



Friends of State Parks

Supporting the State Parks of North Carolina Since 1973

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

Winter 2012

Notes from the President

David Pearson

Make a difference... Give a little!

Friends of State Parks is a volunteer organization dedicated to the understanding, enjoyment, and protection of North Carolina State Parks. Our members contribute their time and efforts because of their passion for conservation, recreation and the education of our citizens and the youth of our great State.

Often great things happen not because of a monumental effort, but because someone stood by their principles and made a difference.

Take for example the establishment of our State Park System with Mount Mitchell as our first State Park. In 1913 logging activity had expanded rapidly and citizens began to voice their alarm about the destruction of the forest. Locke Craig, the Governor of North Carolina at the time, was among them and on March 3, 1915 the North Carolina State Parks System came into being.

In 1965, when the City of Durham proposed building a reservoir in the Eno River Valley, a group of concerned citizens led a campaign to save the Eno and formed the Association for the Preservation of the Eno River Valley. The association proposed a State Park be established and in May of 1972 the Eno River State Park was established.

On a summer morning in 1973, a couple of children were playing on the dunes in Jockey's Ridge when they saw a bulldozer flattening out part of the dune. They went running home to tell their mother, Carolista Baum, who went to investigate and found that an earth-moving machine was preparing a residential development site at the base of Jockey's Ridge.

It doesn't always require a lot of effort, but simply a little to make a lasting contribution to society.

As we look forward to 2012, ask yourself, what have I done that will make a difference? You might consider joining Friends of State Parks and volunteer your time to preserve the great State Parks of North Carolina.

Board Meeting Highlights

Friends of State Parks board members gathered at Carolina Beach State Park on January 28. Park Superintendent Chris Helms and District Superintendent Angelia Allcox updated the board on park activity.

With the completion of the Carolina Beach State Park marina, there are now 54 slips with many available to be rented. Janet Pearson, superintendent at Carvers Creek, has been named superintendent at Stone Mountain. Raven Rock had their first Friends meeting which was attended by 100 people.

The Board elected Lindsey Hobbs treasurer succeeding Betty Martin. Betty was recognized for her 18 years of outstanding service.

David Pearson alerted members to the work of the Program Evaluation Legislative Committee. He has emailed information to the board. The Committee will be meeting in February.

Alec Whittaker reported on meeting with Chuck Millsaps at Great Outdoor Provision to thank them for their support to the Junior Ranger Program and to discuss upcoming opportunities for their involvement. Sean Higgins also attended the meeting.

Jim Richardson announced that the Ridgeline Trail display in memory of John Graham has been erected at Crowders Mountain State Park on the North Carolina-South Carolina state line and will be dedicated April 21st at 1 p.m. following the spring FSP board meeting.

After the meeting, Angelia and Ranger Futch led the board on a tour of the Marina and a hike along the venus fly trap trail.



Ranger Futch gives a tour of the Marina to FSP board members
Photo by Dorothy Graham

A New Discovery

by Jane Hunt

When I heard I was heading for Carolina Beach State Park, I had visions of going to the Ocean. Looking at the map however told me I was wrong, it was located on the Cape Fear River on the east and a tiny looking creek on the north. I found out the creek is called Snow's Cut and was made in the early 30's so those traveling the Intracoastal Waterway would be sheltered from the wind and waves of the Atlantic. The cut divides Wilmington from Pleasure Island where Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, and Fort Fisher are located. Originally there was a small swing bridge which traversed the cut, but now there is a grand high bridge. I wondered if Orrin Pilkey would approve of Snow's cutting away the banks today as I learned there is a heavy current which continually erodes the edges and requires periodic dredging, and there are long term effects of bringing salt water into the area -- a case of ecological costs bending to transportation ease.

Carolina Beach State Park was established in 1969. It is 761 acres of sandy soil, scrub oaks, ponds and pocosins, patches of beautiful turquoise lichens, venus fly traps, and of course Sugarloaf Mountain, a 50' high dune. One of the proudest features is the newly refurbished marina which can hold up to 50 boats. Last year 500,000 people came to camp (family and group), hike six miles of trails, fish, picnic, and enjoy a visitors' center which has spacious meeting rooms and educational exhibits.



A beautiful discovery along the Venus Flytrap trail at Carolina Beach State Park, Photo by Dorothy Graham

Our Thanks to Betty Martin

Betty Martin became Treasurer of FSP in 1993, soon after joining the board. She has served the organization well throughout her 18 years of service and we honor her



Photo by Bob Sowa

Many of us were privileged to visit Betty at her mountain cabin in Watauga County in 2009. The property which she and her husband David purchased in 1969 borders Elk Knob State Park. It is an area that she and her children and grandchildren frequent every summer. She recalls that in the early years before the trail was built, they would tie ribbons onto the trees when they were climbing to the Knob so they could find their way back down. She also recalls being there in October one year when it snowed and there were snow drifts inside their rustic cabin.

Betty noted that being treasurer in earlier years was much simpler than it is today. She sees changes in the organization also with many more people involved now with a broader scope of activities and programs.

Betty says she has found much satisfaction in being treasurer and looks forward to continuing to serve on the board.

We thank you, Betty, for your years of faithful service to Friends of State Parks.



Flytrap trail hike with Ranger Futch, Photo by Angelia Allcox

Keep Parks Open Year-Round:

A Win-Win Decision

David Pearson

On February 14th The General Assembly's Program Evaluation Division which has been reviewing management and operation of North Carolina's state-run attractions, including state parks released its report <http://www.ncleg.net/PED/Reports/RecentReports.html>. The committee accepted the report and referred it to a sub-committee for further review. Members of the subcommittee are Sen. Ralph E. Hise Jr., Sen. Richard Gunn Jr., Rep. Edgar V. Starnes, and Rep. David R. Lewis. Please keep in mind that any recommendations proposed in this report will require actions from the General Assembly in the coming session if they are to be implemented.

While it is not part of the formal recommendation in this report it does suggest further study and consideration to close all State Parks from December to February. The state park system in North Carolina is providing quality outdoor recreation to a record number of visitors, conserving the natural heritage of North Carolina, and enjoys more advocates and public support than at any-time in its 96-year history. With that said, I think we all need to read the report and make contact with our representatives and share our feelings and thoughts. Here are a few of mine:

Reasons to Avoid Closing State Parks during Winter Months

- State parks are a good value for North Carolina. The park system is already highly efficient, ranking 45th in the US for per capita operating expenditures. Park visitor expenditures also create \$409 million annually in economic impact and creating jobs for the counties where they are located.
- Completely closing a state park is not possible. Many popular parks are accessible to hikers, bicyclist and boaters. As people seek different ways to enter the parks, conflicts with neighboring land owners should be anticipated.
- Staff is needed to protect valuable natural resources, including some of the state's iconic landmarks, as well as visitor facilities worth millions of dollars regardless of whether the parks are closed to the public.
- The anticipated cost savings of closing state parks in the winter months have not been detailed and are probably too high. The cost of operating state parks in

the winter months is much less than in the peak use season because seasonal staffing and other expenses are greatly reduced.

- North Carolina state parks have enjoyed record attendance in recent years, including during the winter months. Many popular activities, such as fishing and cold-weather sports, are most popular during these months.
- Many park visitors use state parks several times per week to improve their health and fitness by running, biking, walking or hiking. As North Carolina struggles with obesity among a growing number of its citizen, closing state parks to these uses sends the wrong message.
- North Carolina state parks have been nationally recognized for excellence in park management including natural resource protection and visitor services (such as National Recreation and Park Association and National Association of State Park Directors).
- No significant saving can be realized through park closures without laying off park staff.
- Open or closed, state park staff is needed to protect public safety in back country areas that often require special skills such as search and rescue and first responders medical training.

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature,
he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

John Muir

Record Setting Attendance at State Parks

Visitation at North Carolina's state parks and state recreation areas continued at a record level in 2011, with 14.25 million visits, matching the all-time record set in 2009 and posting a slight increase from 14.19 million visits in 2010, according to the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. During the past 25 years, the state parks system has seen a dramatic 102 percent increase in visitation. In 1986, 7 million people visited state parks and state recreation areas.



*Eno River New Year's Day Hike,
Photo by Don Moffitt*

News from State Parks Friends Groups

The Eno River Association has been introducing people of all ages to the parklands along the Eno for more than 45 years. We started 2012 with our traditional New Year's Day hike at the Eno River State Park which this year brought out a record crowd of more than 800 hikers, all choosing to start their new year at the State Park. Our winter hikes explore the history and geology of the area from January through mid-March, and our guided wildflower walks start on March 11th through Mother's Day. The Eno River has a spectacular variety of spring ephemeral wildflowers and each week we visit a new area to see what's blooming. You are also invited to join us on Sun, May 20 for our annual Stream-in Family River Day and potluck picnic, including free canoeing! Visit enoriver.org for details about our programs or email association@enoriver.org. – Kathy Lee

From Haw River State Park

Things are moving along on our land acquired in 2008 after a long zoning battle which kept a golf course from being built next door. Planning for an access road, parking, and toilets is underway and we hope construction will follow. New trail construction is also planned here and next door at the environmental education center. Extensive renovations have occurred at many of the Summit Environmental Education Center buildings. Spring, Summer, and Fall environmental education programs for children and school groups are filling up. We have scheduled four workdays for the Park along with National Trails Day and Open House activities. Good things are happening at **Haw River State Park** in Guilford and Rockingham Counties. – David Craft

2012 – “The Year of the Bat”

Middle and high school students with Wake Audubon's Young Naturalist Club built bat houses at **William B Umstead State Park**. The bat houses will be visual aids for state park programs during 2012, the Year of the Bat. In 2013, they'll find their way onto buildings to help bats find roosting sites.

In this, the “Year of the Bat,” Division biologists and those from the Wildlife Resources Commission recently conducted a bat survey on **Grandfather Mountain**. They found two Virginia big-eared bats, an endangered species not seen recently in this area.

The Friends of Lake James State Park, Inc. gathered at the trailhead of the newly blazed “Mill's Creek” trail. Member Alan Scholl, pictured below, led the group along with Park Ranger Clay Veasey. The trail is an easy 3.6-mile hike. Parking is available at the trailhead. The FOLJSP group is also in the process of recruiting new members and enhancing the **Lake James State Park's** visitors' experiences thru activities and programming for guests of all ages.

For membership information please contact: Leslie Young at info@friendsofljosp.org or visit our web site at: <http://friendsofljosp.org/>

Lake James State Park, offers educational programming year-round. Please visit <http://www.ncparks.gov/Visit/parks/laja/main.php> for a complete updated schedule of activities. – Greg Norell



Alan Scholl at the trailhead of newly blazed “Mill's Creek” trail

Haw River State Park

Congratulations to **Jenn Phillips**, NC's newest Certified Environmental Educator! Jenn is a teacher at the Greensboro Montessori School. Her community partnership involved creating an interpretive trail and educational signage in a restored stream area at **Haw River State Park** offering benefit to park visitors for years to come.

Alpine Search and Rescue

In January, several park rangers from mountain parks were involved in an alpine search and rescue training class along with rescue folks from several counties. They practiced at a ski slope and at **Grandfather Mountain** using snowshoes, crampons, ice axes and the like...all to keep everyone safer in the winter.

Staff Changes

Congratulations to **Keith Martin**, the new superintendent at **Mayo River State Park** in Rockingham County. Keith has been with DENR 19 years with prior service on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

Janet Pearson is the new superintendent at **Stone Mountain State Park**, one of our largest. For the past couple years, she's been guiding the development of **Carvers Creek State Park**. Congratulations to Janet!

Bryan Wilder, has been promoted to superintendent of **Mount Mitchell State Park**. He succeeds Jack Bradley, who retired as superintendent last year.

Interpretation and Education Update

Sean Higgins, I & E Education Program Manager

Bat Kits are now available! Each district has a kit full of books, activities, puppets and an ultrasonic bat detector. Contact your District I&E Specialist to reserve a kit for an upcoming Year of the Bat event or program. West District parks can contact South Mountains ranger Lance Huss.



New Junior Ranger Patches

William B. Umstead, Chimney Rock and Lumber River State Parks now have their individually designed Junior Ranger patches. Check them out on the Division's website www.ncparks.gov. They are beautiful. Our thanks to Great Outdoor Provision for their continuing support to the Junior Ranger Program.

Order Your Guide to an Adventurous Spring

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

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Crested Iris, Photo by Duncan Heron

FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS - OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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

Executive Committee

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

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Next Board Meeting

Saturday, April 21, 2012 – 10 a.m.
Boulders Access Area
Crowders Mountain State Park
Kings Mountain, North Carolina

Dedication of John E. Graham
Memorial Ridgeline Trail Display
1 p.m.