



Friends of State Parks

Supporting the State Parks of North Carolina Since 1973

Fall 2013

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

Message from the President

David Pearson

This holiday season shop at *Parks R Us!*

With the holiday season approaching, it is a good time to consider alternatives to the shopping mall, toy stores and online shopping. Why not give the gift that keeps on giving. Give an adventure outside at your favorite State Park.

We are constantly blasted with subliminal advertising that edifies toys and material possessions and at the same time besmirches outdoor activities and environmental education. However, any parent and child who have ever experienced the excitement of the outdoors can tell you this is complete brainwashing. Our parks, lakes, forest, rivers and streams offer some of the most exciting activities available on the planet. And at a State Park you have educated, loyal, and enthusiastic Park staff to assist you in your Environmental Education learning experience.

In today's society, we are expected to buy toys for our child, yet shortly after the initial experience with the new toy, children get bored and the toys are placed in closets, bedrooms and garages. As the years go by, parents clean out the child's closet and wonder... why did I ever waste my money on that? Not too exciting when you look back on the experience.

But when a parent takes their child to a State Park, the experience of the great outdoors and the environment is the gift that never gets put away. The gift of the outdoors seems to perpetually extend itself to the parent or child every time they step outside. Some of the best memories are made during day trips, camping trips and vacations to parks and recreation areas.

This year instead of going broke trying to keep up with the endless barrage of marketing campaigns, why not give the gift of the outdoors?

There are many ways to give. You can simply introduce a child to nature at a State Park. Or you can get involved in supporting the State Parks by volunteering or making a donation in someone's name to Friends of State Parks. If you are inclined toward holiday gift giving, spend your money not on trendy toys but on useful

items you can use to enhance your outdoor experience like camping gear, hiking gear, binoculars for nature watching, a State Parks map guide, or a book on the environment and nature which you can order through the FSP website: www.ncfsp.org.

Don't be left feeling despondent, bored, and depressed due to the vast commercialization of the season. Turn the TV off, close the laptop, put down the mobile phone and...

Take a Child Outside... Take a First Day Hike... Become a Junior Ranger... Plan a YIP-EE field trip...

Celebrate the season the natural way... Get outdoors and make lasting memories...

FSP Annual Meeting Highlights

The Annual Meeting of Friends of State Parks was held November 2 in the visitors' center at Lake Waccamaw State Park. David Pearson opened the meeting. Park Supt. Toby Hall, District Supt. Jay Greenwood and Friends of Lake Waccamaw President Cathy Neilson gave presentations on the status and nature of Lake Waccamaw and its endemic species.

Members were updated on a range of agenda items:

- The Junior Ranger program now offered in every park with each park having its own uniquely designed patch.
- Grants to pay for transporting students from schools to a state park available to Friends Groups through the YIP-EE program.
- The *North Carolina State Parks Map Guide* update in process.
- Developing a strategic plan for FSP as a priority with the process beginning soon.
- Nominating Committee Report: Election of board members and officers.
- Bylaws Revisions Approved

A copy of the meeting minutes can be found on the FSP website www.ncfsp.org.

Election of Board Members and Officers

Tim Aydlett, Will Hendrick, Mary Penny Thompson and Doug Youngblood were elected as new members of the FSP board. Mary Penny Thompson was elected secretary and Doug Youngblood, treasurer.

Meet New FSP Officers and Board Members



Photo by Bob Sowa

L to r: Doug Youngblood, Mary Penny Thompson, Will Hendrick

Mary Penny Thompson is a nature enthusiast with a wealth of environmental management experience. She held top executive positions at the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) with prior service as a litigator with the NC Department of Justice's Environmental Division.

Douglas Youngblood is a self-employed CPA who has provided volunteer organizational leadership in areas related to parks and recreation over a span of 21 years. Organizations include Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Commission; N.C. Parks and Recreation Association; National Parks and Recreation Association, Foundation for Sustainable Parks and Recreation and now president of Partners for Parks, an independent nonprofit organization.

Tim Aydlett is a retired school principal. He is a certified Environmental Educator who serves on the EE Advisory Committee and as chairman of the Dismal Swamp State Park Advisory Committee and a board member of Friends of Dismal Swamp State Park. As a PARTF member, Tim visited, hiked or camped at every state park. He is a huge supporter of state parks and their hard working, dedicated staff.

Will Hendrick is an associate attorney with the Southern Environmental Law Center committed to using the power of the law to fight for the preservation of North Carolina's unique natural resources. Prior to joining the SELC, he served as a Legal Specialist with the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources assigned to provide legal counsel to the Division of Parks and Recreation.

Renew Your FSP Membership

Every paid-up membership helps FSP with our mission to support N.C State Parks so please consider renewing yours now. All memberships and donations received before year end will be credited to a full year of membership for 2014 and will have the advantage of being tax deductible on your 2013 tax return (if you itemize). You can see the status of your current membership by examining the code on your newsletter mailing label - the two digits are your last paid year of membership.

Why not save paper and postage by renewing your membership online at www.ncfsp.org/mship1? Notice that using PayPal, we can now offer the convenience of automatic membership renewal, where you specify the amount and frequency of your donation. That way you would always be current and we would be able to count on your support.

Whatever means you choose to renew your membership, please let us know if you would like to receive your newsletter by email where you would enjoy color pictures and save us printing and mailing expenses.



Photo by Bob Sowa

FSP members enjoy a tasty lunch prepared by Cathy Neilson and other Friends of Lake Waccamaw.

News from State Parks

Superintendents Gather for Annual Conference

State Park Superintendents gathered November 18-20 at the Summit Environmental Education Center of Haw River State Park for their 63rd annual conference. The theme of the conference was “North Carolina State Parks: Naturally Wonderful, Infinitely Valuable.” Along with presentations on a range of relevant program and administrative topics, years of service awards were presented to long-term park employees. Brad Ives, assistant secretary of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, presented Lewis Ledford with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine, North Carolina’s highest civilian honor. Lewis who retires Dec. 31 recognized David Pearson’s tireless service to state parks by presenting him the Elisha Mitchell award. Congratulations to Keith Neelson, conference chair, for an outstanding conference.



Left to right: Lewis Ledford, David Pearson, and Brad Ives at the Superintendents' Conference

Lumber River Offers Canoeing Adventures



Friends of State Parks seized the brilliant autumn day November 3 to canoe on the Lumber River safely guided by Park Superintendent Neill Lee.

Americorps Members Assist in State Parks

The Americorps Mountains to Sea program will place 20 Americorps members in DENR agencies across the state from December 2, 2013 to October 4, 2014. Each member will contribute 1,700 hours of national service towards environmental education and outreach. North Carolina State Parks played a key role in securing the federal grant. Interpretation & Education Americorps members will serve at Eno River, Cliffs of the Neuse, Carvers Creek, New River, Haw River and Falls Lake.

Carvers Creek State Park

from Jane Conolly, Park Superintendent

During the first three weeks after opening on September 9, there were over 15,000 visitors to Carvers Creek State Park. The park has opened the mill pond to fishing and has had a constant inflow of anglers every day. The park held its first educational program, on snakes, with close to 40 people attending. Park visitors have been very enthusiastic about the opening and excited to have a state park so close. The goals for the next quarter are for staff to continue to work on the wayside exhibit process and obtain oral histories about Long Valley Farm.

Grason Humphrey's Eagle Scout project is one for the birds --building a bird house at Carver Creek State Park with mounting poles and predator guards. Congratulations to Grason for a successful project!
Photo by Bob Sowa



News from Friends Groups

YIP-EE School Outings to Pettigrew State Park

YIP-EE transportation grants to Manteo Elementary School and Central Elementary School in Currituck County enabled fourth graders to attend Indian Heritage Week at Pettigrew State Park in October. Friends of Pettigrew State Park initiated the request. FPSP members were involved also in giving presentations and purchasing food and last minute supplies for the presenters. The students had glowing comments about the day.



Park Ranger introduces wildlife to fourth graders from Central Elementary School



Students from Manteo Elementary School learn about Native American pottery

Dismal Swamp Friends Group Holds Contest to Name 400-pound Bear

Dismal Swamp State Park is proud to introduce Midnight, a 400 pound black bear mounted and proudly displayed. The bear met its demise on Highway 17, immediately east of the park and the Dismal Swamp Canal and “now lives on as a wonderful educational tool.” Many organizations including FSP and Friends of Dismal Swamp came together to make this happen.

Park Superintendent Joy Greenwood explains “this bear will help further our educational goals by letting our park visitors see a life size black bear up close. One of the most commonly asked questions we have at the park is how often we see bears. We plan to use it in several of our upcoming programs including our

Denziens of the Dismal program and develop an educational panel to educate our visitors about the bear’s life at the swamp.” On October 19th, the Park and Friends group held a contest to name the bear during the annual Dismal Day Festival. Children were asked to make interesting suggestions for the name. The winning name selected was Midnight.



Midnight in its new home in the lobby of the park’s visitor center with park ranger Katie Sanford, Friends Member Francis Gass (who suggested the naming contest), and winner LoriBeth Dunn.

Your Invitation to Canoe a “Natural and Scenic River”

by Jane Hunt

When European settlers came to the area they named the 133 mile long river “Drowning Creek”. In 1809 it was given the less terrifying name of “Lumber River” which reflected the main industry at that time. In 2009 the Lumbee Indians asked the Legislature to change the name back to the ancestral name which was “Lumbee” and translated meant, “Dark Water”. The 2013 map of North Carolina still lists it as the Lumber River.

The river flows from near Winston Salem into the Pee Dee and finally makes its way to the ocean at Georgetown, South Carolina. It is the only blackwater river in North Carolina which has the distinction of being named a Natural and Scenic River and in 2010 was named as one of the top ten natural wonders in the State. There are many places along the river which are official boat

launch areas and flat water is easy to handle for most novices, so find a canoe and a partner and take a day to paddle your way downstream gazing at Spanish moss, cypress knees, kingfishers, and whirlygig beetles.



Photo by Dorothy Graham

Saying Farewell to My Favorite Power Ranger: Lewis Ledford

By David Pearson

Farewell to Lewis Ledford

As we matriculate the college of life we have the opportunity to meet some really amazing professors who make contributions to our lives which we really never completely understand until someday when they retire or move on to the next field of study.

My friend, Lewis Ledford, is one of those people in my life; and, I imagine many of yours too.

I have to start by telling the story of how I first met Lew. Hammocks Beach State Park was in danger of being closed due to Cow Channel filling in and the ferries not being able to get to Bear Island. After many attempts at a resolution, our friends group decided I should go to Raleigh and make a desperate plea for help to the Director. Not knowing my way around the Capital, I asked our park superintendent where the Director's office was located. I was told that if I stood at the Legislative Building and looked down the mall I would see the Archdale Building. I should go into it and ask for Mr. Ledford. Once I got to Jones Street I looked down the mall with museums on both sides. I proceeded to the building at the end and once I got to the door it was locked. I turned to see if I could get help, when a Crown Victoria pulled up on the sidewalk and a gentleman stepped out. I asked him if he was Mr. Ledford. He replied no, but invited me in and asked his secretary to look up Mr. Ledford. As I talked with Mr. Franklin Freeman, I discussed my concerns about State Parks with him and the reason for my trip to the Capital. I also realized we had many common friends in North Carolina and that he was in charge of the Governor's office. Mr. Freeman called Mr. Ledford's office and said he was sending me over to see him. I am not sure if the Governor's office calls the Director of State Parks every day and tells them they are sending over a Friend, but it is a really cool memory Lew and I have reminisced about over the years.

Anyone who knows Lew, knows you don't have to be sent from the Governor's office for him to be excited to see you or for him to give you his undivided attention. Lewis Ledford is a people person and motivated by his love for parks and the outdoors. His dream is for North Carolina to have the best of the best of State Parks nationwide. He is driven in his passion for our State and our Parks. The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation has transformed under his leadership. It has grown in acreage and in service to the public with record attendance. Recently, I attended the National Recreation and Parks Association Congress in Houston Texas with Lew. To say he is well respected on the National level

is an understatement. Everywhere we went in Houston people from all walks of life and parks systems would come up and say hello to Lew, it was like being with a Rock Star!

Over the last decade I have talked with Lew daily, he is one of my best friends. After 38 years he is moving on and I am going to miss him. He will be working as Executive Director of the National Association of State Park Directors and promoting State Parks on a national level. I am sure we will be working together somehow, but I know it will never be the same. I also know Lew is not the Lone Ranger and will not be riding off into the sunset. His passion for parks is what drives him. He surrounds himself with people who share his passion and he is one of North Carolina State Parks most enthusiastic supporters. For many years he has been a "dues paying" member of Friends of State Parks.

So we say farewell to Lewis Ledford as Director of North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation and we say... Hello Lewis Ledford our Friend of State Parks!

A Whale on Display at Lake Waccamaw

by Jane Hunt

Imagine you were wading in a lake and stubbed your toe on a hard object. If you were wading at Lake Waccamaw you might assume it was a cypress root sticking up from the sand. Cathy Neilson had such an experience in 2008. She had often stumbled on this "root". But that summer the lake water was low and she was snorkeling and took another look and thought it did not look like wood, but bone. She was able to get a piece loose and showed it to several people who brushed it off as just another shark tooth fossil. Cathy persisted however, and got the attention of Vince Schneider at the Raleigh Museum of Natural Science who was curious enough to make the trip to the Lake for another look. He was able to confirm it to be part of a whale. Now Lake Waccamaw is about 60 miles inland, so when was this lake underwater as part of the Atlantic Ocean? Just about 3 million years ago. Dug up, reassembled and encased in plexiglass, this large jaw bone and head of a baleen whale is now on display at the Visitors Center at Lake Waccamaw State Park.



Park Superintendent Hall leads FSP members on a nature walk.

Friends of State Parks

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_____ Student _____	\$10.00	_____ Donor _____	\$50.00
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_____ Single _____	\$15.00	_____ Family _____	\$20.00
_____ Patron _____	\$100.00 (or more)		

Name _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

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Phone: _____ Email: _____

Dates and Locations for 2014 Board Meetings:

January 25	Weymouth Woods - 11 am
April 26	Kerr Lake
July 26	South Mountains
October 25	(Annual Meeting) Lake Norman

FRIENDS OF STATE PARKS OFFICERS and DIRECTORS

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

Telephone: 919-827-1088, Website: www.ncfsp.org

Executive Committee

President - David Pearson, Swansboro
Vice-president - Jim Richardson, Raleigh
Vice-president - Dorothy Graham, Durham
Secretary - Mary Penny Thompson, Apex
Treasurer - Doug Youngblood, Charlotte

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Will Hendrick, Chapel Hill, NC
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Morgan Richardson Lloyd, Raleigh, NC
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