



Friends of State Parks

Supporting the State Parks of North Carolina Since 1973

Autumn 2011

PO Box 37655
Raleigh NC 27627
Web: www.ncfsp.org

Support State Parks... Support FSP, your Charity!

By David Pearson, President



YES! Friends of State Parks, Inc. is your charity! It supports the mission of North Carolina State Parks and we need to build our team. We need to ask our friends and associates to join us in supporting our cause, *Your Charity*.

These are tough times in state government and FSP including many local Friends Groups have made substantial financial contributions to the programs of State Parks this year. There were many economic challenges in 2011 that impacted North Carolina State Parks. Our Friends and supporters passed resolutions, made phone calls to representatives and attended events. These efforts made a huge difference. FSP was able to educate our membership and the public and make them aware of legislation that almost ended the North Carolina Park system as we know it. We started an education campaign in April that proved successful in keeping the Park and Recreation Trust Fund intact and secured vital funding for State Parks in the 2011-12 state budget.

As we approach 2012 we have other challenges around the corner.

Section 22.1 of the Appropriations Act of 2011 says: "The Program Evaluation Division shall study and review State operations considered attractions in the State, such as State Historic Sites, Museums, State Parks, Aquariums, and the North Carolina Zoo, and recommend whether administration of such attractions can be consolidated in one Department or administrative unit. In conducting its study, the Program Evaluation Division shall review all sources of revenue generated by these attractions, including admission fees, donations, and concession sales, and shall review daily visitation trends for these attractions to determine optimal operating schedules."

And, there is Senate Bill 677 which would essentially combine the four conservation trust fund boards of trustees, advisory committees and authorities into one 15 member commission called the Conservation Trust Fund Commission. This commission would be filled by staff personnel

virtually eliminating citizen involvement.

The size and focus of our membership will be a factor in our ability to advocate for our parks or for the division.

Building membership is simple. If you – **YES YOU** – are not currently a dues paying member of FSP then Join Now or Renew your membership today! Ask a friend or associate who shares your passion for State Parks to join Friends of State Parks. It's that simple! Just Ask a Friend!

And if you work within the North Carolina State Parks system, join FSP and help us make your job a little more secure and enjoyable.

It's as easy as going on line at <http://ncfsp.org/mship1.html>.

Memorial to John Graham

Family and friends gathered November 15 at Haw River State Park – the Summit to present the John E. Graham memorial bench and plaque. John's memorial bench offers a wonderful place to pause and reflect on the beauty that surrounds you at the Summit. The presentation occurred during the Parks Superintendents' annual meeting. Special thanks to Lewis Ledford, Director of the Parks Division, for timing the presentation to occur in the presence of so many of John's park ranger friends. A Ridgeline display in memory of John will be erected at a later date at Crowders Mountain State Park which borders South Carolina, John's native state.





Medoc Mountain State Park

by Jane Hunt

Several board members were inspired to share their own Medoc Mountain experiences for the newsletter; one is printed here; please visit the FSP website www.ncfsp.org to read others in our expanded online edition.

Medoc Mountain State Park is surrounded by 5 small communities; Arlie, Brinkleyville, Ringwood, Hollister and Arcola. That information would not be enough for me to have the slightest idea where it was located. So to give further clues, I will tell you it is in Northeastern North Carolina just about 10 miles away from I-95 in Halifax County. It is so rural the night sky on a clear night must be filled with stars and the air wonderfully fresh. Is it really a mountain? Well, if we were still in the Paleozoic Age perhaps, but currently the granite "mountain" rises a mere 180' above the landscape, but, there is no higher land between the "mountain" and the Atlantic Ocean.

The first settlers in the area were the Haliwa/Soponi Indians who were farming and hunting there in the late 1600's. Currently there are about 4,000 members of this tribe who hold a public Pow Wow every spring. In the 1800's North Carolina was a huge producer of wine and many of the scuppernong grapes came from this land. Legal production of wine was halted in 1917 with Prohibition, but grapes were still sold locally. Medoc was a province in France which was famous for its vineyards and where the name originated. Boy Scouts had a camp on the mountain top in the 1920's and in the 1930's a deposit of molybdenum was discovered near the summit. This eventually led to much digging and scarring of the land, but no significant mining operations resulted. Just before the land became the park in the early 70's the mountain trees were logged. Now they are growing back and with such vigor it is hard to see the mountain on the horizon line. The park has 2,300 acres.

Seven trails to choose, and if you do them all you will have traveled ten miles. Some of them follow either the Bear Swamp or the Little Fishing

Creeks. Hiking these trails is the best way to enjoy the beauty and diversity of Medoc Mountain. There are also ten miles of bridle trails if you can find a horse. You can also camp, put your canoe in the creek, fish or attend one of the educational programs.

A full-service, online and call center-based reservations system is now available and can be used to reserve campsites, picnic shelters, and other park facilities. Call 1-877-7-CAMP-NC to make reservations.

Lewis Ledford Honored!

Gov. Bev Perdue has honored Lewis Ledford, director of the state Division of Parks and Recreation, with the 2011 Governor's Award for Excellence, the highest honor state employees can receive in North Carolina for dedicated service to the state. Read more about it online, or in the next FSP Newsletter.

FSP Board Meeting Highlights

Medoc Mountain State Park hosted the October 29 Friends of State Parks board meeting. Superintendent Bill Meyer gave a brief history of the park, an update on park issues and future plans. The board approved a \$1000 grant to support the 2012 "Year of the Bat" initiative which will create a bat resource kit for each of the 4 state park districts led by Sean Higgins, I&E Program Manager.

Five existing board members were re-elected for further 2-year terms and Lindsey Hobbs was elected as a new member of the board with accounting and treasury responsibilities.

The next board meeting will be January 28, 2012 at Carolina Beach State Park at 10 am.



FSP board members and guests break for a specially prepared lunch

Junior Ranger Program Receives National Award

The N.C. State Parks Junior Ranger program was recently recognized as a Media Award 2011 winner by the National Association for Interpretation. The program was chosen as an “exceptional educational resource.” The Fall 2011 issue of “Turtle Tracks and Turkey Tails,” the Junior Ranger newsletter, features the new NAI logo.

The Junior Ranger program promotes youth environmental education in 39 state parks and state recreation areas. Youth ages 6 – 12 can earn one of 26 unique Junior Ranger patches by completing activities listed in a junior ranger booklet available at state parks or on the website, www.ncparks.gov. Three more parks will soon have their unique patch-- William B Umstead (Marbled Salamander), Chimney Rock (Peregrine Falcon), and Lumber River (Belted Kingfisher). A new supply of the state-wide junior ranger patches used in parks that don't yet have their unique patch is also being produced.

The program has become increasingly popular, especially with scouts groups and YMCA groups. FSP congratulates Sean Higgins, the Division's I & E Program Manager, and gives special thanks to Great Outdoor Provision Co. for their support to the Junior Ranger program.



Carolina Beach Girl Scouts become Junior Rangers

“What is the extinction of a condor to a child who has never seen a wren?”

Robert Michael Pyle

Friends of State Parks Online

We hope this issue of the FSP newsletter has enlightened you. There is always more to include than there is space. For that reason, we are offering an expanded online edition. The FSP web page link is www.ncfsp.org. We invite you to go there.

FSP is also on [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/). FSP has two Facebook accounts: **NC Friends of State Parks (NCFSP)** is our group account, which is listed on the FSP web page; **Friends of State Parks (FSP)**, the other account, is our fan page. You may ask why FSP has two FB accounts. Facebook sets up group and fan pages differently allowing posting from twitter and other social media to fan page accounts but not to group accounts. It is our hope that all the North Carolina friends groups will use the **group** account (**NCFSP**) to post interesting and relevant events and voice general concerns they may have regarding the parks. FSP links to as many friends groups as possible so if we have missed you, please let us know you are on Facebook.

News from State Parks and Park Friends Groups

Stories in Stone: Memories from a Bygone Farming Community in North Carolina recently published by the Umstead Coalition, is an oral history of the **William B. Umstead State Park** area with mapped hikes. The author, Tom Weber, performed the research for it for 18 years as a labor of love for William B. Umstead State Park and as a volunteer for The Umstead Coalition. The book can be purchased at the Park's visitor center; for additional information, visit <http://umsteadcoalition.org>. There is a hardback edition and also an edition that can fit easily into a backpack.

Congratulations to Chris Helms who was recently named superintendent of **Carolina Beach State Park** to succeed Terri Taylor who retired this year; and to Kristen Woodruff who has been named superintendent of **Singletary Lake State Park**. Woodruff succeeds James Sessoms who recently retired.

Thumbs up to **Haw River State Park** staff for hosting the Project Learning Tree Facilitators Workshop and for being recognized by the governor and DOT for participating in roadside cleanup.

2012 will be the **Year of the Bat** in state parks. T-shirts and bandanas are now available at the Division's website: <http://www.ncparkstore.com/>.

Medoc Mountain (Mis) Adventure

After a productive but somewhat long meeting, a few of us decided to stretch our legs and see more of the park. We wanted to see the “mountain” so we set out in the direction of the Summit Loop trail. It was close to 3:45 PM. Dorothy and I were content to fall behind Bob and Chandler as we talked and enjoyed the walk. Although we never conferred about it I think both of us imagined a walk of an hour or so. Bob and Chandler had a park map so I didn’t make the effort to form a cognitive map of the area as I like to do.

We admired the pink-veined granite and paused to photograph the fine fungi. After a dreary morning the sun had come out and shone through the autumn leaves. As we traveled the gently rolling trail, Bob and Chandler were soon out of sight. No problem—all the trails are marked and this was a loop—how hard can that be? We passed Robert on his way back. He told us we were a few hundred yards from the summit. We reached the summit which was a flat clearing with without a vista. Wanting to explore new territory we continued on. As we descended, the trail followed the winding stream. Upturned trees were evidence of Hurricane Irene’s destruction. When we reached a decision point we chose the orange blazed Discovery Loop. Earlier in conversation we had both expressed the desire to get Gortex hiking shoes. Ironically, soon we encountered a stretch of swampy bog. We saw no way to cross it without getting at least one foot wet.

At this point the shadows were lengthening. Surely we must be close to the Visitor’s Center. After all, none of the trails are particularly long. We trudged on as the sun moved toward the horizon. A bit of anxiety crept in. We hadn’t seen another soul since we passed Robert an hour earlier. We reached a blue blazed trail

with an arrow pointing toward “picnic area.” Our walk had turned into a hike but we neared the finish line. We reached the road around 6:00 PM and set off in the direction of the Visitor’s Center. A ranger’s truck was approaching. When I asked if we were heading towards the Visitor’s Center he answered that we were but we “couldn’t get there from here. He offered us a ride in the back of his truck if we didn’t mind climbing in with a deer. We agreed but we both pictured the carcass of a deer that had come to an unfortunate end. Thankfully, the deer was a display model.

As it turned out we were a couple of miles from our destination. Predictably, my car was the only one left in the lot. Mercifully, the ranger (Ed Wilkerson?) unlocked the restroom before he headed on his way. The sun was down and our legs were sore as we drove west towards home. The day had been glorious and the company couldn’t have been better. As I’ve heard it said, ‘all’s well that ends well.’

Jean Donnan



A Vision of Spring Magic at Medoc Mountain

It was Saint Patrick's Day, March 17, 1999, one year and 4 days since my Mother Helen, who was blind for 40 years, could now see. The brown stone lens were gone. Mother now moved around like a jet plane. I wanted her to experience what brought me so much joy. As vice-president of the Wild Flower Preservation Society, I planned the trips. One of my folk dance friends suggested that we try to time a visit to Medoc Mountain State Park for the trout lily peak. Hurricane Fran and Floyd had come through a few years before. With great anticipation a few carloads of us wildflower enthusiasts made our way through the wonderful country roads to northeast NC. Of course I was dressed in bright green with my tall St. Pat's hat and walking stick. The gracious ranger welcomed us and suggested the trail down along the river. To paraphrase Steve Job's words on his entering the Spirit World: "Wow! Oh, wow!" We had entered Paradise with its millions and millions of gorgeous harbingers of spring, the delicate pale lemon yellow and maroon trout lilies, in dramatic bloom. The hillsides were carpeted with the spotted trout-shaped foliage and resplendent blooms. Mom had her first vision of the Spring Magic that North Carolinians protect in their treasured Sacred Masterpieces of State Parks.

Alice Zawadzki

Alec Whittaker Shares a Special Memory of John

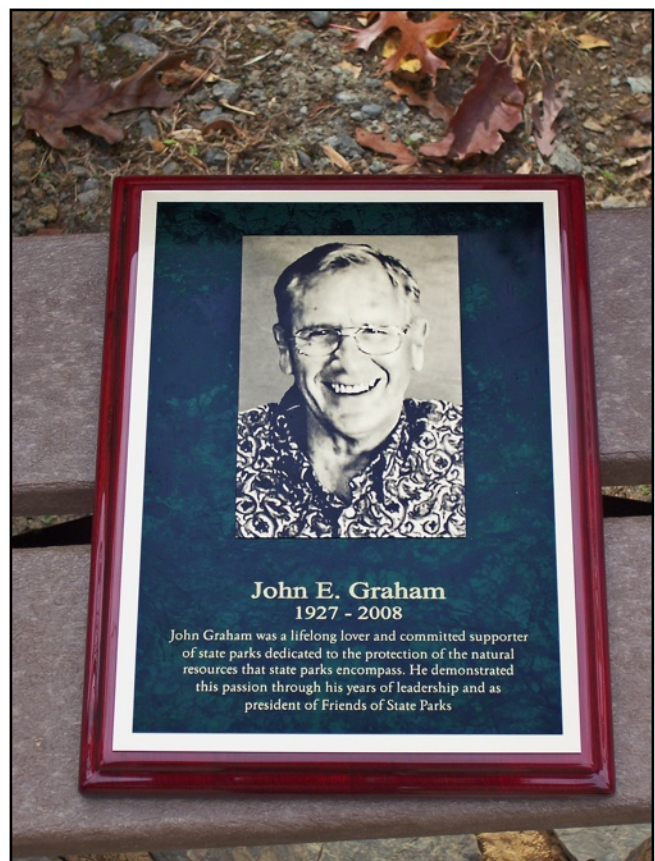
It is almost exactly 3 years since we lost our friend John Graham. The dedication of the memorial plaque at Haw River State Park brought back memories of the last time that John and I visited the Summit.

It was the occasion of the founding of the Friends of the Haw River friends group. John and I traveled together to give a presentation on the advantages of their becoming chapter members of Friends of State Parks. I had known John for many years. We served together on the board of FSP. We spent hours together at the Legislature lobbying for the causes of State Parks, particularly for John's favorite cause, pay equity for Rangers. But I had never really known John on a personal basis. On the two hour drive from Durham to the Summit we talked about our lives. We exchanged "old soldier" or in John's case "old sailor" stories. We both had stories of our experiences leading Boy Scouts on camping trips. The journey passed very quickly.

We gave our presentation to the Haw River group. That night we stayed in the cabins at the Summit. At about sunset there was a tap at my door. I opened it to find John.

"Do you like single malt Scotch?" he asked.

We sat in companionable silence and sipped on John's whisky and watched the sun go down. Yes! I know it was against Park regulations but it remains one of my favorite memories. I wish I had known John better. I still miss him, as do we all.



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P.O. Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627

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Visit the Website: www.ncfsp.org
Email: fsp@ncfsp.org



Yes! I want to be a Friend of State Parks!

Just fill out the form, clip and mail with your check to:

Friends of State Parks, PO Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627

_____ Student	\$10.00	_____ Donor	\$50.00
_____ Senior Citizen....	\$10.00	_____ Organization	\$35.00
_____ Single	\$15.00	_____ Family	\$20.00
_____ Patron	\$100.00 (or more)		

Name _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____

Mail To: Friends of State Parks PO Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627

Order Online: www.ncfsp.org

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: _____

Address: _____

City _____ Zip _____

FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS - OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

Official organization address: P.O. Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627
Website: www.ncfsp.org

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Holiday Notes:

- Join or renew your FSP membership before December 31 and get a tax deduction for 2011
- Order books or merchandise by mail or online for great Holiday gifts
- For convenience and the environment choose to get the newsletter online

Next Board Meeting

Saturday, January 28, 2012 - 10 am
Carolina Beach State Park