

## An Honor Well Deserved



Since Lewis Ledford became Director of North Carolina State Parks six years ago, the system has expanded by twenty per cent and now exceeds 200,000 acres. In the past year 33 parks and 19 Natural Areas attracted more

than 13 million visitors, many of them from other states - a number that grows each year.

Lewis is the first leader of the parks system to have risen through the ranks to reach the top position. From the start of a summer job at Mount Mitchell State Park after high school, Lewis, when he graduated from Appalachian State University with a B.S. in biology, in 1976 became a park ranger. He rose to District Superintendent of the Western Region in 1980, Superintendent of the statewide system in 2000 and became Director of State Parks in 2003.

Two unique North Carolina landmarks, Chimney Rock and Grandfather Mountain, have recently been added to the parks system with the funding primarily from the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund and the initiative largely from Lewis' energy and dedication. The dramatic monolith of Chimney Rock, more than 300 feet high, will form the centerpiece of the new Hickory Nut Gorge State Park and the Grandfather Mountain acquisition will provide access for visitors to the 5,964-foot peak that is the highest point on the Blue Ridge. Lewis also took the initiative to provide a state funding contribution to the Mountains-to-the-Sea Trail, the 1,000 mile trail that soon will extend across North Carolina.

Recently the Raleigh News & Observer recognized Lewis Ledford as "Tarheel of the Week." It is recognition of the contribution state parks make to the quality of life of North Carolina's citizens and the role that he has played in maintaining and improving them.

## Lobby Day

Most of the funding for the purchase of Chimney Rock and Grandfather Mountain came from the Parks & Recreation Trust Fund. This dedicated fund is derived from a small tax on all North Carolina real estate transfers. In this year of economic tribulation and fiscal problems the fund may well be a target for legislators desperate to fill the budget gaps.

April 29th is Environmental Lobby Day and Friends of State Parks members will be at the Legislature to remind our representatives that state parks contribute more than \$400 million annually to local economies through tourist expenditures, jobs and direct expenditures by the parks and that, beyond their financial merits, state parks improve the quality of life for our citizens while preserving the unique and scenic environment.

Be there at the Legislature on Wednesday April 29th to meet your representatives and remind them to defend our heritage of state parks.



# Junior Rangers: Our Newest Friends of State Parks

Contributed by Sean Higgins

The Friends of State Parks continue to foster the next generation of park enthusiasts by sponsoring the Junior Ranger Program. This February, 1,200 brand new junior ranger books were sent to South Mountains State Park, Carolina Beach State Park and Pettigrew State Park. New Junior Ranger patches were also sent to New River State Park and Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. "We've had a number of requests already this year", says park ranger Steve McMurray with Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. Steve and staff at Jordan Lake are eager to reward their hard working junior rangers with a bald eagle patch.


Currently there are eight Junior Ranger programs in the NC state park system, all funded by the Friends of State Parks. The program continues to expand in 2009, with Pilot Mountain, Fort Macon and Lake Waccamaw printing new books and patches. Plans are also underway for Junior Ranger summer camps and a newsletter. In addition to funding the program, past and present FSP members have provided the needed enthusiasm, dedication and persistence to make it a success.

## About the Program

- *The Junior Ranger program was designed to engage young children in experiential learning at our parks.*
- *Junior Rangers complete an activity book, attend park ranger programs and complete a stewardship project.*
- *Stewardship projects range from doing a beach cleanup to identifying potential safety hazards along a hiking trail.*
- *Once these tasks are complete, they recite the Junior Ranger Pledge with a park ranger to earn the park's unique patch.*




## NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS




### Junior Rangers:

Be a Part of Our Mission






In the Junior Ranger Program, children ages 7 - 11:



- Attend park ranger programs, complete an activity book and do a stewardship project with their family, troop or club.
- Gain an appreciation of North Carolina's natural and cultural heritage.
- Learn about natural resources careers.
- Earn a different Junior Ranger patch at each park!
- Explore our parks while having fun!

Join today!

Ask for a Junior Ranger book at one of these parks:  
Carolina Beach, New River, Goose Creek, Hammocks Beach,  
Pettigrew, South Mountains, Jordan Lake, Mount Mitchell.

## The Junior Ranger Pledge

*"I, promise to do what I can to protect the air, water and land of North Carolina. I will not litter and will do what I can to keep the park clean. I will not harm or remove any plants or animals in the park. Instead, I will try to learn about them. I will encourage my family and friends to help protect the park and all our natural resources."*

# Meet the New Board Members

Four new members were elected to the board of Friends of State Parks at the October General meeting. Here they introduce themselves:

## John Boesch

I have been a member of several national fishing and hunting organizations that focused on preserving habitat but I realized that the money would be better spent on North Carolina organizations. I feel that Friends of State Parks' mission is more in line with many of my beliefs, specifically procuring more land for residents of North Carolina and preserving more local habitat. To be asked to sit on the board of FSP is a milestone in my life and a rare opportunity and I hope to serve the mission of FSP in any facet the board might need.

## Sidney Shearin

I started with the NC State Parks at Morrow Mountain as a Park Attendant in 1975. After graduating from college I worked as laborer at Medoc Mountain and, in 1977, became its first ranger. From there I became Superintendent of Pettigrew in 1983 and remained there until I retired last June. I have visited more than 200 state parks nation wide and camped at about 85 state parks. Currently I am restoring a 150 year old farm house near Medoc Mountain that my wife and I purchased when I was a young ranger at Medoc.

## Dwayne Stutzman

I retired from the State Trails Program after 20 years with the NC Division of Parks and Rec-

reation. I hold a Masters Degree in Recreation Resource Development from Texas A&M University. With 36 years of experience, I managed state level trail programs in two states; worked with private and governmental entities in Oklahoma, Texas, South Carolina and Arkansas; served as Chair of regional trails organizations in Arkansas & Oklahoma. I own a consulting firm, Recreation Resource Development, LLC, working with government agencies and private non-profits in the areas of trails development, natural resource conservation, and the preservation of open space and currently serve as the Chair of the Buncombe County Greenway and Trails Commission.

## Billy Totten

After obtaining a B.S. Degree in Conservation and Outdoor Recreation (with a minor in biology) at East Carolina University I did summer work at West Point on the Eno (1978) and at Medoc Mountain State Park with the Youth Conservation Corps as Seasonal Naturalist (1979). I became YACC Coordinator (1979-80) at Pilot Mountain State Park. From 1980 to 1983 I was a Park Ranger at Stone Mountain State Park then I became Chief Ranger at Lake Norman State Park until 1990 and Superintendent at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area (1990 - 2004) I held the position of North District Superintendent. from 2004 until I retired earlier this year.

# Maiden Voyage

The board of FSP held the Winter quarterly meeting at Hammocks Beach State Park and, after business concluded, enjoyed a voyage on the brand new ferry boat *Bear Island II*. Because of ongoing dredging operations there is no access to Bear Island but voyagers were able to view the newly acquired Jones Island - and the rain held off.

Former superintendent Claude Crewes told the board of how, when his park became desegregated, the first white visitors reluctantly asked if they were permitted to ride the ferry to Bear Island. "Well, yes," he told them, "but you'll have to sit at the back of the boat."



Photo: Bob Sowa

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Please send me:

- North Carolina State Parks Map Guide @ \$19.95 (\$15) + \$3 S&H = \$22.95 each
- Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina @ \$10.00 (\$8) + \$2 S+H = \$12.00 each
- Exploring the Geology of the Carolinas @ \$19.95 (\$15) + \$2.50 S+H = \$22.45 each
- North Carolina State Parks: A Niche Guide @ \$14.95 (\$12) + \$2 S&H = \$16.95 each
- Jawbone Trail Cookbook @ \$10 (\$7) + \$2.50 S&H = \$12.50 each

Note: FSP members prices in parenthesis

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## John Graham Memorial Donors

FSP wishes to thank the following friends for their generous donations in memory of our late president, John Graham:

Carlene Burns, Lumberton, NC, Patrick & Mary Callahan, Columbia, SC, Caroline & Dick Donnan, Chapel Hill, NC, Lee Barrie & Ellen Elias, Bayside, NY, Steven A. Elias, Miami, FL, Sarah Emanuel, Raleigh, NC, Mendy Evans, Denver, CO, Barbara Fish, Durham, NC, Gerry & Cammie Gibson, Durham, NC, Tom Howard, Fuquay-Varina, NC, Diana M. Hyland, Durham, NC, Carol H. Jones, Raleigh, NC, Jeanette Landgraf, Silsbee, TX, Lorie B. Langan, Rockford, IL, Betty Martin, Raleigh, NC, Mary G. Moore, Gaffney, SC, Kim & Marie Mote, Ken & Margo Perkins, Reidsville, NC, Diana Phillips, Hillsborough, NC, John Rorem, Durham, NC, Jane & Henderson Rourk, Durham, NC, Susan Russell, Chapel Hill, NC, Mary & John Sargeant, Camden, SC, Nicole & Malcolm Seawell, Cherry Hills Vil, CO, Dave & Lois Slade, Durham, NC, Marian K. Solleder, Colfax, NC, Curtis & Helen Woodlief, Raleigh, NC

## Next Meeting

The next Friends of State Parks board meeting will be held at Hanging Rock State Park on April 25th commencing at 11 am.