to these communities. The planting of the trees was the culminating event in the restoration process. The event was very much a community and family affair. Most volunteers were families from the local area, Wilmington, Raleigh and from as far away as Florida.

Prescribed Burning at NC State Parks 2000-2014



RECREATION RESOURCES SERVICE 2014 ANNUAL REPORT

The N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation continues its service to local parks and recreation agencies through Recreation Resources Service, the nation's oldest technical assistance program. The program is administered through North Carolina State University's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management in the College of Natural Resources.

In 2014, RRS provided technical assistance to local governments in all 100 North Carolina counties. RRS staff conducted presentations to citizen advisory boards, and evaluated park land purchases and development plans.

With its team of four regional consultants, RRS helps local

governments plan and submit grant proposals for the N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. They also follow through with project inspections, application processing, conversion issues and closeout processing.

In addition to grant administration, RRS provides continuing education opportunities for parks and recreation professionals and citizen board members. In 2014, RRS sponsored eight teleconferences in 12 locations across the state using the North Carolina Research and Education Network. Topics included pesticide certification, summer camps, legal issues, social media, nature play, repurposing parks and emergency planning.

Statewide teleconferences were also held regarding the trust fund grant process and financial data reporting with over 115 people attending.

Each year, RRS conducts the North Carolina Municipal and County Parks and Recreation Services Study. The 2014 study marked the 65th year of assessment for municipal leisure service providers. The study offers leisure service managers and 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 revenue sources for similar communities as a tool to evaluate levels of service.



Educational opportunities provided by RRS included:

- Presentations at North Carolina Recreation and Park Association annual conference, the South Carolina Park and Recreation Association and the National Recreation and Park Association;
- Sponsoring the National Playground Safety Institute, a training course offered by the National Recreation and Park Association;
- Coordinating the 66th Annual Municipal and County Recreation Directors Conference with more than 130 directors and guests attending;
- Coordinating the 4th Annual Women's Lead"her"ship Conference which drew 120 women from across the country;
- Coordinated the 3rd Annual Aquatics Workshop;

- Co-sponsored with North Carolina state parks, a statewide trails conference with more than 110 participants; and,
- Co-sponsored the 7th Annual Conference NC Children and Nature Coalition.

One of the focuses of RRS is to meet the needs of the individual parks and recreation agencies through the state, as well as developing recreational opportunities where none exist. This assistance takes many forms including:

- Recreation advisory board training;
- Development of new parks and recreation departments (Towns of Holden Beach and Windsor);
- Department accreditation assistance;
- Development of systemwide and site-specific master plans;
- Conceptual drawings of parks;
 - Maintenance audits;
 - Regional park and recreation directors meeting.



At the request of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, RRS assisted in the development of the 2014 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan. RRS involvement included the development and distribution of surveys determining park acreage, facility inventory and public input. Over 17,000 survey responses were received.



HANGING ROCK STATE PARK TO EXPAND WITH TRANSFER OF FORMER 4-H CAMP



The lodge, once known as Cheshire Hall, was built in the 1890s as the centerpiece of a resort.

Hanging Rock State Park in Stokes County has expanded with the addition of a former 4-H camp on 717 acres.

Operations of the former Camp Sertoma 4-H Education Center, also known as the Vade Mecum Springs property with Moore Springs Campground, have been folded into those of the state park. Legislation passed by the 2014 General Assembly authorized the N.C. Department of Administration to transfer the property for inclusion in the state parks system.

Vade Mecum Springs is a Stokes County landmark,



Interior of one of the camp's cabins.

having been developed in the 1890s as a resort. It was operated as a retreat and summer camp by the Episcopal Diocese and Easter Seals until its acquisition by North Carolina State University in 1981 for its 4-H program. The Vade Mecum facilities include a 398-acre campground complex with nine miles of mountain biking trails and access on the Dan River, a lodge, recreation hall, swimming pool, 13 cabins, equestrian barn and trails, chapel and athletic fields. The property is located about one-half mile northwest of the state park boundary across Moore Springs Road.



Volunteers begin clearing trails on the property.

The state parks system is developing a management plan for reopening those facilities that can contribute to the state park's mission. Friends of Sauratown Mountains is developing volunteer resources to assist the state park.

The Vade Mecum Springs property has a long history. Entrepreneurs John Sparks and J. Cicero Tise developed Vade Mecum Springs at the turn of the 20th Century as a resort revolving around the healthful Moore Springs. Vade Mecum is Latin for "go with me," and local history suggests the businessmen borrowed the name from a legend involving a Saura American Indian princess and her lover.

MORROW MOUNTAIN DEER RELEASED INTO NEW HOME ON CHEROKEE LANDS

To assist the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians, Morrow Mountain State Park donated deer to reestablish the deer herd on the tribe's Qualla Boundary reservation. The cutting edge project was a group effort of the Cherokee, North Carolina state parks, the National Park Service, the University of Tennessee, and the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission.

All deer are tracked with radio collars and research is conducted on the success of the relocation efforts. The Cherokee have been concentrating on improving habitat for all wildlife, including deer on their lands. Morrow Mountain has long had an excess of deer due to a lack of native predators, and the relocation benefitted the park as well as the Cherokee.



JUNIOR RANGER DAY INTRODUCES KIDS TO THE STATE PARKS AND THE OUTDOORS

North Carolina's Junior Ranger program celebrated its 10th anniversary this year. This effort is supported by the statewide Friends of State Parks and retailer Great Outdoor Provision Co. with instructional materials and a series of patches that represent specific state parks. Through the Junior Ranger program, children gain an appreciation of the outdoors, the state parks and North Carolina's natural heritage, and they learn about careers in natural resources.

Junior Ranger Day featured crafts, games, lessons on ecology and wildlife, fishing, and opportunities to create a boat from recycled materials and cook s'mores over an open campfire. Park rangers and education staff, Americorps staff, and volunteers from Friends of State Parks and Great Outdoor Provision Co. guided these activities.

More than 200 youngsters earned Junior Ranger patches at William B. Umstead State Park at the first-ever Junior Ranger Day, as part of the state parks' Earth Day celebration.



NC STATE PARKS WAREHOUSE MAKES THINGS EASIER IN THE FIELD



Chuck Melvin

The state parks warehouse is an often overlooked part of the state park system. But, in reality, it is a vital part of daily park operations that grows with each passing year and every new addition to the system. When fully stocked, the warehouse secures approximately \$750,000 worth of IT equipment, operational and safety supplies, and is ultimately responsible for ensuring the entire division receives vital operational supplies and timely labor/logistical support.

The warehouse supplies the parks and division staff with hundreds of essential items year round, including janitorial and cleaning products, park signs and boundary markers, personal protection equipment, firefighting supplies and fulfills



Mike Nossek

the bulk of the parks' needs through spring and fall delivery seasons. Centralized purchasing enables bulk orders and greater buying power, saving the division tens of thousands of dollars on supplies each year.

In addition to the responsibilities of purchasing and delivering the parks' supplies, the state parks warehouse also houses the division's Web store concessions stock and processes and ships customer orders. The facility supplies the parks' visitor centers and North Carolina area welcome centers with state park brochures.

Additional division support includes receipt and tracking of new division IT equipment, removal and submission of



Kelly Chandler

division surplus property, and assistance with administrative moves.

Warehouse staff takes these responsibilities very seriously and are committed to fulfilling them while promoting the division's mission of conservation and stewardship. By continuously adding recycled and environmentally friendly items to the growing inventory and increasing operation efficiency through careful planning and combined trips, the warehouse strives to preserve our precious environment and save valuable fuel and taxpayer dollars, while offering the highest level of service to its valued customers: all division staff, our state park friends and visitors.



RETAIL OPPORTUNITIES FOR VISITORS CONTINUE TO EXPAND

North Carolina state parks have been focusing on ways to generate more revenue within our parks as well as provide new services to our visitors. A successful example of this is by offering gift shop areas in our visitor centers. In the past, park staff had to send campers

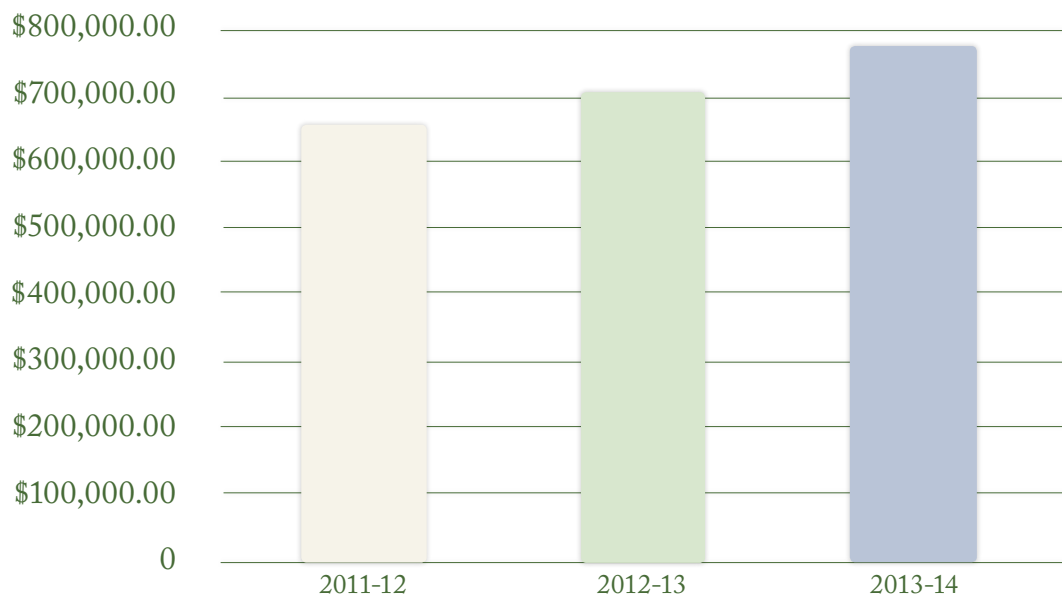
to the local convenience store if they forgot matches to light a campfire or marshmallows to roast over that fire.

Guests also inquired about souvenirs they could take home to remind them of their visit. Recently, Elk Knob State Park, Weymouth Woods

Sandhills Nature Preserve and Kerr Lake State Recreation Area all added display cases offering everything from t-shirts, coffee mugs, water bottles, paper plates, bug spray and yes, matches. Other parks are following suit.



Retail Sales 2011-2014





Elk Knob State Park

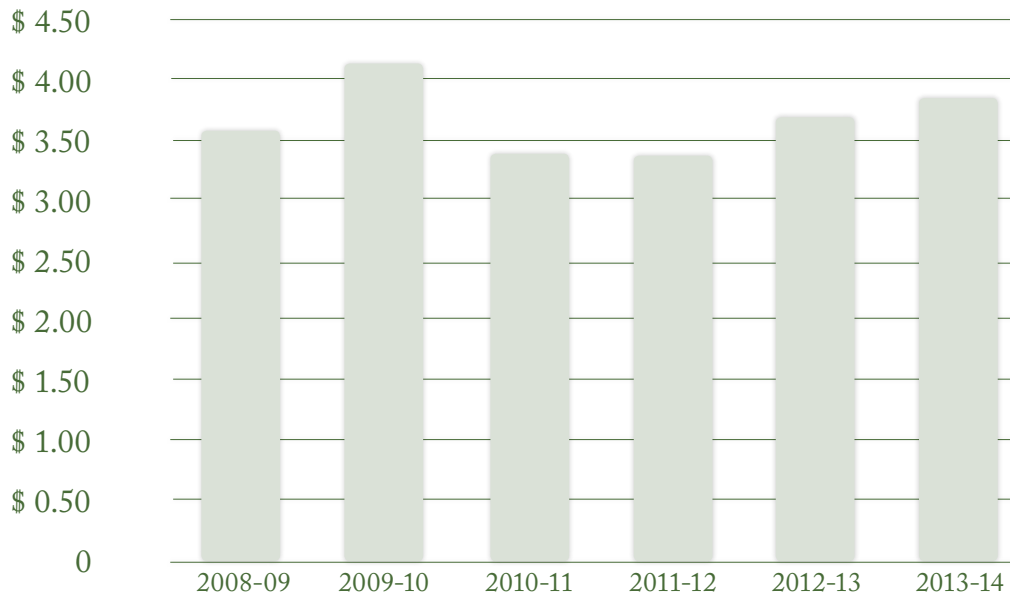
With a new focus on retail by the division, sales of gift shop merchandise and concessions items have increased each of the past five years.



Dismal Swamp State Park



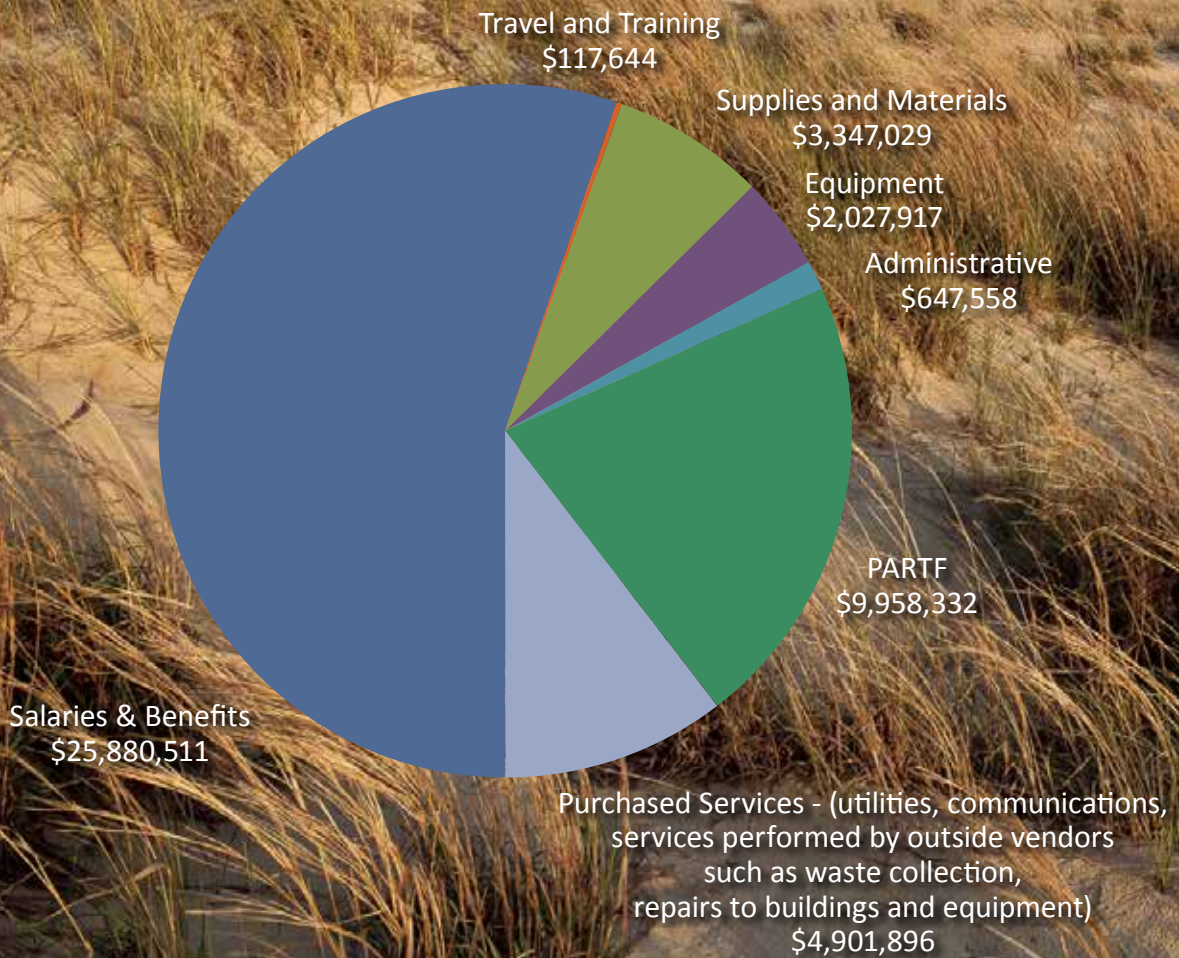
NC State Parks Operating Cost per Capita



NC State Parks Operating Cost per Visitor



NC State Parks Budget 2013-14



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