

Notes From the President



John Graham

Our last notes left you sitting in a 4,400 year old canoe, hewn from a majestic bald cypress, which was felled by native Americans near the pristine waters of Lake Phelps.

You were at Pettigrew State Park where artifacts of civilizations dating back to the year 8994 BC are being unearthed.

Who were these “stewards” of this goodliest place?

Today we entrust the care of this unique treasure to; Supt. Sidney Shearin III, Rangers Doug Lequire, Lisa Williams and recently commissioned Lisa Manning and George Chesson in charge of maintenance, with Bonnie Ambrose keeping the office running smoothly.

Tranquility is abandoned as we fast forward into the 90th Anniversary of state parks.

On March 8, 1915 the General Assembly designated Mount Mitchell as our first state park.

This is the 33rd year of a support group for state parks. In 1978 we were incorporated as Friends of State Parks. We continue to be an all volunteer organization and are designated as a 501 C 3 non-profit corporation. All contributions to FSP are tax deductible within the limits of the IRS.

Some highlights of the 2005-2006 period are:

- FSP display in State Legislature

building on June 8, 2005 in support of “Pay Equity” for our Park Rangers.

- Sponsor of revitalized Junior Ranger (JURA) program system wide.

- Appointed Tom Ellis as “Ambassador of Parks” in recognition of his 60 years of service to the nation, state and to state parks.

- Adopted a “Youth Initiative” plan for recruiting High School, Community College and College students into FSP.

- Our support of the book “A Guide to Snakes of North Carolina” by Dr. Dorcas of Davidson College has provided funds for FSP projects. Copies may be purchased from your local Great Outdoor Provision Company or from us on the web. It is outstanding in photography and text.

- The FSP “Map Guide to North Carolina State Parks” is nearing publication and will be offered through FSP website and selected vendors.

- FSP is a sponsor of “Discovering the Geology of the Carolinas”, which will be available in early 2007. The authors are, Dr. Kevin Stewart, professor of geology at UNC-CH and Mary Russell Robertson, a freelance science writer. Thirteen of our state parks are referenced in this work.

- The business plan submitted by Bob Sowa was adopted by the Board and is being implemented.

- On March 27, '06 FSP was recognized by Director Lewis Ledford as a contributor to achieving our goal of “pay equity” for our ranger and maintenance staff throughout the park system.

- Your president represented FSP at the commissioning ceremony of seven new Rangers. Each had completed their law enforcement training and now proudly wears the badge of NC Park Ranger. Each was congratulated and each thanked FSP for our efforts in their salary increase.

- Leon Carter, FSP historian and board member presented the first installment of a “History of North Carolina State Parks” at our April 29 board meeting. The history begins in 1891. When completed to the current year we will

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Junior Rangers

As state-wide sponsors of the Junior Ranger program - funded by a grant from Great Outdoor Provision Co - it is particularly satisfying to Friends of State Parks to see the first group of young rangers receive their well-earned certificates and patches here seen presented by Ranger Sam Bland. This group of youngsters, a 4-H dragonfly group who travelled from Hickory, NC, earned the title of Junior Ranger by completing four park programs and a service project. Friends of Hammocks Beach funded the printing of certificates and patches.

Notes From the President Continued

publish it in a format that will permit us to keep pace with "New Parks for a New Century".

- REI (Recreation Equipment, Inc.) has generously awarded grants of \$10,000 each to Crowders Mountain, Eno River, Falls Lake and Wm. B. Umstead State Parks. These grants are for park improvement projects and are designed for "volunteers" to be a significant part of the project. Call the park closest to you, inquire as to the project and give of your time and talent. Inquire on our website if you wish.

We need help in our expanding activities, you can fill a niche. Contact me by phone at 919-477-2601 or via email @ papajohneg@aol.com.

I am waiting for your call or contact.

John E. Graham

The new Junior Rangers completed the workbooks and received these certificates and badges showing the logo for Hammocks Beach. Designs for Goose Creek, Jordan Lake, New River and Mount Mitchell parks are underway and plans call for these to be followed by Falls lake, Fort Macon, Pilot Mountain, Hanging Rock and South Mountain.



The Summit - A Blessed Adoption

Contributed by Alice Zawadzki

From Episcopal Retreat and Conference Center and HARP to Environmental Education Center at Haw River State Park where we can all meet as one to become better Earth Stewards.

The last weekend in April 2006 brought the Board of Friends of State Parks to the Summit Environmental Education Center at the Haw River State Park. Over the last few years the Episcopal Church has transitioned its 25-year stewardship of several hundred acres in the headwaters of the Haw River in Rockingham and Guilford counties to the State Parks of North Carolina.

As an occasional visitor since 2001 I have come to hold the Summit as a sacred place in the Piedmont. When I was a faculty member at Saint Mary's College in Raleigh I had heard of the Summit as a special place where the SMC Trustees would go for retreats where important discussions took place. In my retirement I have experienced the peacefulness and hospitality of the Summit for the annual conferences of the NC Conservation Network and for spiritual and environmental retreats sponsored by the Episcopal Church. It has been a slow growth of a dream of mine to see People in the Faith Community working together with People in the Green Community so that we all would be one in our efforts to be good Stewards of the Earth.

As my fondness for this special place grew, I became concerned as I heard talk several years ago that the Summit might be lost to development as the Church was finding it more difficult to upkeep the facilities. Thankfully the difficult deliberations by the Church stewards transitioned into the Summit's successful adoption by the State of North Carolina. I am grateful to the Congregants of the Episcopal Church for their long-term commitment to protecting the headwaters of the Haw River; for their thoughtful and careful development of the facilities and protection of the forest for the Summit conference, retreat, and education center; for their vision in designing the wetland boardwalk showcasing and protecting the birthplace of the Haw River; for their initiating HARP the excellent environmental education program that has matured to have school groups returning for several years from as far as Texas; for their choosing the State as the Summit's adoptive parents; for their continued relationship with the Summit in their ministry.

I am grateful to North Carolina and its wonderful, thoughtful, conscientious State Parks staff for the beauti-

ful considerate transition and care that is unfolding. I am especially happy and proud to see the excellent, gracious Summit staff continuing as State positions are being detailed with the possibility that the Summit staff can become the continuing staff members with State Parks. It was also nice to find respectfully stored liturgical books on the bookshelf that we used on an adjoining spiritual retreat the day before, along with the continuing State Forest posters on the bathroom doors and new State Park information in the lobby.

This weekend as I traveled to the Summit through the scenic roads of still rural Piedmont I began to think of a myriad of ways that we can combine farm tours and subsistence crafts, agri-tourism and eco-tourism,



*The Center at The Summit - see the colors at: <http://www.rasman.com/fsp/Meet2006Apr.html>
Photo: Alec Whittaker*

environmental studies, private protection of waterways with more extensive buffers, canoe rentals, private campsites, historical preservation of mills, tobacco barns, and country stores, and so much more. I look forward to the creative, considerate ways that the Environmental Education Center at Haw River State Park and its environs will continue to grow and be a catalyst for an even more fabulous special and sacred place where we can all meet as one to become better Earth Stewards.

Friends of State Parks
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Please send me: _____ copies of A Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina @ \$14.95 + \$2 S+H
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North Carolina's Everglades? With herons and dragonflies and mallards and wildlife galore - but no alligators! From the Center at The Summit follow a boardwalk through the wetlands to Haw River - don't miss it!

Photo: Alec Whittaker

Volunteers Needed

Volunteers needed to place Friends of State Parks brochures in libraries and outdoor stores. We have Raleigh, Durham and Chapel Hill covered but if you would like to volunteer for another region, call Alec Whittaker at (919) 781-0535 or e-mail fsp@rasman.com

Mark Your Calendar

Don't forget Land & Water Conservation Day - June 14th, 9 am at the Legislative Building, Jones Street, Raleigh. See you there!

The next quarterly meeting of Friends of State Parks will be held at South Mountain State Park on Saturday, July 29th starting at 11 am. All are welcome.