



Friends of State Parks

Supporting the State Parks of North Carolina Since 1973

Spring 2012

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

Crowders Mountain State Park Hosts Board Meeting

Crowders Mountain State Park hosted FSP for the April 21 board meeting. The meeting opened at the new Boulders Access facilities with accolades for board president David Pearson who had set out at 4 a.m. from Swansboro and was the first to arrive. A surprise birthday party the night before created a last minute change in David's travel plans! Thanks for your commitment, David. You inspire us!

Larry Hyde, Park Superintendent, welcomed the board and highlighted Crowders Mountain State Park events and developments. During the prior weekend, there had been a climbing fall. A dog bite and a vehicle accident occurred simultaneously on the following day. January was, as usual, a peak month at Crowders. Late winter, early spring and fall are all popular times for visitors. The Visitors Center at the park headquarters area is getting 100 more parking spaces to address a serious shortage and inconvenience to visitors.

The North Carolina-South Carolina Ridgeline Trail display is in place with a dedication in memory of John Graham scheduled for 1 p.m. Larry spoke of opportunities to know John and observe John's dedication to state parks and how pleased he is that the memorial will be a feature of the park where he is superintendent.

Representatives of Crowders Mountain Friends Group were introduced – Don Clapp, past president; Dewey Matherly, president, and Verna Neal, secretary.

Lewis Ledford, Director of the State Parks Division, updated the board on recent developments and showed an informative power point presentation about the parks and a newly released video featuring exciting parks activities, rangers at work and enthusiastic comments from park visitors. 2011 was a record year for visitations to our parks – 14.25 million visitors.

Jim Richardson reported that there are now 26 parks that have local friends groups, two more since our last meeting – Bay Lakes which includes Jones Lake and Singletary Lake, and Chimney Rock.

John Graham Memorial funds were used to transport three fifth grade classes from an inner city school in Durham to Eno River State Park for environmental learning. Dorothy Graham, Junior Ranger Committee chair, proposed meeting with Kathy Bull, president of NC Child and Nature (NC CAN), to explore ways we and local friends groups might partner with them as a state wide organization to get more underserved children out into state parks. Kathy will be invited to attend our July board meeting.

Junior Ranger patches for Chimney Rock, Lumber River and Wm. B. Umstead State Parks were displayed.

“Three Parks, Two States, One Trail”

Parks officials, friends and family gather to remember John Graham and to dedicate North Carolina-South Carolina Ridgeline Trail Display. left to right: Lewis Ledford, Director of N.C. Parks Division; Larry Hyde, Supt. Crowders Mountain SP; Erin Broadbent, Supt. Kings Mountain National Military Park; and Rowdy Harris, Asst. Manager Kings Mountain State Park in South Carolina.



Photo by Scottie Seawell

Schools, Parks, Friends Groups — Partnerships in Outdoor Learning

A partnership among three state-park focused organizations, all committed to engaging inner-city young people in outdoor learning, saw new life in April 2012 when 78 fifth graders from Lakewood Elementary School in Durham visited Eno River State Park. The students came in groups of 25 on three separate days, and with environmental educators at the helm, all had opportunities to wade in the river and find water bugs, listen to river currents and bird sounds, learn about river management and stewardship, and enjoy optimal motion from the swinging bridge.

Park superintendent Keith Nealon, park rangers Amy Duggins and Christopher Greiner, park technician Jeremy Lappas, and Liz Stabenow, environmental educator for Eno River Association, applied their collective wisdom and years of environmental education experience to capture and hold the students' attention and instill in their young minds a growing love for nature and being outdoors.

FSP provided funds for school bus transportation to bring the students to Eno River State Park and group co-leaders -- Mary Fletcher, Ben Wright, Alison O'Reilly, Bob Sowa, and Dorothy Graham. Costco provided funds to pay for healthy snacks — oranges, bananas, and whole-grain goldfish.

FSP encourages state parks friends groups to form similar partnerships with their own schools and state parks to take young people who might otherwise not have the experience on an all-day field trip to their state parks. Environmental education is what our park rangers love to do and do so well. There are many ways they can use your support in reaching underserved youth. And take our word for it, the students and teachers will be thrilled!

Dorothy Graham



Enthusiastic fifth graders wade into the Eno River in search of “water bugs.”
Photo by Dorothy Graham

State Parks Are Natural Playgrounds

If you haven't heard, there's a movement going on to get children and their parents outdoors to move, play and learn. Richard Louv, author of Last Child in the Woods, kick started the outdoor play craze with his synthesis of various research on children's lack of access to the outdoors in 2005. Much like the recent trends of “greening” of our food, clothes and transportation systems, children's play habits have been scrutinized and we're learning about the negative consequences of too much time spent indoors.

I recently completed my Masters of Science in Environmental Studies from Green Mountain College in Vermont, and my professional project for my thesis was a program design for a playscape at the Schiele Museum of Natural History (my current employer). The project allowed me to do research on our home turf and with our stakeholders. Through my research I found that many adults I interviewed had spent time outside, unsupervised and had the freedom to explore entire neighborhoods, woods, trails, creeks and abandoned buildings with siblings or friends and this is how they spent afternoons after school or summers. You too, may have had such experiences. These salient, happy memories are what has likely helped you to develop your understanding of the natural world. Perhaps these experiences even propelled you to join a Friends Group because at one time, you had a place to play and you would like to see other natural places preserved for the enjoyment of habitat preservation, wildlife viewing or recreation.

What a wonderful opportunity for our NC State Parks to get on board with Friends groups to help promote healthy outdoor activities! It's not difficult to imagine that with a little help from an event, a ranger or a walk that the world can be shared and explored, and even played with!

The North Carolina Children and Nature Coalition (NCCAN) is an organization that is spearheading the outdoor play movement here in North Carolina and a great resource for State Parks. It is a local hub for finding out more information and the tools and resources used by the national Children&Nature Network (C&NN). Through networking with NCCAN and C&NN the natural play movement and resources to help a Friends group get started in promoting outdoor play is within easy reach.

*Rebecca Kirlin
Certified NC Environmental Educator
& Interpretive Guide (NAI)
Environmental Education Specialist,
Schiele Museum Natural History*

Chimney Rock State Park Junior Rangers

“On April 25th, 40 students from Mount Vernon-Ruth Elementary School in Forest City became official NC State Park Junior Rangers. Chimney Rock Park Rangers led the youth through a series of outdoor adventure, learning and service that allowed them all to complete the Junior Ranger Program. The experience ended with the group taking the Junior Ranger Pledge and receiving a certificate and official Chimney Rock State Park Junior Ranger Patch! Thanks to the NC Friends of State Parks for supporting this rewarding program and to all the students and teachers that participated.” We are very proud to have been a part of this.

Adrienne Wallace, CRSP Superintendent

News from State Parks Friends Groups

Crowders Mountain State Parks Friends Group was organized in 2000. This has been a busy year for fundraising. A bike ride fundraising event that starts at the park occurred recently. A grant received from an area organization will be applied towards building picnic sites at Boulders. Another grant will be used for a tool trailer and tools for the park. There will be a music festival on July 2nd. If you live in the area, consider joining. They would like more members. Learn more by visiting their website at www.friendsofcrowdersmountain.org

Friends of Pettigrew State Park in Creswell, NC was established in April of 2011. We had our kick-off cookout that June and officers were officially selected. The group (FPSP) began meeting once every 2 months. As of our April 26, 2012 meeting, it was decided that we would begin meeting monthly in the evenings from 7 to 8:30, with refreshments being donated by members. Within the

next couple of months, we will begin having a presenter at each meeting, in hopes to draw in more of the surrounding community.

On Saturday, April 7, 2012, we organized and held an Easter Egg Hunt at Pettigrew State Park. Over 300 eggs were hidden among the cypress trees and lush vegetation. Locals and visitors alike enjoyed the egg hunt, games, and bake sale. Around 20 children ages 1-12 participated in the hunt. Altogether, around 50 people attended and made the event a success. In March, we sponsored a logo contest. This involved local students creating a logo for the Friends group to use on items to be sold at the park. The logo was to be drawn within the shape of Lake Phelps. Fifty dollars was awarded to the winner at our Friends & Family Fun Day on May 5, 2012. This, our second event, included a free hot dog lunch, canoeing, fishing game, cake walk, Indian heritage presentations on canoe burning and hunting, and a Scuppernong River presentation. Around 60 people attended this event.

The group decided to create and print a brochure that can be picked up at the park office or mailed when requested. The brochure includes pictures and information about Pettigrew State Park, as well as an application for those interested in becoming Friends members. Our group has elected to have an annual decoy raffle. The decoys are expertly carved and painted by local artist Ed Morrison. He is a member of the Friends group and has agreed to donate a decoy each year. Friends' members sell raffle tickets throughout the year and have the drawing in December. Last year, a Canvasback decoy was raffled. Currently, we are raffling a Hooded Merganser which is on display in the park office. Our friends group would like to expand in the near future with the addition of new members. We also hope to be bringing many more exciting events to Pettigrew for all to enjoy. Heather LeQuire, Secretary.



New Junior Rangers at Chimney Rock State Park

Friends of Fort Macon State Park announce the 2012 music season at Ft. Macon State Park. Shows are from 7 to 8 p.m. You can learn more about the performances at the Friends' new website www.friendsoffortmacon.org.

June 1—Carteret Sunshine Band (large orchestra)

June 15—Unknown Tongues (cajun/zydeco)

June 22—Samantha Casey and the Bluegrass Jam (traditional bluegrass)

June 29—Searce & Ketner (acoustic rock, "seagrass")

July 13—Wild Honey (country, contemporary folk)

July 27—The Morehead Brass Consortium (small, all-brass orchestra)

August 10—Conch Stew (pop tunes, country)

Tom Kelly, President, Friends of Ft. Macon



*The Sunshine Band performance at Fort Macon State Park, summer 2006
© Everett Meserve 2006*

Friends of the Mountains-to-Sea Trail: On Thursday, May 10, Diane Van Deren, a 2010 National Geographic Adventurer of the Year, set off from Clingmans Dome in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park to attempt a new speed record for the MST which will mean reaching Jockey's Ridge State Park in less than 24 days to break the record set last year by Matt Kirk of Marion, NC.

Diane Van Deren is an extraordinary athlete who spent 10 years of her life racked by epilepsy and is now seizure-free. She has completed many extraordinary ultra-races including the Yukon Arctic Ultra - 430 miles of frozen tundra in the dead of winter.

Diane first learned of North Carolina's Mountains-to-Sea Trail when she spoke in Raleigh last October during a speaker series sponsored by The North Face. She says "I was immediately intrigued by the diversity of terrain and natural beauty of the MST."

Diane's run is being sponsored by The North Face and by Great Outdoor Provision Co. in honor of its 40th year in business. Consider attending the party to celebrate Diane's run at your local Great Outdoor Provision Co. store on National Trails Day - Saturday, June 2nd from 5 pm to 7 pm. (Contact FMST Executive Director Kate Dixon for more information at kdixon@ncmst.org).

Friends of Dismal Swamp State Park board members Mark Gass, Michele Aydlett, and Tim Aydlett recently planted Atlantic White Cedar tree seedlings and seeds at Dismal Swamp State Park in Camden County. The

Aydletts worked with Superintendent Joy Greenwood and four other park rangers to plant 700 trees in a 43 acre area that was burned during the summer fire in the Dismal Swamp. Mark Gass distributed a quart bag of Atlantic White Cedar seeds at the site. Michele, president of the Dismal Swamp State Park Friends Group, is currently working on a grant to fund another 10,000 of these Atlantic White Cedar tree seedlings to help with the reforestation of this endangered species in the rare habitat of the Dismal Swamp State Park. More than 350 kayaks and canoes registered for Paddle for the Border from Dismal Swamp State Park to the Virginia line on May 5. Make plans to join next year.

Hammocks Beach State Park Conducts LEAP Week: Hammocks Beach State Park conducted the first annual LEAP Week, or "Learn and Explore At the Park" by conducting a weeklong series of nature programs. During the week of April 9th through April 13th, 2012, park rangers lead a series of programs in support of the North Carolina Junior Ranger Program, during the spring break for Onslow and Carteret County Schools. The end result allowed for the participants to receive their Hammocks Beach Junior Ranger patch and certificate. Each day rangers Kendrick, Tomczak and

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Vitak presented a new topic and activity from the Junior Ranger book. LEAP Week was geared for children ages 6-12 who wanted a little adventure in a nature quest to learn more about Hammocks Beach and its natural surroundings. The program proved to be a great success and was attended daily by 12 to 14 participants.

Topics for LEAP Week included: habitats, reptiles, birds, sea shells, and local history with complimenting activities each day. The children got the chance to discover the critters in the adjacent waters of the park; learn about snakes and turtles; as well as learn about and conduct a bird survey in support of stewardship for the park. Each participant in the event had a great time with the week-long programs and enjoyed a trip at the end of the week over to Bear Island, where they gained a better understanding of what they learned. An award ceremony and cookout was held on the last day of the weeklong adventure and participants were sworn in as Junior Rangers.

Renee Tomczak, Park Ranger



LEAP Week 2012 group taking Junior Ranger oath



Friends of Hickory Nut Gorge (FHNG) sponsored the 2nd of 3 Living with Wildlife programs presented by Chimney Rock Park educator and naturalist, Emily Walker, at the Upper Hickory Nut Gorge Community Center in Gerton on March 22, 2012.

Friends of NC Mountains-to-Sea Trail Gather at Falls Lake for Celebration:

A ceremony to celebrate completion of a stretch of the N.C. Mountains to Sea Trail from Falls Lake Dam to Penny's Bend was marked with a ribbon cutting and hike to the new Little Lick Creek bridge at Falls Lake on May 19. Present to mark the occasion were Col. Steven A. Baker, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Chris Dawes, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission; Ellen Reckhow, Durham County Commissioner; Lewis Ledford, Director of Parks and Recreation; Jeff Brewer, Falls Lake Task Force Leader and vice president of Friends of the Mountains to Sea Trail. Riverdave Owen read an inspiring poem "The Luck of Little Lick Creek" written for the occasion. Congratulations and thanks to Kate Dixon, executive director of NC MTS, who organized the celebration, and to the many volunteers who have worked on developing the trail and building the new bridge.



Land for Tomorrow Lobby Day

Let your voice be heard on May 30 in Raleigh for Land for Tomorrow's annual Lobby Day. It's important to make sure our elected officials know just how important land and water conservation is to the future of our state. Follow the link below to register and get the info you'll need. www.landfortomorrow.org

Legislation Aimed at State Parks

HB 944 and SB 813, bills that contains various recommendations for further study from the interim Program Evaluation Division, have been introduced in the House and Senate. The legislation directs State Parks to study site proximity and span of control to identify parks that could adopt a coordinated management structure; and daily visitation data to determine potential changes from daily or seasonal closures of specific parks. The Bills have been referred to committees and can be accessed at www.ncleg.net.

Friends of State Parks

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State Parks Division Offices Relocate

The Parks Division offices have relocated to the newly dedicated Nature Research Center, 217 West Jones Street, Raleigh, NC 27604. Please visit the Division website for more information and updates. www.ncparks.org.

Eno River Festival July 4, 7, 8, 2012

Seize the opportunity to acquaint folks with FSP – our mission, our publications our activities. Sign up to volunteer with the FSP exhibit table. We need you! Contact Jim Richardson at jimr@ncfsp.org.

FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS - OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

Official organization address: P.O. Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627
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Executive Committee

President - David Pearson, Swansboro
Vice-president - Jim Richardson, Raleigh
Vice-president - Bob Sowa, Cary
Secretary - Alec Whittaker, Raleigh
Treasurer - Lindsey Hobbs, Raleigh

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Next FSP Board Meeting

July 28, 2012 10 a.m.
Gorges State Park

Come tour the new visitors' center, State Parks 5th LEED certified building, scheduled to open this fall.