



Summer 2016

A celebratory tour by Gov. Pat McCrory in the wake of a successful \$2 billion bond referendum was launched from Jordan Lake State Recreation Area. The bond package includes \$75 million for projects throughout the state parks system.

Gov. McCrory thanked North Carolinians for voting for the Connect NC bonds by a two-thirds majority and said it represented foresight and a positive attitude during a tumultuous election year. "It sent a message that we can all come together and put away partisan differences," he said. "Through the whole process I've just seen positive dialogue."

At the edge of the lake, McCrory was joined by Susan Kluttz, Secretary of the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, Mike Murphy, state parks director, and delegations from institutions that will benefit from the bonds, including state park rangers, UNC School of Medicine students, National Guardsmen and university and community college students. Later in the day, the governor visited NC A&T University in Greensboro and Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte.



For the state parks system, the bond passage will result in projects at 45 state park units, including every state park and state recreation area and several state natural areas. The identified projects include: \$20.8 million for new or improved visitor centers and community buildings in 11 parks; \$18.8 million for new or expanded campgrounds and cabins in 12 parks; \$21.3 million for other visitor facilities in 12 parks; and, \$14.1 million for land acquisition at 10 park units.

McCrory said the next step is to ensure the bond money is spent wisely for facilities that retain their usefulness over time and are flexible enough to meet changing needs. "It's not just getting the bonds passed, it's execution," he said.

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Points of interest

- National Public Lands Day
Saturday, September 24th
- Junior Ranger Jamboree
October 1 & 2 at Jordan Lake



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Message from the Executive Director

First came the miners. All they wanted were a few minerals and there were plenty.

Then came the lumberjacks. All they wanted were a few trees and there were plenty.

Then came the railroad men. All they wanted was a little space to travel up the mountain and there was plenty.

Then came the mill. Lumber was needed for construction and the mill made plenty.

And then came the lumber camps, housing, and loggers by the hundreds. Lots of men were needed for labor and the camps provided plenty.

The economy was booming. It was the land of opportunity.

And everyone thought there was plenty –

except for a few, who were afraid that soon there would be none.

Trees were cut by the hundreds. Whole forests were destroyed.

And, the few became outraged and appealed to the governor who insisted that it stop, and he convinced the legislature to establish the first state park. And then there was one.

That was in 1915.

For 100 years the "Few" have organized in greater numbers and are today known as "Friends Groups". Friends Groups have promoted, advocated, and supported the growing state park system.

What started with a few friends 100 years ago has become North Carolina's "Naturally Wonderful" state-wide park system!

Legislative Update, by Elizabeth Biser

The General Assembly adjourned its 2016 "short" session (which began in April) on July 1.

The purpose of the short session is to make adjustments to the two-year budget adopted in 2015. As a practical matter, many substantive policy issues are also addressed. The biggest item of interest for Parks is the budget, as it determines how much money is available for use by the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for the upcoming year. Here's how parks fared this year:

Budget

Funding remains untouched: More than \$10M is slated to be added to the Trust Fund (on top of the base amount of approximately \$13M) this year. There was one earmark added in the final hours of budget negotiations (for the Montford Point Marine Memorial park in Jacksonville) but the associated funding (\$330K) was added to the trust fund to pay for the earmark.

DuPont State Recreational Forest: The budget opens the way for State Recreational Forests (of which there is one - DuPont State Recreational Forest) to be eligible for the state portion of the PARTF. The Parks Authority will still be the decision maker in the funding distribution process.

Clarifying and Conforming Changes

Hotel & Inn Provision: There was a provision in the Senate budget to allow State Parks to construct, maintain, operate, or lease a hotel or tourist inn. The provision was intended to address existing facilities at Hanging Rock and Haw River State Parks. The final budget, instead, explicitly maintains a prohibition on State Parks constructing, maintaining, operating, or leasing a

hotel or tourist inn. Instead, it directs the Department to study the issue with regards to its applicability at Hanging Rock and Haw River State Parks.

Jessica Lunsford Act Amendments

HB1021, Amend Sex Offender Certain Premises, was passed as a means to address North Carolina's sex offender law while a challenge to GS 14-208.18 (the Jessica Lunsford Act) makes its way through the court system. The bill prohibits any person required to register as a sex offender from knowingly being at any place where minors "frequently congregate" including amusement and recreation parks. There are exceptions for medical care treatment, voting at the polls, and for parents of minors.

This law is effective unless either or both of the court rulings find the previous law unconstitutional.

State Nature & Historic Preserve Amendments

The legislature passed SB 124, which contained an annual list of additions and deletions to the State Parks System's land. Most land in the State Parks System is protected under the State Nature & Historic Preserve, which requires a 3/5 vote of each chamber to amend. The changes are minor boundary changes resulting from small land exchanges or rights-of-way issues.

What's Next

All 170 legislators and the entire Council of State will be on the ballot in November. The 2017 General Assembly will begin its work on January 11, 2017.

Hanging Rock State Park welcomes 136 new Junior Rangers to celebrate 100 years!

Hanging Rock State Park's goal was to train 100 new Junior Rangers to commemorate the 100th birthday of North Carolina State Parks.

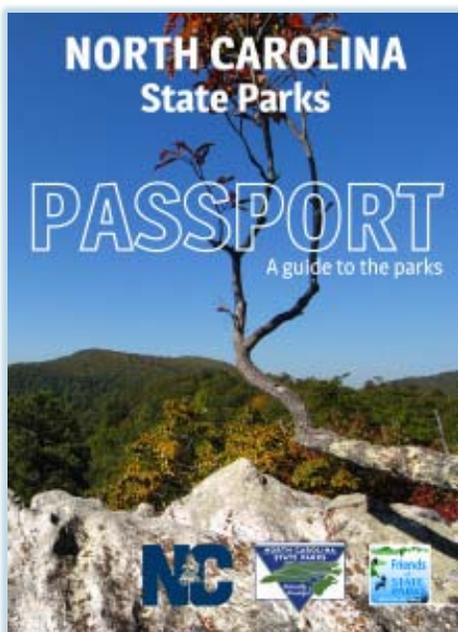
The park easily surpassed that mark, welcoming 136 new Junior Rangers to the ranks, teaching them about stewardship of the natural resources, how to find nature's secrets in the forest, state parks history and the finer points of a ranger's duties.

Superintendent Robin Riddlebarger and the park's staff cycled the candidates through learning stations. For a stewardship project, the youngsters helped fill landscaping steps with soil, forming a bucket brigade. Then, Mike Murphy, state parks director, swore them in with the oath and presented each with a Hanging Rock State Park Junior Ranger patch and certificate.

To learn more about the Junior Ranger program contact your nearest State Park.



North Carolina State Parks Passport



Over the years, many people have taken on the challenge of visiting every state park, but bragging rights to that accomplishment have been difficult to back up until now with the introduction of the North Carolina State Parks Passport.

In celebration of our 2016 Centennial, the passport program allows outdoor lovers to carry a keepsake passport to be stamped at any of the 41 states parks visited.

For a limited time, the passport is free and every visitor completing the challenge will get a Centennial prize pack. The more state parks you visit and stamps you collect, the more prizes you can earn.

If you can't get to a park right away, you can also get a passport from the Division's online store. Just for fun, many of our parks are offering stickers at interpretive programs and special events, which can also be placed into the passport.

National Public Lands Day 2016!

2016 National Public Lands Day Registration is Now Open!

Registration is now open for the 23rd annual NEEF **National Public Lands Day**, taking place this year on **Saturday, September 24th!**

If you are planning an event for this year's NPLD, you can register NOW using the new registration form on the NEEF website. Looking for a public lands event to participate in on NPLD? Use the new event finder to locate events near you.

**CELEBRATE SOMETHING
WE ALL SHARE:
OUR PUBLIC LANDS**



The Battle and Siege of Fort Macon

North Carolina State Parks celebrates 100 years throughout 2016 with 45 centennial celebrations, which will highlight, showcase and celebrate the historic occasion.

Fort Macon State Park hosted the first of several signature events in April with fireworks, cannon blasts, Civil War reenactments, a U.S. Marine Corps Band concert and a series of family friendly events on the weekend of April 22-24 at Fort Macon State Park in Carteret County to celebrate the 100th anniversary of North Carolina's state parks system.

Beginning on Friday evening on Earth Day, April 22, Fort Macon State Park treated visitors with a musical performance by the 2d Marine Corps Band followed by the dedication of cannons and carriages for the fort designed and fabricated by students at Wayne County Community College and a fireworks display to complete the evening.

Throughout the remainder of the weekend, visitors learned about women's fashions of the Victorian Period, witness reenactment drills and the siege and capture of Fort Macon, listen to a flag talk, enjoy Civil War era music and much more.

To learn more about the Centennial Events and activities, visit <http://www.ncparks.gov/100/centennial-events>



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N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Update

The N.C. Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority allocated \$8,944,597 for improvements and repairs in four state parks and for land acquisitions in seven state parks during its meeting on Friday, May 20, 2016 at Mount Mitchell State Park.

Authority members approved \$700,000 for trail improvements at Chimney Rock State Park; \$60,000 for design work on a planned family campground shower house at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park; \$750,000 for dredging access to Bear Island at Hammocks Beach State Park, and \$2,750,000 for wastewater system improvements at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

The authority earmarked \$4,484,597 to be used in the acquisition of 2,775 acres at Hammocks Beach, Hanging Rock, Carver Creek, Chimney Rock, Merchants Millpond, New River and Mount Mitchell state parks. The new park lands will protect natural resources, improve park access and management and provide land for new visitor facilities.

Tim Johnson, head of the Division of Parks and Recreation's Grants and Outreach Program, told authority members the division has received 69 grant requests totaling \$19,450,000 for local government parks and recreation projects.

The estimated total amount available for local government projects is \$6,772,204. Awarding the funds for both state park projects and local grants is contingent on passage of the 2016-17 state budget. An additional \$3 million from the ConnectNC Bond will be available for local government projects to provide recreational facilities for disabled children and veterans. Grant applications for bond funding will be available in June.

Johnson also shared feedback on the scoring system used to rank local government projects the division received through surveys of parks and recreation directors and private consultants. He outlined the strengths and weaknesses identified in the survey for consideration if any changes should be made in the future.

At the start of the meeting, new PARTF authority member Chad Brown was sworn in.

In other business, Division Deputy Director Carol Tingley outlined plans and timetables for the projects identified in the \$75 million ConnectNC bond initiative. Director Mike Murphy provided an update on division activities, and Bryan Wilder, Mount Mitchell State Park superintendent, provided a description of the extreme weather on Mount Mitchell.

Ascent Of The Century

Celebrate 100 years of North Carolina State Parks at our first state park, Mount Mitchell. We'll ascend nearly 4,000 feet in elevation in 6 miles to the 6,684-foot-high summit of Mount Mitchell to join a birthday celebration with music, food, history, and more. Spend two nights camping along the South Toe River and immerse yourself in the mountain atmosphere. There's no better way to say Happy 100th Birthday to our fantastic state parks!

Registration Information: Registration required. Fill out online, print and mail the Museum's Registration Form and Health Form with payment. Registration deadline is two weeks prior to trip start date. Trips failing to reach the minimum registration numbers by the deadline date may be canceled. Please call to check on trip status if interested in registering after the deadline.

If you don't have your own camping gear, the Museum may have some you can borrow! For camping gear questions or more information contact Melissa Dowland at 919.707.9898.

DETAILS

When: 10:30 am Friday, August 26, 2016 - 6:00 pm Sunday, August 28, 2016

Fee: \$75 (includes camping fees, transportation, some camping gear, some meals).

Requirements: Minimum age 12 (minors must be accompanied by a registered adult).

Cancellation Notice: Refunds only issued if Museum cancels program.

Trip Leader: Melissa Dowland & Jerry Reynolds, Museum Educators; Sean Higgins, State Parks Educator.

Activity Level: Hike will be strenuous, participants must be physically fit.

Venue

In the Field - Mount Mitchell State Park

Organizer

Melissa Dowland
919.707.9898

melissa.dowland@naturalsciences.org

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The Pinnacle Of Mount Mitchell, 6711 Feet
From this point Visitors are bewildered at the Thrilling Grandeur of the Rugged Mountains.
A GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY
The Mount Mitchell Railroad offers a Golden Opportunity to Visitors to Western North Carolina, that Tourists travel thousands of miles to realize.
MT. MITCHELL RAILROAD
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Connection by Southern Railway
Leave Asheville on Southern Railway train Number 22, at 8:50 A. M. Leave Pearley & Crockett's Mill, Black Mountain, 9:40 A. M. Leave Mountrest 9:50. Arrive Mitchell Ridge 12:30.
Returning Leave Mitchell Ridge 3:30. Arrive Mountrest 6:20. Arrive Pearley & Crockett's Mill, Black Mtn. 6:30.
Southern Railway train Number 21 Leaves Black Mountain 7:20. Arrives at Asheville 8:00.
For Information, Schedules, Etc., Address
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You can honor the memory of a special person or joyous occasion while supporting Friends of State Parks work in conservation, recreation, education, and volunteerism in our State Parks.

Send gifts to Friends of State Parks, Inc., PO Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627 or make your donation online at www.NCFSP.org

Neighborhood Ecology Corps

We had a wonderful year-end celebration for the Neighborhood Ecology Corps, with around 50 people - youth and family members - fishing, playing games, and sharing program success stories.



Thankfully, the weather outperformed a rainy forecast. As you can see, the little fish were biting! Sean Higgins shared with this group that the White Oak picnic shelter holds 600 people, and our hope is that this year's 30 youth will reach 600+ people by continuing to bring their families, friends and neighbors into the great outdoors!



History of South Mountain State Park, by Jane Hunt

I'm going to South Mountains State Park.

" Never heard of it."
Where's it at?"

If you start at the coast of N.C. and proceed west about 2/3rds of the way across the State, you will get there. It is the largest North Carolina State Park. Nature's crossroad, where the Mountains meet the Piedmont and pure water still flows.

Long ago, around 1000 A.D., you would have encountered the largest N.C. settlement of Indians near Morganton, just north of the Park. In 1567, Spanish explorers built a fort there, but a year later the Indians attacked and killed the Spanish and burned the fort to the ground. Unfortunately, these Native Americans were next overcome by larger tribes and many, many lost their lives to smallpox and the area was abandoned.

Centuries later Europeans came and settled in the area, hunting and farming. During the Revolution these frontiersmen fought the Loyalists at Kings Mountain, just over the border of South Carolina. They were called the "Over Mountain Men" because they crossed over the Mountains to join the fight, in addition the British Colonel Ferguson called them "a set of mongrels". However these mongrels soundly defeated the British and the battle at Kings Mountain was hailed as a turning point in the War.

In the 1930's the Civilians Conservation Corps was established to give jobs to young men during the depression. About 200 were stationed near Morganton where they worked on cleaning up watersheds, building forest roads, erosion control and fighting fires. Roads which they built are still used as camp trails in the park. Planning for the Park began in the 1940's, but the first 5,000 acres were not purchased until 1975, and now has expanded to 18,000 acres.

It is best seen from the air where you can take in all of its many peaks, ten of which tower 2,500 feet above sea level. Or travel by bike on the 25 mile strenuous mountain trails, which the ranger said, "if you are into endurance you will love it, if you want an easy ride, you will hate it." Perhaps an easier way would be to ride on the back of a horse. (Yes, they have equestrian camping...sleep overs with your horse.) Or stand in one of the many streams and cast your fishing line for trout. Try a hike to the 80 foot waterfall, savor the lush growth along the way as you watch the water splash over boulders and bathers cooling in the pools or standing under a shower of spray. If you choose to stay, there are campgrounds for backpackers, horse riders, groups, RV's and families. You can call 1-877-722-6762 and make a reservation, a perfect spot for a vacation, really away, no cell phone connections.

Did you know?

*FSP is able to accept your **TAX DEDUCTABLE** donations of stock to support our work and/or projects in State Parks.. Send gifts to FSP, PO Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627 or give us a call at (919) 827-1088 for more information.*

Saving the Best - A Documentary

One hundred years of stewardship, education and recreation are celebrated in "Saving the Best: North Carolina State Parks at 100," a documentary produced by filmmaker Tom Earnhardt and airing on UNC-TV.

"Saving the Best: North Carolina State Parks at 100" is a tribute to the men and women who work in the parks, park volunteers who give their time and energy, and the 17 million visitors who use our parks each year.



This program was made possible through funding from the Friends of State Parks and the State Employees' Credit Union.

Our Friends in Action!

Weymouth Woods parties for world's oldest longleaf pine

One of the initial 2016 centennial events for the state parks system was the Party for the Pine at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve. For the park in Moore County, it was a birthday party for what is believed to be the oldest longleaf pine in the world, estimated to have sprouted 468 years ago.



(The park also boasts the second largest longleaf.) There were hikes to the old tree led by retired Superintendent Scott Hartley and a cake cutting and singing presided over by current Superintendent Billy Hartness. The new Friends of Weymouth Woods and other community groups helped stage the event.

Onslow County recognized for strong support of Hammocks Beach State Park

Onslow County, the home of Hammocks Beach State Park, was recognized by the state parks system for its outstanding support of the state park, including direct financial support for planned new facilities.

State Parks Director Mike Murphy presented the Onslow County Commissioners with a plaque of appreciation, in part for a \$1 million commitment to build boating facilities on a 289-acre tract recently added to the park's mainland complex. The commissioners have pledged \$250,000 a year over four years from the county's tourism occupancy tax.



David Pearson, executive director of Friends of State Parks, said that, early on, the county commissioners never hesitated to support the state park's acquisition of the property along Queen's Creek. The tract was acquired last year.

Pearson said that when Friends of State Parks also suggested financial help with development of the tract, they found Onslow County to be a eager partner.

Jeffrey L Hudson, the county manager, said that the county considers Hammocks Beach State Park to be a good long-term investment for recreation and tourism. "In the words of one county commissioner, 'It's a jewel in Onslow County,'" Hudson said.

Onslow's population and its tourism economy are booming, Hudson said, and many of its citizens and visitors are avid boaters on the Intracoastal Waterway, the White Oak River, the New River and the Atlantic Ocean. The county partnered with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission for three boat ramps in recent years.

"What we'd hoped, as part of the Hammocks Beach development, that yet another boat ramp could be placed there because all of our existing ramps are already overcrowded and heavily used," he said. The county has also discussed partnership with the state park on other recreation facilities such as kayak/canoe access and group campsites, he said.

Junior Ranger Jamboree

Junior Ranger achievers and their families are invited to the first event Junior Ranger jamboree - October 1-2 at Jordan Lake!



Postcards will arrive at each park in the mail. Please discuss within your park and local Friends Group how to best make them available for your Junior Rangers. Over 10,000 youth have become junior rangers in just over 10 years of the program.

This preregistration event is limited to 100 people. We would love offers to support the event from Gorges to Dismal Swamp or anywhere in between. If you would like to help out at this event, please contact jennifer.fenwick@ncparks.gov

We'd love greeters, expert s'more chefs, story-tellers, astronomy aficionados, birders, camp cooking demos, anglers, etc. We're just now starting our list of who may be able to help make the Jamboree fun and memorable.





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Phone: _____ Email: _____

2016 Board Meetings

January 30th	10 am	Haw River State Park
April 22nd	8 am	Fort Macon State Park
July 30th	10 am	New River State Park
October 15th	11 am	Pettigrew State Park

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