

**North Carolina
Friends of State Parks
2015 Annual Report**

North Carolina Friends of State Parks, Inc.

Mission Statement

Friends of State Parks is a citizen's group dedicated to the understanding, enjoyment, and protection of North Carolina's State Parks. FSP was formed in 1973 and incorporated on December 15, 1978 and designated as a 501(c)3 federal tax exempt organization. Tax ID #58-1634155

FSP supports the mission of N.C. Division of State Parks and Recreation: to protect and manage the unique biological, geological, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources of the state. Friends of State Parks promotes public awareness of the immense contributions of these natural areas to the quality of life for North Carolinians of present and future generations.

P.O. Box 37655
Raleigh, NC 27627
(919) 827-1088
www.ncfsp.org

Contents

Welcome	1
Executive Director's Message.....	1
Board of Directors	2
Remembering Alice	3
Promote	4
2015 Friends Conference.....	4
State Park Connections.....	5
State Park License Plate.....	6
Advocate	7
Centennial Planning	7
Hammocks Beach State Park Land Acquisition	8
Support	9
Photo Scavenger Hunt	9
Parks & Greenways Celebrations	10
Junior Ranger Program	11
Youth in Parks Environmental Education	12
Long Valley Farm at Carvers Creek State Park.....	13
It's Good to have Friends.....	14
Financial.....	15
2014 Expenditures.....	15
2014 Support and Revenues.....	15

Dear Friends,

In 2016 our North Carolina state park system, that began a century ago with the establishment of Mount Mitchell State Park in 1916, and reaches from the highest mountain in eastern North America, to the second oldest river in the world, to the tallest sand dune on the Atlantic seaboard, to unique habitats and endangered species, will turn one hundred years old. From its modest beginnings our North Carolina state parks now offer a wide range of educational opportunities and quality outdoor experiences and has reached visitation levels of over 15 million visitors each year.

As we look to the future and plan for the Centennial, North Carolina Friends of State Parks will take an active role in promoting, supporting, and advocating for the next 100 years of our State Park system. Our Board of Directors has made decisions to invest in the future. North Carolina Friends of State Parks has a new mobile friendly website designed to promote our state parks, our membership, and events. Over the last year our Board has also invested funds for the first time in our history to conduct research and carefully develop a robust capital campaign to support every State Park. The Capital Campaign is envisioned as a public/private partnership with the State of North Carolina providing seventy five percent of the cost and Friends raising private dollars to fund the remaining twenty five percent. To accomplish our goal we first set out to advocate for seventy five million in bonds for the citizens to vote on. Once the citizens make their choice Friends will be positioned to begin promoting and supporting the projects and raising funds to meet the 25 million dollar capital campaign goal. Every park has a designated project and every citizen in North Carolina has a voice.

We are keeping our focus on supporting and funding our environmental programs including the junior ranger and the YIP-EE (youth in park & environmental education) programs, while developing new programs such as a park passport and a 100 mile challenge to engage park visitors during the next one hundred years.

Support for these and other projects are made possible by donations and membership dues to North Carolina Friends of State Parks. There are many ways to support FSP, the simplest is to visit our website and join as a member, or make a donation, or volunteer. If you are planning your estate, FSP has an endowment fund setup with the NC Community Foundation. Or, you can always support FSP with a NC State Parks license plate or buying items on Amazon Smile.

As we prepare for the Centennial, it is our hope you will join us in promoting, supporting, and advocating for North Carolina's *Naturally Wonderful* state parks system!

Sincerely,



David M. Pearson, Executive Director
Friends of State Parks, Inc.

Board of Directors

Executive Committee

President – Jim Richardson, Raleigh

Vice President - Dr. Cyndy Weeks, Carrboro

Secretary – Jessica Griffin, Burlington

Treasurer – Doug Youngblood, Charlotte

Immediate Past President - Mary Penny Kelly, Apex

Executive Director - David M. Pearson, Swansboro

At-Large Board Members

Tim Aydlett, Elizabeth City

Lindsey Golnik, Raleigh

Will Hendrick, Chapel Hill

Jane Hunt, Raleigh

Katherine Larsen, Raleigh

Morgan Richardson Lloyd, Garner

Chandler Palethorpe, Gibsonville

Jim Proctor, Lake Lure

Alec Whitaker, Raleigh

Alice Zawadzki, Raleigh

Emeritus - Dorothy Graham, Durham

Local Friends Groups

Local friends groups are a great way for neighboring communities to support their parks and participate in park programs. Each park in the East District has a local friends group, while the other districts are close behind. Some groups are supporting more than one park which helps our parks that are not close to large populations.

Remembering Alice



FSP and NC have lost one of its prime supporters with the recent death of Alice Zawadzki.

As a Board Member she was very alert to proper procedure and often wrote articles for the Newsletter.

Alice was particularly attuned to the native wildflowers of North Carolina. Above all, she realized the importance of our being stewards of our surroundings.

Her talent to bring nature, joy and love to those she touched was truly a gift and it was a passion which she shared with us.

She served as a volunteer docent and guide at the Sarah P. Duke Gardens in Durham and was an active member of the Unitarian Universalist Fellowship of Raleigh.

Alice was a founder of the Polish-American Dance group and other dance groups as well as singing groups. Taking her love of music and her love for people, she often ministered to shut-ins with song and stories.

A degree in chemistry combined with her passion for the environment led her into active roles in the Friends of Plant Conservation Foundation, North Carolina Native Plant Society, North Carolina Botanical Garden Foundation, the Conservation Council of NC Foundation, NC Coastal Land Trust, B W Wells Association, and other concerned organizations.

Her work with the FSP has helped make North Carolina a better place for ourselves and for future generations.

You would recognize her because of her dress...all one color, usually a flowing gown, and her hat covered with pins telling us what she supported, and around her neck hung keys, a frog flashlight and whistle. Her family always sang at Birthday's...in Polish, "May you live 100 years"...though Alice did not make it, her memory, merriment, and influence certainly will.



Friends of State Parks

Energizes for Centennial Celebration

On the eve of the state parks system's centennial, the nonprofit Friends of State Parks has developed a strategic plan that will help it become a more effective advocate for state parks in North Carolina.



"We need to grow up, mature and celebrate this birthday," Mary Penny Kelley, president of the organization, told members during its annual conference in Raleigh. The strategic plan, she said, concentrates on developing "superpowers" to reach its goals.

The statewide Friends of State Parks has been actively involved in centennial planning and will lead an effort to gather corporate and citizen support of the year-long celebration in 2016.

Mike Murphy, director of the state parks, said the centennial is a premier opportunity to leverage publicity for support of state parks as well as its varied friends groups. The opportunity, he said, "gives us a way to speak to leadership about the value of parks and the need to fund them."

Murphy detailed centennial plans, which include special events at every state park and signature events at Mount Mitchell and Fort Macon. More detail came from Sean Higgins, head of the parks system's education program who is coordinating those events, and from MSA, a Raleigh-based firm developing a marketing strategy for the centennial.

In recent years, Friends of State Parks has nurtured its role as an umbrella organization, helping local friends groups organize to support individual parks. It has also increased funding for education programs such as the Junior Ranger and school field trips. In 2014, it hired former president Dave Pearson as an executive director.



PROMOTE

Connections

Friends website friendlier to smartphones and tablets

An improved Friends of State Parks website at www.ncfsp.org was introduced in November of 2014 after a major redesign. Aside from refining many of the site's most popular features, the upgrade results in a site friendlier to smartphones and tablets.

The ways that people use the Internet constantly evolve. One of the most significant changes in recent years is that more people now use mobile devices to reach favored websites rather than desktop or laptop computers. And, social media plays a larger role than ever. The site is designed to allow visitors to find information quickly and efficiently.

The new site incorporates a member database and allows state park supporters to make donations, join Friends of State Parks, and register for events online.

Users will find a close integration with Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube, and other social media links

Because the website now is such a vital part of serving state park friends, it will continue to be a work in progress. So, feedback and suggestions on improvements are always welcome.



State Park License Plate

Help Support and Protect State Parks with a N.C. State Parks License Plate

The revenue derived from the special plate is transferred to Friends of State Parks, Inc., for its educational, conservation, and other programs in support of the operations of the State Parks System

- Complete an online DMV application
- Visit your local DMV license bureau
- Or you may download an application and mail it in for processing.

Send your completed application, along with payment to the DMV. Make checks payable to N.C. DMV.

North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles
3155 Mail Service Center
Raleigh NC 27699-3155



Centennial Planning

Centennial Capital Campaign

At the April 2014 Board of Directors meeting the board voted to evaluate and hire a capital campaign consulting firm to initiate a large capital campaign on behalf of Friends of State Parks. At the same meeting the board voted to contract with the NC Community Foundation to establish an endowment fund and a gift fund related to the capital campaign.

The capital campaign is envisioned as a joint public private partnership where Friends of State Parks advocates for \$75 million in bonds for State Parks and FSP will raise \$25 million through private donations.

Friends also advocated for the Governor and General Assembly to support the North Carolina State Parks Centennial year with funding for promotion and advertising.

Highlights of the 2014 legislative year

- Camp Sertoma in Surry County is transferred to DENR to add to the State Parks System; there is a corresponding money provision to provide \$70,000 in recurring operating dollars for the property.
- A member representing the State Parks System has been added to the NC Travel & Tourism Board.
- The state is directed to study highway signage as a means of increasing awareness of State Parks and the Mountains-to-Sea Trail.
- The Parks & Recreation Trust Fund, along with every other DENR special fund, lost its interest earnings (approximately \$130,000 annually), but the base amount of the allocation was left untouched (a victory in and of itself, as many funds were swept to pay for statewide initiatives such as teacher pay).
- \$3 million will be financed through the 2/3 Bond Act to be used for the expansion of Hammocks Beach State Park following the recent signing of a settlement agreement for the property.
- State Parks will take a \$414,616 reduction in operating dollars (the Governor and Senate had originally proposed \$623,360 in operating reductions).



Land Acquisition

Hammocks Beach State Park

In June of 2014 the State Board of Education, the heirs of John and Gertrude Hurst, and the Hammocks Beach Corporation entered into an agreement that ended decades of legal wrangling. Friends of State Parks was instrumental in facilitating this settlement. The current lawsuit had been ongoing for over eight years when FSP Past President and Executive Director, David Pearson, met with attorneys representing the parties and worked out a settlement. Many others, including Past President, Mary Penny Kelly, and the local friends group, Friends of the Hammocks and Bear Island, were involved and advocated for this acquisition. FSP was able to effectively advocate for funding through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the 2/3 Bond Act, and The Conservation Fund. The acquisition brings 290 acres of pristine coastal forest into Hammocks Beach State Park.

The property was once used by the North Carolina Teachers Association as a retreat for African American Teachers to visit the coast. The remnants of two camps are on the property and part of the settlement included provisions for the Hurst Family to lease one camp for children.



Photo Scavenger Hunt

A group of young NC State Park employees gathered together at the 2012 Outdoor Nation Summit to brainstorm and plan a new project. Their task was to design a zero-impact recreational opportunity for NC State Parks that would utilize technology to bring people outdoors and connect and engage them with our state's natural wonders.

The team designed and created the NC State Parks Photo Scavenger Hunt Challenge. The project seemed to be a simple yet effective way to bring people outdoors and utilize technology to truly engage participants in the natural environment around them. Participants could use a digital camera, a cell phone camera or even a disposable camera of any quality to find and

photograph a list of natural objects and phenomena. Challenges such as "Photograph a piece of litter you picked up and disposed of" and "Take a picture of a blaze from a trail that you hiked" engaged participants with the park they were visiting, and all participants could enter themselves into a raffle drawing once they completed the challenge.

The Photo Scavenger Hunt was initially intended to be implemented in just ten of North Carolina's state parks with grant funding from Outdoor Nation's Outdoor Foundation.

In 2014 Friends of NC State Parks teamed up with the initial Outdoor Nation project team and expanded the project statewide.



Parks & Greenways

Partnerships Celebrations

Friends of State Parks funded three State Park events with a grant from the National Environmental Education Foundation.

The Triangle Volksmarch is intended to get people of all ages walking, hiking and biking to discover the amazing public lands that are connecting by the Capital Greenway. The event is modeled after the traditional German Volksmarch (people's march) where people earn badges for taking part in noncompetitive fitness walks. Participants collect stamps in a passport book at five public lands sites including William B. Umstead State Park, Prairie Ridge Ecostation, Schenck Forest and Art Park. Four special programs at the public lands sites will highlight each unique site.

Heritage Day at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area is an opportunity to show the community the history of the land before the creation of Jordan Lake. Every fall we celebrate the unique cultural and natural resources of this region. It gives participants an opportunity to see and experience activities related to agricultural, industrial, natural, and Native American history. While the event has been held more than 10 years, we feel that enhancing and increasing the activities for children will help reinvigorate it.

The Falls Lake State Recreation Area Youth Fishing Tournament is an opportunity to introduce kids and their parents to fishing and raise awareness about local species in Falls Lake as well as foster an appreciation for the natural environment. The event is in its second year and we hope to have a turnout of about 150 kids ages 5-13 participating in the tournament and their families. We will also have a festival-like arrangement for educational booths in which we hope all ages will attend.



Junior Ranger Program

Junior Ranger Programs engage elementary age children ages 6-12 in meaningful learning by participating in park educational programs, completing an activity booklet, and learning about stewardship of natural resources. Children can earn a badge by completing the activity booklet for a park. They complete the booklet for multiple parks and collect additional badges. They have the option of joining a free Department of Parks and Recreation newsletter for Junior Rangers. After a successful pilot program with five parks the program is now available for all North Carolina's State Parks. For more information and to download the activity booklet, go to www.ncparks.gov/junior-rangers



This award-winning program was developed by Interpretation and Education staff and funded by the Friends of State Parks through a Great Outdoor Provision Company grant.

In the same spirit that Coloradans set out to summit fourteeners and many set out to hike the Appalachian Trail, we have a growing group (like Aubrey pictured) who are setting out to collect as many junior ranger patches as possible.

Aubrey's father noted the photo scavenger hunt started their "state parks bug". Their family visited parks in all four districts, and were greeted with incredible professionalism and friendliness everywhere! We certainly have wonderful park rangers.

Youth in Parks Environmental Education

Providing opportunities for public school children to learn about nature in our state parks is the pivotal goal of FSP's Youth in Parks Environmental Education (YIP-EE) Program. Through these experiences we hope to foster a lifelong love of nature and promote environmental stewardship and preserving our state's natural resources.

By creating collaboration between public schools, local friends groups and NC State Parks, the YIP-EE Program hopes to eliminate the barriers that keep young people from learning about their environment in a natural setting. Budget cuts are making it increasingly difficult for schools to support outdoor education with hands on learning experiences and field trips. Many families lack the resources to do this on their own. Parks face their own obstacles in having enough staff to accommodate all the individuals and groups who might want to participate in their programs.

Friends of State Parks provides grants to assist public schools in funding field trips covering the costs for transportation to NC State Parks. In 2014 the Friends of State Parks extended their funding to including additional supporting costs including costs for substitute teachers.



School groups and State Parks awarded grants in 2014

- East Albemarle Elementary and Morrow Mountain State Park
- Old Town Elementary and Hanging Rock State Park
- Haliwa-Saponi Tribal School and Kerr Lake State Recreation Area
- Manteo Elementary School and Pettigrew State Park
- Brevard Middle School and Jefferson State Natural Area
- Ashe County High School and Gorges State Park

Creative collaboration between state park personnel and public school instructors make all the difference for many children who would otherwise not have the opportunity to explore our state's educationally rich natural areas.

Local friends groups also play an important role in connecting educators with their local state parks, encouraging grant applications and supporting these efforts by offering volunteer assistance.

Long Valley Farm

Happy Second Anniversary to Carvers Creek State Park!

Park Volunteers have been very helpful in many projects and programs over the last two years. To date the park has had the participation of more than 250 volunteers putting in over 1,120 hours of work! Volunteers have worked on trails, removed old barbed wire fence, controlled harmful non-native plants, built a privacy fence, cleaned-up hundreds of pounds of litter and trash, and many other projects. Rangers with the help of several volunteers and some Boy Scouts, planted a Pollinator's Garden next to the park office, Wood Duck boxes on the Millpond, Blue bird houses throughout the park, and the flag pole.

Many, many thanks to all the volunteers for your hard work and desire to give back!

One of the park's most important mandates is to provide environmental educational opportunities that promote stewardship of our natural resources. Since opening the park has presented 270 programs attended by 5,577 people! In 2014 the park was recognized for programming efforts by winning an internal division award for the best programming of all the 41 state parks!

Speaking of stewardship of natural resources Carver's Creek State Park has had many successes! There have been seven prescribed burns of a total of 786 acres. Harmful, non-native plants have been inventoried and many control efforts put into practice. Nine biologist or other researchers have conducted studies within the park documenting plants, frogs, birds, and other wildlife. And, a very large wetlands and stream restoration project was successfully completed.



It's Good to have Friends

Shoes and Ships and Sealing Wax?

Perhaps not – but stones and signs and shirts are among our 'many things.' The 'things' the Friends of States Parks grant program has covered range from the stones of rebuilt walls at the entrance to Morrow Mountain State Park, the signs that identify the mountain peaks visible from Moore's Knob in Hanging Rock State Park and the T-shirts that celebrate the festivals and summer camps of Singletary Lake State Park.

Friends of Morrow Mountain came close to their \$19,000 funding target by raising \$12,000 locally in cash donations which together with a \$5,000 Friends of State Parks grant, 'in-kind' donations such as the loan of a front-loader and, most important, a lot of volunteer enthusiasm and sweat restored the walls originally built by the Civilian Conservation Corps in the 1930s.

Singletary Lake State Park used a grant of \$1500 for logo design and T-shirt printing. Of the four different designs, two celebrate summer camps and two the park.

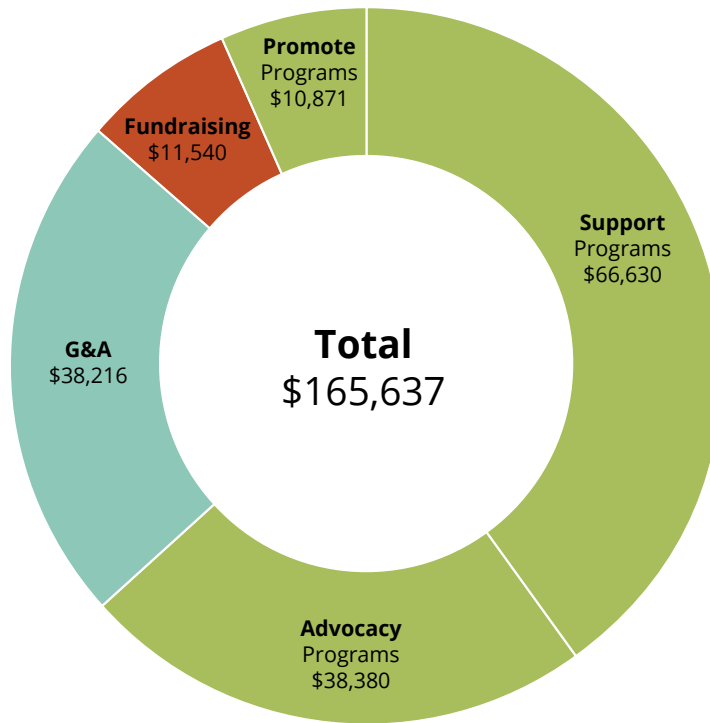
Gorges State Park used their grant to produce a beautiful weatherproof park map showing the trails and features of the park that has sold well in the region.

Other grants have funded taxidermy – unfortunate creatures hit by cars survive as educational exhibits – black bears at Medoc Mountain and Dismal Swamp and a coyote at Eno River State Parks.

Grants applications are available at the Friends of State Parks web site (go to 'Programs' and download from 'Grants'.) Any supporter of North Carolina State Parks may apply but priority for available funds goes to Friends groups for projects or activities in their local park, followed by those from Parks' staff.

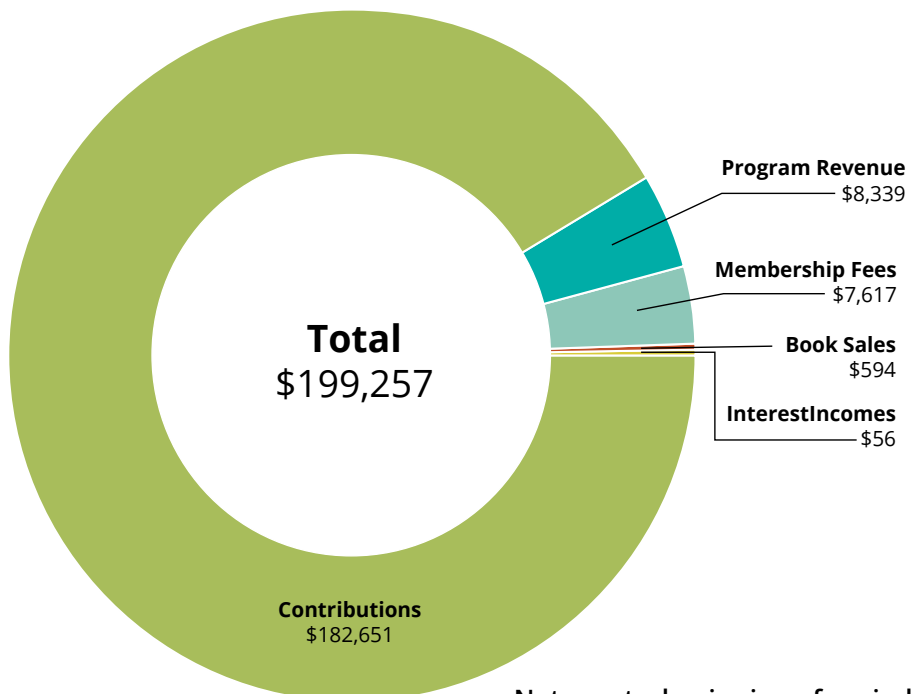


2014 Expenditures



Total Programs 70%
 Total General and Administrative Expenses 23%
 Fundraising 7%

2014 Support and Revenues



Net assets, beginning of period \$175,293
 Net assets, end of period \$231,918
 Change in assets \$56,625



Find us at:

www.ncfsp.org

www.facebook.com/NCFSP

www.twitter.com/NCFSP

Supporting N.C. State Parks for over 40 years



Find us at:

www.ncparks.gov

www.facebook.com/NorthCarolinaStateParks

www.twitter.com/NCparks



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

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non Profit Org
US Postage
PAID
PERMIT #167
Raleigh, NC

Become a member of North Carolina Friends of State Parks!

With your support, our educators, advocates, conservationists, and Rangers will continue their work to ensure a healthy and prosperous State Park System. Your annual membership helps to

- Support the mission of NC State Parks
- Protect Unique Biological, geological, archaeological, recreational, and scenic resources of our state.
- Promote public awareness of the immense contributions of these natural areas to the quality of life for North Carolinians of present and future generations.
- Provide outdoor recreational & educational opportunities to North Carolina's youth

To say thank you, you will receive these great benefits:

- Add your Voice to supporting our State Parks when FSP presents your views to the Department and Legislature
- Opportunities to interact with other supporters of North Carolina's natural resources
- Receive information about each Park and the total Park System
- A Quarterly Newsletter which gives news from the 40 Parks, FSP activities, major park events, legislative action, and issues in the parks
- Reduced rates on FSP sponsored publications
- Annual Report
- Hands on volunteer opportunities

You can join today at www.NCFSP.org

Remember your membership is current for one calendar year. You can always renew online or by mail.

Questions? Call or email us: (919) 827-1088
or Friends@NCFSP.org



Join the fun at
www.NCFSP.org

