



North Carolina State Parks
SYSTEMWIDE PLAN
2023



NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
NC DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
D. Reid Wilson, Secretary Roy Cooper, Governor





Division of Parks and Recreation
NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Governor Roy Cooper

Secretary D. Reid Wilson

To the Citizens of North Carolina:

I am pleased to present the 2023 update for the North Carolina state parks system's Systemwide Plan. This plan is a five-year guidance document that lists the system's recent activities and accomplishments and offers a strategic direction and goals for the near future. It creates a vision and plan for meeting the needs of current visitors and the next generation of park users.

The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of state parks for North Carolina's residents and visitors, as we saw a record-breaking 22 million visitors in 2021 alone. Many visitors came to state parks looking to break the monotony of being indoors all day. What many found were the spectacular beauty and serenity of nature, the vigor and vitality of outdoor recreation, and the scenery, culture, and history that make our state and our parks great places to visit. We saw many first-time visitors keep coming back, even as indoor spaces began to reopen and ease social distancing restrictions. Our dedicated staff continues to work to provide the best visitor experience possible while also protecting the important natural and cultural resources within our state parks system.

Thomas Berry, the Greensboro priest, philosopher, and environmentalist, once said, "Teaching children about the natural world should be treated as one of the most important events in their lives." Education remained a crucial pillar of our mission during the pandemic and continues to do so. Though park staff could not provide regularly scheduled events and programs for many months due to social distancing requirements, Division staff sought to continue providing educational support for teachers and families through resources online, including ranger videos, worksheets and activities, and virtual tours of the parks. The Division also pushed forward with the Schools in Parks initiative, pairing our staff with North Carolina teachers from 3rd through 5th grade to provide them with resources and encouragement to bring their students to state parks. After all, we believe that sparking an interest in nature at a young age results in a lifelong passion for the outdoors.

As we move forward in a changed post-pandemic world, many of us are working towards finding and maintaining a careful balance in many aspects of our lives, and state parks are no exception. We recognize the increasing demand for outdoor recreation spaces and must weigh that with the mandate to protect and conserve our natural and cultural resources. We know the tremendous public support for our state parks comes with an expectation that we maintain high operational efficiency and fiscal responsibility. And we acknowledge that increased visitation can bring challenges for our staff and our parks, but it can also bring tremendous opportunities for growth and improvements.

While this report enumerates the accomplishments of the Division over the last five years, it would be remiss if we did not acknowledge that they were all accomplished with active participation, support, advocacy, and advice of park visitors, legislators, local governments, land trusts, friends groups, businesses, scientists, educators, environmentalists, and many other wonderful partners. The state parks system would not be what it is today without them. We look towards the next five years grateful and eager for continued collaboration.

The Division's mission statement dictates that we "exist to inspire all North Carolina citizens and visitors through conservation, recreation, and education." But we continue to strive for excellence in conservation, recreation, and education because North Carolina citizens and visitors inspire us to do so. We want them to be proud of what our state has to offer, and we continue to work diligently to become the stewards they deserve. We invite you to visit and enjoy your wonderful state parks and see for yourself the fruits of your inspiration.

Brian Strong
Director, North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

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Executive Summary



Carolina Beach State Park



Morrow Mountain State Park



New River State Park

The last five years were truly unprecedented for the Division of Parks and Recreation (Division) because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The pandemic caused dramatic changes to people’s lives globally, and its impact and repercussions continue to persist as the world recalibrates and moves forward. For the Division, the years of the pandemic brought several new challenges to park operations, but it also included new opportunities as it became evident how valuable parks can be to public health.

The years 2018 through 2022 saw continued growth both in system size and visitation. A total of 28,995 acres were added to the state parks system, including one new state park, one new state natural area, and six new state trails. Attendance at the parks has increased a total of 8% since 2018, with the largest yearly growth of 14.5% and a record-shattering 22 million visitors in 2021, following the reopening of the parks after shutting down during the early stages of the pandemic.

As social distancing and working from home became the norm for many Americans, parks became an important lifeline to escape the confines of the indoors. Visitors needed to limit their time at places like grocery stores and shopping malls to reduce the risk of spreading and contracting respiratory viruses, so outdoor spaces replaced them as venues and outlets for gatherings and recreational activities. As visitors flocked to state parks, park staff not only needed to manage a larger volume of guests, but they also needed to adapt to new safety protocols and cleaning guidelines to keep everyone safe.

The Division’s long-term mission — conservation, recreation, and education — has remained the same, but its strategic goals have adapted to the current conditions and challenges seen during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. Added pressures on the parks system have forced natural resource management to increase in capacity and scope to sufficiently meet preservation and conservation goals. New responsibilities and changing work-life mindsets have placed a greater value on staff retention and compensation.

While visitation will likely level out in the coming years (and it has already begun to) as society readapts to new post-pandemic norms, many new users are likely to continue returning to newly found outdoor hobbies. In fact, the number of new and returning outdoor recreation participants has increased by 26%, with the five most common outdoor activities being camping, biking, fishing, hiking, and running.

Programs with health initiatives, such as North Carolina’s Parks and Trails for Health (NC PATH), will continue in prevalence, especially now after COVID-19 impacted the outlooks and behaviors of many individuals. Research has shown the correlation between exposure to parks and the overall health of individuals — both physical and mental health — as the popularity of the outdoors during a global pandemic has proven.

At the same time, North Carolina continues to be among the fastest-growing states in the country, due to a significant number of people moving here from other states. There are constant changes in population groups, as North Carolina is experiencing a large increase in people over the age of 65 and the overall population is becoming more diverse. Researchers have documented the racial and ethnic disparities among parks organizations, and the Division is committed to championing diversity, equity, inclusion, and access (DEIA) in all aspects of the state parks system. Diversity has been at the forefront of programs such as the Professional Track Seasonal Employee Program and partnerships between the Division and various minority organizations.

Though the last five years saw major changes in operations and visitation, the Division continued to progress through action items from the previous systemwide plan. With the support of funding for capital improvement projects and land acquisition, 19 major capital improvement projects were completed and 56 have begun design or construction. The Division also continues to make strides toward utmost efficiency through a focus on staff training, better technology, and improved data integrity.

The state parks system has been tasked to protect representative examples of the state’s significant archaeological, geological, scenic, recreational, and biological resources. These resources have been categorized into 108 themes. Continued progress is being made to increase theme representation within the state parks system with the ongoing land acquisition program. However, several themes continue to be underrepresented and there remains much to do, with identified future land acquisition needs of more than \$606 million and future facility construction and maintenance needs of more than \$294 million.

Strategic Goals

As the North Carolina state parks system continues to expand, the Division strives to meet the increasing demands for protecting natural and scenic resources and providing low-impact outdoor recreation. The recent additional funding available for state parkland acquisition and facility development has helped the Division address some system needs to ensure a positive visitor experience. Public support for open space protection and new park units remains high. It will also be important for the state parks system to constantly improve in other ways. The following six strategic goals have been identified:

1. Continue to Expand the State Parks System

As the state's population keeps growing, there remains a demand for a wide variety of parks and recreation services, and an ongoing need to protect important natural and cultural resources. There must be continued emphasis on careful planning and evaluation of statewide priorities to ensure the best use of funding.

2. Make Parks More Accessible to Provide the Best Possible Visitor Experience

The Division seeks to improve the accessibility to parks for all people and improve visitors' experience through better understanding of needs and creating specific actionable tasks.

3. Increase Operational Efficiency

New additions to the state parks system, increased visitation, and high public interest have placed great demands on the Division's resources and capabilities. It remains a challenge to meet staffing needs at the same pace as the record growth of the system and public usage. It will be essential to increase the Division's organizational adaptability and to foster efficient use of funds and resources available to the Division.

4. Support Local Economic Development

State parks are important regional attractions that can form the cornerstone of local efforts for ecotourism. In addition, the Division can support local economic development by participating in local and regional tourism initiatives, coordinating multijurisdictional recreation planning, offering grants to local park and trail projects, and providing environmental education opportunities for schools and universities.

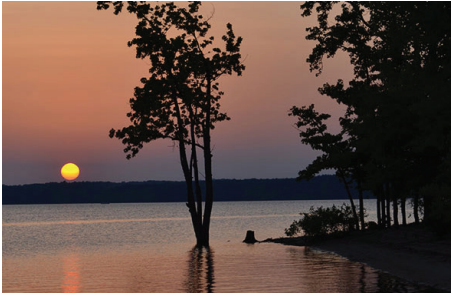
5. Support State and Local Health and Wellness

Studies show the average American boy or girl spends just four to seven minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day, and more than seven hours each day in front of an electronic screen. This lack of outdoor activity has profoundly impacted the wellness of children. In addition, recent surveys found that the COVID-19 pandemic has made people more concerned for their health and their mental well-being. However, as the pandemic showed, many disparities exist that create barriers for certain groups of individuals to access wellness resources. State parks and trails can help by providing free outlets for physical activity. The Division will develop partnerships with public and private health organizations to explore ways to use the state parks to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles for all.

6. Increase Natural and Cultural Resource Stewardship

The ecosystems and cultural features protected by the state parks system often represent the highest quality examples of the state's natural landscape and heritage. In many cases, these ecosystems and cultural features are also among the most threatened. The primary objective of the Division's natural resource management initiatives is to correct or compensate for the disruption of natural processes caused by human activities. The primary goal of cultural resource management is to protect and preserve historically significant features.

1.0 Accomplishments



Kerr Lake State Recreation Area



Singletary Lake State Park



Jordan Lake State Recreation Area

Establishing New Units

As North Carolina’s population continues to grow, so does the demand for recreational opportunities, which in turn creates increased development pressures in areas of ecological and conservation concern. The Division of Parks and Recreation (Division) is committed to preserving the state’s natural, cultural and recreational resources through the strategic acquisition of lands.

The North Carolina state parks system has grown consistently for decades and has continued to do so from 2018 to 2022. During this timeframe, 1 new state park, 1 new state natural area, and six new state trails were added to the system.

Land Protection

A total of 28,995 acres have been added to the state parks system from January 1, 2018 through December 31, 2022. Most of these acquisitions have expanded state parks, while there have been more modest — yet significant — expansions to state natural areas and state trails as well. (Tables 1.1 through 1.6)

Table 1.1: State Recreation Areas – Land Acquisition, 2018-2022

State Recreation Area	2018 Acres	2022 Acres	Acres Added
Falls Lake State Recreation Area	4,891	4,891	0
Fort Fisher State Recreation Area	475	475	0
Jordan Lake State Recreation Area	4,545	4,545	0
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area	2,490	2,490	0
Total:	12,401	12,401	0

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

Table 1.2: State Lakes – Water Acreage, 2018-2022

State Lake	2018 Acres	2022 Acres	Acres Added
Bay Tree Lake	1,418	1,418	0
Jones Lake	224	224	0
Lake Phelps	16,600	16,600	0
Lake Waccamaw	8,938	8,938	0
Salters Lake	315	315	0
Singletary Lake	572	572	0
White Lake	1,068	1,068	0
Total:	29,135	29,135	0

Table 1.3: State Parks – Land Acquisition, 2018-2022

State Park	2018 Acres	2022 Acres	Acres Added
Carolina Beach State Park	420	628	208
Carvers Creek State Park	4,455	4,897	442
Chimney Rock State Park	6,899	7,156	257
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park†	1,026	1,066	40
Crowders Mountain State Park	5,207	5,207	0
Dismal Swamp State Park	14,353	14,353	0
Elk Knob State Park	4,157	4,546	389
Eno River State Park†	4,198	4,463	265
Fort Macon State Park	537	537	0
Goose Creek State Park	1,672	1,699	27
Gorges State Park	7,709	8,120	411
Grandfather Mountain State Park†	2,687	3,746	1,059
Hammocks Beach State Park	1,611	1,770	159
Hanging Rock State Park	7,899	8,461	562
Haw River State Park	1,429	1,488	59
Jockey's Ridge State Park	426	437	11
Jones Lake State Park	1,391	1,391	0
Lake James State Park	3,685	3,920	235
Lake Norman State Park†	1,926	1,956	30
Lake Waccamaw State Park	2,328	2,328	0
Lumber River State Park	12,309	13,351	1,042
Mayo River State Park	2,509	2,966	457
Medoc Mountain State Park	3,893	3,939	46
Merchants Millpond State Park	3,347	3,347	0
Morrow Mountain State Park	4,501	5,810	1,309
Mount Mitchell State Park†	1,996	4,498	2,502
New River State Park†	3,015	3,432	417
Pettigrew State Park	5,185	5,185	0
Pilot Mountain State Park	3,872	3,918	46
Pisgah View State Park*	0	1,400	1,400
Raven Rock State Park	4,810	4,899	89
Singletary Lake State Park	649	747	98
South Mountains State Park	20,634	21,341	707
Stone Mountain State Park	13,605	13,605	0
William B. Umstead State Park†	5,588	5,588	0
Total:	159,928	172,195	12,267

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

* Indicates a park unit that was authorized after 2018

† Does not include conservation easements. Conservation easements add 1,692 acres to the state parks acreage total.

Table 1.4: State Natural Areas – Land Acquisition, 2018-2022

State Natural Area	2018 Acres	2022 Acres	Acres Added
Bakers Lake State Natural Area*	0	0	0
Bald Head Island State Natural Area	1,260	5,970	4,710
Bay Tree Lake State Natural Area	626	626	0
Bear Paw State Natural Area	384	384	0
Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area	295	310	15
Bob's Creek State Natural Area	0	6,090	6,090
Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area	430	430	0
Bushy Lake State Natural Area	6,396	6,936	540
Chowan Swamp State Natural Area	6,031	6,031	0
Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area	97	97	0
Lea Island State Natural Area	27	27	0
Lower Haw River State Natural Area	1,025	1,357	332
Masonboro Island State Natural Area	106	106	0
Mitchell Mill State Natural Area	91	91	0
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	1,123	1,143	20
Occonechee Mountain State Natural Area	206	229	23
Pineola Bog State Natural Area	91	94	3
Run Hill State Natural Area	120	120	0
Salmon Creek State Natural Area	0	1,305	1,305
Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area	3,042	3,042	0
Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area	102	122	20
Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area	281	281	0
Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area	0	990	990
Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve	919	919	0
Yellow Mountain State Natural Area	3,518	3,805	287
Total:	26,170	40,505	14,335

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

*Indicates a park unit that was authorized after 2018

Table 1.5: State Rivers – Length of River, 2018-2022

State River	2018 Miles	2022 Miles	Miles Added
Horsepasture River	5	5	0
Linville River	13	13	0
Lumber River	102	102	0
New River	27	27	0
Total:	146	146	0

Table 1.6: State Trails – Planned and Designated Length, 2018-2022

State Trail	2018 Acres [†]	2022 Acres [†]	Planned Length (miles)	2018 Designated Length (miles)	2022 Designated Length (miles)
Dan River State Trail*	0	0	90	0	0
Deep River State Trail	1,277	2,151	125	0	4
East Coast Greenway State Trail*	0	0	795	0	102
Fonta Flora State Trail	90	240	100	16	30
French Broad River State Trail	0	0	117	117	117
Hickory Nut Gorge State Trail	90	0	50	0	0
Mountains-to-Sea State Trail	0	778	1,400	660	679
Northern Peaks State Trail*	0	0	40	0	0
Overmountain Victory State Trail*	0	0	132	0	0
Roanoke River State Trail*	0	0	225	0	0
Wilderness Gateway State Trail*	0	681	170	0	0
Yadkin River State Trail	0	0	162	130	163
Total:	1,457	3,850	3,406	923	1,095

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

[†] Acreage encompasses fee simple purchase and easements that are held by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

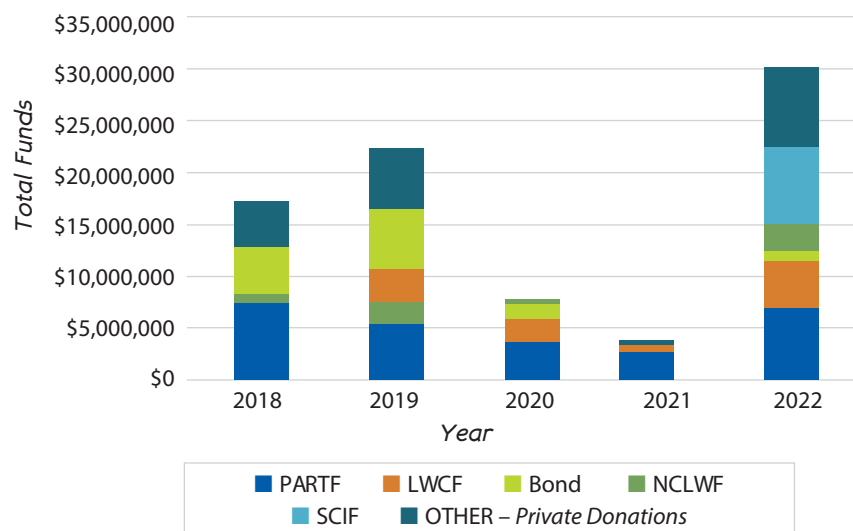
*Six of 12 state trails were authorized by the General Assembly between 2018 and 2022. Northern Peaks, Overmountain Victory, and Wilderness Gateway state trails were authorized in 2019; Dan River, East Coast Greenway, and Roanoke River state trails were authorized in 2021.

There are many funding sources that are used to procure state park lands from willing sellers. These include:

- Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF)
- North Carolina Connect Bond Funding (BOND)
- Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF)
- North Carolina Land and Water Fund (NCLWF)
- State Capital and Infrastructure Fund (SCIF)
- Private Donations (OTHER)

As can be seen in Figure 1.1, PARTF is the most consistent funding source for purchasing property.

Figure 1.1: North Carolina State Parks Land Acquisition Funding Sources



Total Visitation

Following a trend from the previous five years, attendance at North Carolina state parks continues to grow overall. As shown in Table 1.7, attendance has grown a total of 8% since 2018, with the largest yearly growth being 2021 at 14.5%. The significant growth in visitation in 2021 is attributed to the pandemic.

Table 1.7: North Carolina State Parks Total Visitation

Year	Visitation
2012	14,198,796
2013	14,172,661
2014	15,561,295
2015	17,251,862
2016	18,762,600
2017	19,390,801
2018	18,036,469
2019	18,566,828
2020	19,806,641
2021	22,680,973
2022	19,418,791

Partnerships for Conservation Across North Carolina

Partnerships between the state parks system and conservation organizations across North Carolina have been invaluable in the effort to protect some of the state's most important natural resources. Partnerships are based on a shared goal of protecting these outstanding resources for future generations. Conservation organizations, such as local land trusts, play an important role in the process by helping identify significant resources, contacting landowners and moving quickly to acquire properties on a short deadline if needed. Without these partnerships, the conservation of significant areas would be more difficult, if not impossible. Notable partnerships include:

- **Audubon North Carolina** and the Division have been working on land acquisition and conservation management for Lea Island State Natural Area in Pender County and Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area in Robeson County. Warwick Mill Bay's 976 acres successfully closed.
- **The Nature Conservancy** has continued to partner with the Division to close on a 376-acre tract at Carvers Creek State Park.
- **Blue Ridge Conservancy** is working on several projects to expand Grandfather Mountain and Elk Knob state parks.
- **The Conservation Fund** and **Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina** donated 989 acres to South Mountains State Park over the past five years.
- **The Conservation Fund** and **Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina** created a new state natural area — Bob's Creek State Natural Area (roughly 6,000 acres) — in southeastern McDowell County.
- **The Conservation Fund** and the Division successfully expanded Mount Mitchell State Park by 2,600 acres and are adding significant acreage to the Deep River State Trail in Chatham County.
- **The North Carolina Coastal Land Trust** and the Division helped protect a new state natural area: Salmon Creek in Bertie County.
- The Division worked in partnership with **Blue Ridge Conservancy**, the **North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission** biologists, **The Conservation Fund** and the **U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Endangered Cooperative Species Conservation Fund** to successfully protect roosting and breeding sites near Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area in Watauga County for the endangered Virginia big-eared bat.
- The Division continues to be an active partner with the **North Carolina Sandhills Conservation Partnership**, which is geared to the preservation, restoration, and conservation of unique Sandhills ecosystem and species such as the red cockaded woodpecker.
- The Division continues to work closely with the **Southern Appalachian Highlands Conservancy** on establishing the newly authorized Pisgah View State Park in Buncombe County.

Capital Improvements

State appropriations and Parks and Recreation Trust Fund monies totaling approximately \$105 million have been spent or encumbered at state parks from 2018-2022 for construction of new facilities, major improvements to existing facilities, and maintenance. Nineteen major capital improvement projects were completed and 56 have begun design or construction.

Table 1.8: Capital Improvement Projects, 2018-2022

Status	Number of Projects	Amount Spent 2018-2022
Predesign	6	\$3,875,769
Design	16	\$7,824,989
Construction	12	\$6,924,980
Completed	19	\$22,188,175
Maintenance Section	2	\$367,398
Supplemental Funding	18	\$10,861,225
Total:	73	\$52,042,536

Park Operations

Law Enforcement and Safety

The Division transitioned from internal emergency responder classes to the national standard certification of emergency medical responders for all rangers and maintenance staff.

The Division used state parks facilities for the first time to conduct ALERT, the mandated annual law enforcement training. This helped the Division address its specific and unique training needs for law enforcement and safety.

Data and Efficiency

The Division partnered with SeeInsights to install and manage 115 visitation counters, which provide timely and accurate data on car and pedestrian traffic across the system. The collection of this data helps park operation by allowing the Division to understand and support the utilization of facilities. The addition of data lets the Division to subsequently improve decision-making and increase efficiency, abiding by an objective of Goal #3 of the previous Systemwide Plan in 2018.

A new database system was implemented to be used at university career fairs and networking events to collect data from prospective applicants through a form attached to a QR code (Figure 1.2). This database allows the Division to email groups of students or alumni regarding positions available as well as events at state parks. This can aid the Division in identifying top candidates for internships and seasonal/part-time positions.

Diversity Partnerships

The Division is working with minority organizations to sponsor events at state parks to increase minority visitation. These organizations include:

- Black Girls Camp
- Outdoor Afro Greensboro/Triad
- Outdoor Afro Raleigh-Durham
- GirlTrek
- Latinos Aventureros

The Division is also partnering with Black Folks Camp Too, a marketing-driven business whose mission is to increase diversity in the outdoor industry, to encourage participation and engagement with diverse communities through the Department of Natural and Cultural Resource's Parks and Trails for Health (PATH) initiative.

Figure 1.2: QR Code for Career Fair Database System Survey



Summer Internship Program

The Professional Track Seasonal Employee Program allows interns to gain the experience needed to establish a career with the Division. It also provides participants with leadership, communication, and professional development skills that will help them in other fields. Interns perform a variety of duties to get an understanding of the positions to which they aspire. Each intern maintains a weekly journal of their experiences and discusses them biweekly with the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator. The interns also study a plant or animal located at their park and complete an end-of-program presentation on their findings. If their seasonal work is in an office setting rather than a park, they create a presentation on their area of work. The interns also work on special projects with the Diversity and Inclusion Coordinator as well as meet with staff and leaders of teams within the Division and DNCR.

Program objectives include:

- Provide valuable learning experience
- Allow participant to manage a significant level of responsibility
- Allow participant to work approximately 40 hours per week
- Provide a structured real world work experience
- Provide professional mentorship and network opportunities for students
- Introduce students to parks-related career opportunities

The Division's internship program partners with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) and Minority Institutions of Higher Education (MIHEs) to give minority students an opportunity to start a career with the Division. The North Carolina HBCU and MIHE partners are:

- Bennett College
- Elizabeth City State University
- Fayetteville State University
- Johnson C. Smith University
- Livingstone College
- North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University
- North Carolina Central University
- Saint Augustine's University
- Shaw University
- University of North Carolina at Pembroke (Native American-Serving, Nontribal Institution)
- Winston-Salem State University

Equipment Retirement and Replacement

The Division has made significant progress in the creation of an equipment retirement and replacement plan, as identified as an objective in Goal #1 of the previous Systemwide Plan in 2018. Improving the equipment resources of the Division allows better efficiency and maintenance of the growing system.

COVID-19 Operations

The COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the operations of the state parks system. In accordance with federal and state guidelines, many state parks were closed for about six weeks and then reopened facilities in phases to protect the health and safety of visitors and employees. The Division had to act quickly to procure personal protective equipment (PPE) for hundreds of field staff and adapt to changes to operational procedures to meet enhanced cleaning and sanitation guidelines. As the initial lockdowns lifted throughout the state, many individuals gravitated to the outdoors, seeking its multitude of benefits, both physical and mental, which resulted in record visitation at state parks and operations were stretched to the limit.

This surge of visitation resulted in upticks in littering waste and overcrowding, both of which impacted not only the experience of the visitors but also park staff. Hiring and recruiting seasonal staff and volunteers — whose work is crucial for maintaining operations due to increased demand and limited resources — slowed. This was partly due to the risk of contracting the coronavirus in public-facing jobs, and, for seasonal and temporary employees, partly due to pay that remained minimal despite the high risk and added responsibilities. In addition, most office workers transitioned to telework to follow social distancing guidelines, leaving limited staff onsite at the state parks — a problem that was exacerbated when staff did contract COVID-19 and had to remain in quarantine for several days. As information and misinformation spread about the virus, masks, and social distancing guidelines, park staff also had to contend with irate customers who complained about locally mandated requirements and continued closures. Without the knowledge of the implications of the pandemic and the difficulties in obtaining PPE, park staff experienced mental and emotional tolls, in addition to changes in their daily job duties to accommodate the changing atmosphere at the parks. Innovative collaboration and solutions have been vital to mitigate these impacts on the staff and on resources, and they continue to be as the Division examines the lasting effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on state parks.

Career Opportunities Video

The Division's Communications team developed a video that showcases the multitude of career opportunities at state parks and shares the experiences of current staff members. The video is used at career fairs and university panel discussions. In identifying participants for the video, the Communications team also sought to recruit staff who identify as Black, Indigenous or a person of color to show not just the variety of positions in the Division but also the variety of cultures represented among staff.

Concessions Growth

North Carolina state parks have seen a steady increase in revenues from gift shop sales. Sales exceeded \$2 million for the first time in the last five years. Prior to 2010, only a handful of parks offered merchandise available for the public to purchase, such as Mount Mitchell, Hanging Rock, and Carolina Beach state parks. Currently most state parks have some type of retail area found within the park. In addition, state parks merchandise can be purchased through the state parks ReserveAmerica website at Product Catalog – North Carolina State Parks (reserveamerica.com).

With a focus on providing goods and merchandise to improve the customer experience and expand revenue opportunities, the Division has made a conscious effort to convert available space from visitor center lobbies into small retail areas and to include concession space in all newly built visitor centers.

The Division emphasizes selling items that are educational, geared toward the souvenir seeker, useful for camping or outdoor activity, and provide a memorable token for visitors.

Operating Contracts

The Division has a variety of contracts and lease agreements in place to run specific facilities, provide recreational opportunities and experiences, and rent equipment. The contracts are issued through a bid process, which includes a request for proposals (RFPs) for prospective operators.

These contracts include four marina operations at Jordan Lake, Falls Lake and Kerr Lake state recreation areas, the elevator and associated facility management at Chimney Rock State Park, kayak/paddleboard rentals at Carolina Beach and Hammocks Beach state parks, the hang gliding school at Jockey's Ridge State Park, beach equipment rental at Fort Fisher State Recreation Area, the restaurant at Mount Mitchell State Park, and the bookstore at Fort Macon State Park. The Division receives a percentage of the gross revenues generated through each of these operations. The Division is always open to new ways to provide the best visitor experience through partnerships with local businesses.

The Central Reservation System (CRS) was rebid in 2017, and a new contract was awarded to Aspira (ReserveAmerica) in March 2018. Recently the Division signed a one-year extension to continue services.

The contract includes system expansion to other park units and operations, utilization of new technology as it becomes available, specific financial information security measures and other reporting measures. The new contract provided ferry ticketing services at Hammocks Beach State Park and recently added Haw River State Park to the system. Planned in the next few years include online payments for the marina space at Carolina Beach State Park and pier/buoy permitting at some state lakes. Like the previous contract, this turnkey centralized reservation system is funded solely through the fees collected from the reservations of campsites, shelters, cabins, and other facilities.

Volunteers

Volunteers serve North Carolina state parks in several functions including bagging oyster shells for shoreline restoration, constructing picnic tables, working special events, planting trees, working on trails, and repairing bridges. Some prominent organizations are behind state parks volunteers, such as AmeriCorps, Big Sweep, Boy/Girl Scouts, Eagle Scouts, the military, local universities, colleges, and school systems. Each volunteer receives a handwritten thank-you note and those who volunteer significant hours are awarded Division gifts.

Table 1.9: Concession Revenues

Year	Revenues
2017-2018	\$1,415,803
2018-2019	\$1,349,646
2019-2020	\$1,213,934
2020-2021	\$1,430,234
2021-2022	\$2,026,358

Table 1.10: Volunteer Hours

Year	Hours
2018	57,777.00
2019	56,192.80
2020	28,139.50
2021	32,092.30
2022	30,637.60

Natural Resource Protection

The Division's Natural Resources Program (NRP) provides assistance, impact reviews, implementation direction, technical expertise, and educational training to a wide array of the Division's functions. NRP staff interact with field staff, planners, trail teams, and regulatory agencies, in addition to external public and private collaborative partners to address needs for resource stewardship, environmental review and compliance, and landscape planning and management. The primary responsibility for resource protection, both natural and cultural, lies at the core of all activities and functions of the Division. This is enumerated in the state constitution, the State Parks Act, the Division's mission, and throughout Division policies.

Increasing pressure on individual park units and the system overall as well as staff shortages continue to have a negative long-term effect on resource management needs. A natural area that needs periodic fire every two to five years will not remain vibrant if prescribed or natural fires are limited to every five to 15 years. An invasive species that is not identified and controlled early after introduction can quickly become a cumbersome endeavor with exponential monetary and logistical implications in addition to the negative resource impacts. These examples represent a microcosm facing the future management of the state parks system.

Since 2010, the NRP has added personnel to increase the scope, depth, and experience base to assist both the park field staff and the agency at large in meeting some of these challenges. While the program has increased the capacity to address needs, the true successes and accomplishments lie in the coordinated and shared efforts with the park field staff. This teamwork allows for adaptation and flexibility, leverages collaborations with external partners, and produces increased consistency and fulfillment. As the needs continue to increase, so do opportunities to adapt and evaluate for gains in efficiency, cost-savings, and ultimately a greater stewardship of the land and cultural histories.

Restoration and Major Natural Community Management

Management and restoration of significant terrestrial and aquatic natural communities has become an integral effort of the NRP. The Division manages important areas of land and water that have been historically altered or are currently being negatively affected by a variety of influences that threaten the quality and resilience of these areas. To improve visitor experiences at park properties, increase the educational opportunities and impacts, and protect these significant natural systems, it is necessary to correct and improve the neglected facets.

The projects below provide examples of cooperative, integrated management efforts involving multiple NRP, parks field staff, and numerous partners. The addition of the Restoration Specialist position for NRP in 2018 provided a central coordinator and technical specialist to facilitate many of these efforts. Yet successes are not rooted in the efforts of any single individual, but in collaborative endeavors and flexibility of many within the NRP, as well as park staff, partner agencies, and contract vendors.

Key Accomplishments and Projects (2018-2022 and ongoing):

- **Lake James State Park "126" Restoration Project Area** – An eastern white pine plantation was removed in 2017 and staff utilized retention measures for site-appropriate native species associated with this project of pine-oak-heath, pine-oak, and associated stream corridor natural communities. Along with the plantation removal, invasive species treatments began in 2018 and are still ongoing; prescribed fire reintroduction occurred in 2020 with another burn in 2022. Initial shortleaf and pitch pine reintroduction planting took place in December 2022 and will continue to be monitored.
- **Yellow Mountain State Natural Area Christmas Tree Plantation Removal** – Acquired land had a Christmas tree farm that had been poorly maintained and had high prevalence of invasive species (tree of heaven, Oriental bittersweet, princess tree, etc.). The Christmas trees were removed and initial treatments for invasive species and prescribed burning began the long-term recovery of the site.
- **Mount Mitchell State Park Collaboration with the Southern Appalachian Spruce Restoration Initiative (SASRI)** – SASRI is a multi-partner collaboration working to correct negative historic impacts and address future challenges faced by high-elevation spruce-fir forest communities in mountain region parks. As part of this collaboration the planting of 200 red spruce seedlings is planned for 2023.
- **Deep River State Trail "Justice Tract" Restoration Project Area** – A long-term restoration project was initiated in 2018 to remove a loblolly pine plantation and mitigate past human influences. Project area assessments, monitoring, and planning began in early 2018. Initial implementation involving the timber removal was conducted in the fall of 2019 and during the spring and summer of 2020. Invasive species treatments have utilized a dual approach of contracted work by an outside vendor across infested areas and focused efforts with in-house personnel on the most sensitive and significant species areas of the project (2020-present). Prescribed fire was first reintroduced to Unit 1 in 2022, and Unit 2 is scheduled to begin in 2023. Site monitoring continues every two to four months seasonally by multiple NRP specialists.
- **Carolina Beach State Park Brackish Slough Restoration** – A collaborative wetlands restoration project (about 7 acres) with the Coastal Federation began at Carolina Beach State Park in 2022 and continues at present. This project involves both the removal of heavy infestations of phragmites and the restoration of tidal flows for a natural brackish marsh area.



Deep River State Trail Restoration Unit 1 Area Following Plantation Removal, Fall 2020

- **Living Shoreline Projects** – Ongoing collaborations with the North Carolina Coastal Federation for living shoreline implementation and restoration (2022-present). Over 10,000 feet of shoreline work has been implemented or permitted and designated for work in Jockey’s Ridge, Fort Macon, Hammocks Beach, and Carolina Beach state parks, and Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area.
- **Goose Creek State Park Longleaf Restoration Project Area** – A loblolly pine plantation was removed in 2017 to restore a more appropriate and natural species composition. Groundcover, invasive species, and mesophytic species density control efforts initiated in 2018 and continue currently. These have been coordinated with the reintroduction of prescribed fire to the project areas. Plantings of native grasses and forbs occurred in 2018 and 2020 on targeted areas across the entire project area. Longleaf, shortleaf, and pond pines have successfully been established across about 50% of the project area.
- **Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve Scrub-Oak Sandhill Reclamation** – Several areas of Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve have been substantially fire suppressed over many decades, even before it became part of the state parks system. NRP and park staff, and partners have collaborated on efforts to protect this old-growth longleaf pine system and associated significant species.
 - › **Low-impact mechanical removal and density reduction of mesophytic species** around the old-growth longleaf began in 2018 to facilitate the decomposition of the duff layer that has built up due to fire exclusion. These efforts have allowed the successful reintroduction of prescribed fires to several blocks previously unburned in decades.
 - › **Groundcover efforts** such as seeding and planting of grass plugs for species like wiregrass began on degraded areas in 2019 and continues at present. These efforts, paired with prescribed fires conducted during the appropriate season, are beginning to show vitality and diversity improvements across the properties.
- **Carvers Creek State Park Ephemeral Wetland Recovery** – A long-neglected ephemeral wetland on the Sandhills Access unit was reclaimed using low-impact tree removal (chainsaw felling). This work has resulted in an increased water pool and retention during the winter, spring, and early summer seasons. This is a time vital to the reproduction of several significant amphibian species.
- **Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area Low-Impact Loblolly Control Project** – Advanced regeneration of loblolly pines were established within several wet savanna areas of Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area. Collaborative efforts by NRP staff and The Nature Conservancy completed work on about 175 acres from 2020-2022 that prescribed fire alone was incapable of successfully controlling.
- **Lake Waccamaw State Park Longleaf Pine Restoration Project** – Slash and loblolly pine plantation had been removed in 2015 to restore the coastal Sandhills longleaf and pond pine woodlands and associated ecotonal wetland natural communities. Longleaf pine seedlings in addition to native wiregrass and little bluestem grass plugs, were planted in winter 2018, followed by a second-entry prescribed fire in spring 2019. Seedling survival checks and diversity monitoring were completed in fall 2019.
- **Other Restoration Projects** – Early project work is underway at Carvers Creek State Park and Salmon Creek State Natural Area for off-site species plantation removals.

Invasive Species Management

It was in the early 2000s when the scientific consensus began to understand that non-native invasive species represent one of the most significant threats to native biodiversity and the health of state parks natural resources. In 2015, a permanent position (Invasive Species Biologist) within the NRP had been added to begin coordinating efforts to address the challenges these species present.

In early 2020, the NRP added a four person, 11-month temporary crew to bolster efforts and assist park field staff with both invasive species treatment and other natural resource management needs. This crew's priority is assisting with terrestrial and aquatic invasive treatment, while also developing and possessing a broad professional skillset to assist additional resource management.

Key Accomplishments and Projects (2018-2022 and ongoing):

- The process for developing invasive treatment prescriptions and treatment activity records has been successful during the introductory phase implementation Divisionwide. To continue improving efficiencies, NRP staff have identified several needs and improvements involving the integration of available geographic information system (GIS) tools and applications. Use and development of these GIS interfaces and dashboards are a priority to modernize and match pace with the increasing and magnifying invasive species problems.

- **Invasive Species and Acres Treated by Year:**

- › 2020 – 34 species for 167 acres
- › 2021 – 37 species for 224 acres
- › 2022 – 26 species for 315 acres

The added personnel to the NRP in 2020 allowed the Division to start keeping detailed records of treatments across the entire system. Approximately 30 different park properties have ongoing invasive species treatment projects.

- **Major non-native invasive species being addressed on park properties** include but are not limited to: hydrilla/waterthyme, bamboos, phragmites/reeds, privets, Japanese knotweed, kudzu, rattlebox, non-native lespedezas/clovers, weeping lovegrass, autumn and Russian olive, feral hogs, Chinaberrytree, emerald ash borer, hemlock woolly adelgid, spongy moth, alligatorweed, silvergrass, Amur peppervine, vetches, non-native thistles, Oriental bittersweet, non-native honeysuckles, and Callery pear.
 - › Several of these efforts involve collaborations with other local, state, and federal agencies and programs, in addition to landscape partnerships funded by National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grants.
 - › Since 2019, hydrilla has not been detected in Lake Waccamaw because of the partnership efforts from 2013-2018. To increase the preventative measures aimed at combatting reintroduction of this noxious invasive, the Division installed two waterless boat cleaning stations at major access points around the lake in 2022. These stations were funded by the North Carolina Land and Water Fund.
 - › Partnership with the U.S. Department of Agriculture Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service's feral hog control efforts at Yellow Mountain State Natural Area and other mountain park properties where hogs create dramatic resource impacts.
 - › Partnership collaborations with the North Carolina Forest Service and Hemlock Restoration Initiative across 10 state parks to combat the hemlock woolly adelgid threatening both of the state's native hemlock tree species.
 - › The Eno River Hydrilla Management Task Force, which consists of several government agencies, university researchers, and public stakeholders, continues efforts to control hydrilla within the river basin. This work has been ongoing since 2013 and has greatly reduced the presence of hydrilla, though it has not been eliminated completely. Challenges due to the complexities of property ownership, agency jurisdictions, personnel capacity, and funding reliability continue. Still, the management efforts are demonstrating productive control of hydrilla while being safe for the public and native species.
- Approximately three to five invasive species identification and management training workshops have been offered annually for Division and partner personnel. Changes in Division staffing have reduced the number of licensed pesticide applicators from about 55 in 2017 to about 40 licensed applicators at the end of 2022. This reduction in qualified field staff creates multifactorial implications on the efficiency and effectiveness of efforts addressing the increasing invasive species challenges.

Natural Resource Inventory and Monitoring

The goal for this branch of the NRP is to provide reliable data on the presence and abundance of species within state parks properties. There are over 1,000 species of plants and animals in the North Carolina state parks system facing some degree of imperilment. Significant, keystone, rare, and protected plants and animals are a major consideration for numerous Division activities. However, there is also an increasing number of common species that are becoming less abundant. These watchlist species provide insights for landscape health and resource quality, all of which are experiencing increasing pressures from development, invasive species, fire suppression, land cover and hydrologic conversions, and climatic vicissitudes statewide.

This data is used to inform a wide array of decision-making processes and activities within the Division, not only to manage resources, but also to address the location, design, and maintenance of park facilities to avoid and reduce adverse impacts. Assessments involve not just single species information, but also larger natural communities and landscape composition.

Key Accomplishments and Projects (2018-2022 and ongoing)

- **The Natural Resources Inventory Database (NRID)** has been in use since 2003 and is the primary place for recording natural resources species and natural community data. This database now contains over 317,000 entries, and these data are consistently shared with partner resource agencies including the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (WRC), Plant Conservation Program, and North Carolina Natural Heritage Program. Additionally, this information is also utilized by the North Carolina Biodiversity Project, a public source of ecological information about species found in North Carolina. An effort was initiated in 2022 to modernize NRID utilizing new GIS features and applications.
- **Bioblitzes** – Due to weather, logistical constraints and COVID-19, only two bioblitzes were conducted between 2018-2022. In 2018 and 2019, respectively, Lake Norman State Park and Hanging Rock State Park hosted well-attended efforts. Hundreds of new species were added to the parks list, helping to improve understanding of the natural history of the property.
- **Monitoring Effort Examples:**
 - › **Deer Herd Health Checks** – The Division continues to work with WRC district biologists to assess the health and wellness of white-tailed deer herds. NRP staff were able to assist with herd health checks at Pilot Mountain State Park in 2018 and Morrow Mountain State Park in 2022.
 - › **American Alligators** – NRP staff continue to collaborate with biologists from the WRC on a long-term mark recapture effort at Lake Waccamaw. Begun in 2017, the twice-yearly surveys have led to more than 300 animals being marked. These efforts have also provided training for over 120 professionals, including several park rangers.
 - › **Lake Waccamaw Aquatic Monitoring** – Important work with WRC Aquatic Wildlife Diversity biologists to monitor aquatic species continues in this nationally unique system located in southeastern North Carolina. Fish, including Waccamaw endemics such as a darter, killifish, and silverside, are surveyed every year, while mussels and freshwater snails are monitored every other year.
 - › **Eastern Hellbenders** – Long-term survey efforts continued for eastern hellbenders at New River State Park, in cooperation with park staff and a vast volunteer pool from across the state. Since its inception the project has marked over 350 animals marked throughout the National Wild and Scenic River section of the New River and beyond. The project has also gathered important distribution information about common mudpuppies and several fish species of concern in this aquatic system.
 - › **Bats** – These winged small mammals serve tremendous ecological functions, and despite unreasonable aspersions due to zoonotic disease transmission, provide important benefits to both humans and other components of the natural environment. Many of these species have experienced significant declines in recent years associated with habitat losses and degradation due to development and land conversions, in addition to the emergence of white-nose syndrome, a fungal pathogen that negatively affects bat health and survivorship. Between 2018-2022, the NRP staff have worked with several partners including the WRC, the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the North Carolina Department of Transportation, volunteers, and the Southeastern Bat Diversity Network to survey for bats across the state parks system at different times and seasons of the year.
 - **Mist Netting** – Staff continued to assist with bat mist netting surveys at several parks. Long-term netting efforts in the mountain bog natural areas, in partnership with WRC biologists, led to the discovery of a large roost for the imperiled little brown bat. This is a species that has seen massive declines across its range due to white-nose syndrome in recent years. Netting at Lake Waccamaw, Lumber River, Medoc Mountain, and Merchants Millpond state parks has provided valuable data on the distribution of bat species in state parks, including several rare and uncommon ones such as Rafinesque’s big-eared bat, southeastern myotis, tricolored bat, and Seminole bat.
 - **Cave Gates** – In response to human disturbance in a site at Crowders Mountain State Park, NRP staff worked with a consulting and fabrication firm and the WRC to erect a gate at the entrance to a mine to keep people out and let bats pass through. This mine is known to harbor tricolored bats, a species proposed for endangered species status by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Similar work is planned for additional parks in the future to minimize detrimental human-wildlife interactions.



Young American Alligators at Lake Waccamaw State Park



Rafinesque Big-Eared Bat Captured During Mistnetting



Cave Gate Installation at Crowders Mountain State Park



Burn Crews at Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve



Prescribed Burn at Hanging Rock State Park



Post Burn at Carvers Creek State Park

- **Hibernacula Surveys** – Winter roost surveys and testing for white-nose presence were conducted at several parks, including Chimney Rock, Crowders Mountain, Grandfather Mountain, Hanging Rock, Raven Rock, South Mountains, and Stone Mountain state parks, along with Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area.
- **Acoustic Surveys** – NRP staff have added passive and active acoustic sampling to the Division's survey arsenal in recent years. Passive detectors, deployed across 15 different park units, yielded almost 270 sample nights, with well over 100,000 calls recorded. Confirmed calls from these sampling events have found 15 of the 17 known bat species from the state. Acoustic surveys remain one of the most efficient methods to determine which bat species are present around a given property.
- **Partnership Surveys** – In June 2019, several partners came together on the Albemarle-Pamlico Peninsula to survey for the presence of bats on various public properties over a three-night period. These partners included NRP staff, the Museum of Natural Sciences, WRC, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.
- › **Crystal Skipper Butterflies** – Division staff and partners including the North Carolina State University Center for Marine Sciences and Technology, have worked to survey, monitor, and gain species-specific ecology insights on the North Carolina-endemic and critically imperiled crystal skipper butterfly at Fort Macon and Hammocks Beach state parks. This species resides in the grassy dune habitats on only a 30-mile stretch of the North Carolina coastline and is under threat from both development pressures and shifting climatic impacts.

Fire Management

Fire management in the Division has developed and grown rapidly over the past decade. The Division primarily burned about 500 acres per year prior to 2009, when the agency first began addressing fire needs across the system. By the end of 2022, the Division's fire management staffing entails three permanent positions (a Fire Management Officer and two Ecological Burn Coordinators), and a four-person, 11-month temporary burn crew. Staff work in concert with other NRP personnel and park staff to prepare and conduct prescribed fires, and to respond to wildfire and other natural disaster incidents across the system.

Since the Division's fire management group was formed, the parks system land area has increased from approximately 175,000 acres to over 250,000 acres by the end of 2022. Fire frequency needs are estimated at about 13,000-15,000 acres annually needing fire in a simple maintenance condition approach. While much of the Division land was in a condition of long fire exclusion before the Fire Management program was established, the Division has come a long way to meeting the estimated needs of fire frequency.

While maintenance fire frequency sounds simple, the reality is that a highly complex series of logistical and ecological factors influence implementation. For example, these factors include:

- Fire suppression history (years since fire)
- Fuel load accumulations and distribution both by types and geographical location due to suppression
- The presence of significantly rare species and their fire-adapted life history characters
- Public safety
- Containment logistics and implementation efficiencies including personnel and experience needs
- Seasonality related ecology
- Smoke and health impact mitigation
- Climatic and longtime interval weather pattern influences
- Day of conditions related to weather, fuel conditions, personnel, and park operations

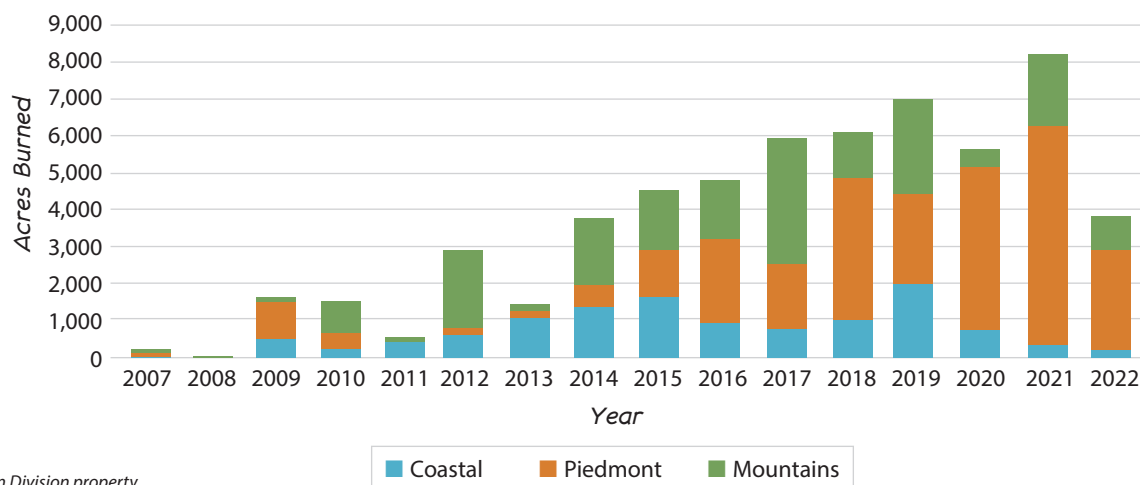
Overall, the parks system continues to increase in size, as do the challenges with implementing a fire program. With increased fire staff positions working in conjunction with park staff, neighbors, state and federal agencies, and other cooperative partners, the Division is making significant gains.

Key Accomplishments and Projects (2018-2022 and ongoing):

- There have been 321 prescribed fires on 35 park properties for a total of 31,307 acres from 2018 through 2022. Figure 1.3 provides an annual perspective on prescribed acres burned annually since 2007.

- › While acres burned is a common statistic, it provides a limited perspective. It is difficult to relay the complexities of fire management on raw and undeveloped land.
- › COVID-19 presented some implementation challenges in 2020. One contributing factor relates to the reliance on cooperative partnership assistance due to personnel capacity and experience within the agency. This assistance has allowed for gains associated with several of the complex fuel and terrain conditions statewide. Prior to the pandemic influences, several cooperative projects were completed by mid-March. These projects included the complex Moore’s Wall cooperative burn at Hanging Rock State Park (about 330 acres) and several at Morrow Mountain State Park with the North Carolina Forest Service. Throughout the remainder of the year, all prescribed fires were completed by Division staff.
- › The decreased acreage of 2022 was influenced by several factors, including reductions in work force, increased contractual costs, large wildfire response needs, influences of several adverse weather patterns throughout the year, visitation pressures and facilities development projects in some key areas. Despite these challenges, more than 40 prescribed fires were completed during the year, including some key highlights:
 1. The Woods Gap cooperative burn (about 1700 acres) across complex terrain found along the boundaries of South Mountains State Park and South Mountains Game Lands managed by WRC.
 2. The cooperative growing season burn on the Lake James State Park restoration project area with the Division, North Carolina Forest Service, U.S. Forest Service, and additional partners.
- **Wildfires** are common on state parks properties, mostly due to accidental human causes. Most are quickly discovered and contained before they exceed a few acres. Several large wildfires occurred on or adjacent to state parks properties in 2021 and 2022 during challenging weather and fuel conditions periods. These required NRP and park field staff to prioritize response assistance over normal duties.
 - › More than 55 wildfires were reported on state parks properties from 2018-2022.
 - › From November 2021 through November 2022, the Division worked collaboratively with the North Carolina Forest Service and other partners on seven major wildfire incidents statewide, including the Grindstone wildfire* at Pilot Mountain State Park, the Huntsville Mountain wildfire* at Bob’s Creek State Natural Area, the Cedar Creek wildfire* at Bushy Lake State Natural Area, the Boulder Area wildfire* at Crowders Mountain State Park, the Pine Street wildfire* at Morrow Mountain State Park, the Ferebee Road wildfire adjacent to Pettigrew State Park, and the Juniper Road 2 wildfire near Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area. Those directly on Division properties (*) burned more than 2,400 acres total.
- The NRP staff have begun working with the North Carolina Forest Service, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, North Carolina Plant Conservation Program, and the WRC to provide geographically relevant data available for significantly important ecological resources for interagency personnel during wildfire suppression operations. This provides informed planning and tactical implementation that minimizes negative impacts to important, high-value natural resources. A similar endeavor is needed for significant archaeological and cultural resource locations, so that they, too, are protected to the greatest degree possible during management activities and incident operations.
 - › Several NRP staff are now trained to serve as Resource Advisors for incident management and significant project consultations when minimizing and protecting natural and cultural resources is vital to agency objectives.

Figure 1.3: Prescribed Burning at North Carolina State Parks, 2007-2022



*Wildfire directly on Division property



Prescribed Fire on Sugarloaf Mountain,
Morrow Mountain State Park, 2022



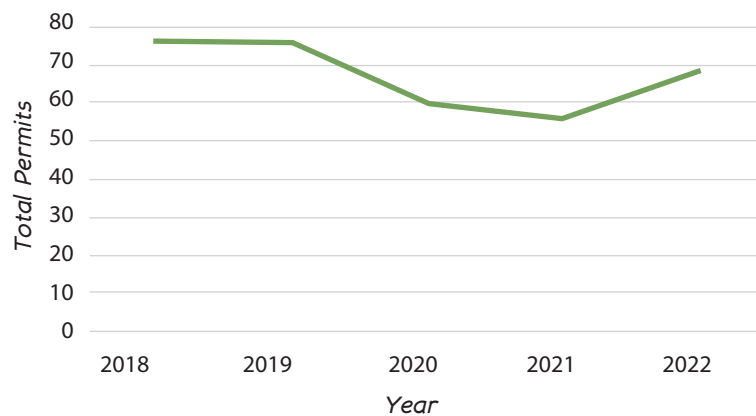
Grindstone Wildfire – View from Pilot
Mountain State Park's Visitor Center

- It is a requirement that most state parks field staff receive basic firefighter training to prepare them for wildfire responses and to participate in prescribed fires on their respective parks. On average, about 30-40 personnel receive this training annually. A smaller number continue to build experiences and more in-depth training to further progress into higher national qualifications and towards becoming agency burn bosses.
 - › The overall number of Division qualified burn bosses continues to decrease, yet those that remain continue to gain experience and even more robust qualifications.

Research

The Division issues Research Activity Permits to credible applicants for projects on state parks properties. Many of these projects encompass a wide range of natural and cultural science topics, and the Division ensures additional regulatory compliance is also approved during the permit consideration process. During the period from 2018-2022, the Division made the move to an online application process. Annual permit numbers have remained nearly the same overall, despite a slight decline during the pandemic.

Figure 1.4: Number of Research Activity Permits, 2018-2022



Notable Project Examples:

- Multi-Scale Assessment of the Drivers of Neuse River Waterdog (*Necturus lewisi*) Distribution and Recruitment
- Assessing the Ecophysiological Impact of Winter Warming on the Fraser Fir (*Abies fraseri*) and Red Spruce (*Picea ruben*)
- Developing a Fire History of Pilot Mountain State Park and Hanging Rock State Park Using Dendrochronology
- Timber Rattlesnake (*Crotalus horridus*) Populations in North Carolina State Parks: Genetic Connectivity and Diversity
- Predicting Marsh Bird Population Response to Sea Level Rise: Providing Information for Management Decisions and a Framework for Other Marsh Species
- Evaluating Water Quality, Microbial Community Composition, and Benthic Invertebrate Abundance in the Lumber River
- Evaluation of Higher Titer Oral Rabies Vaccine for Wildlife

The Division is also exploring funding opportunities for questions and project needs the agency itself has internally identified. The approach of these efforts is to continue to utilize university, private, and independent researchers to assist the Division by providing relevant information that helps inform agency decision processes.



Neuse River Waterdog



Fraser Fir Trees



Timber Rattlesnake

Interpretation and Education

The Division offers a wide range of educational opportunities and resources. The Interpretation and Education (I&E) program focuses on interpretive programs at parks including guided hikes, canoe excursions and campground programs; professional development for rangers and teachers; visitor center exhibits and museums; science and cultural history field trips for students; and special youth programs.

Interpretation and Education Professional Development

- I&E specialists work with new rangers to help them attain the skills needed to develop best-practice interpretation and education programs. Beginning in 2018, all rangers and educators attend a 32-hour Certified Interpretive Guide (CIG) course offered through the National Association for Interpretation. Since 2018, more than 100 Division staff have been certified in this nationally recognized training. In 2021, the Division hosted an instructor workshop with leaders from around the country at Haw River State Park. This workshop increased the number of Division staff qualified to teach CIG from three to 11.
- The Advanced Interpretive Training is a series of one-day workshops for park staff and other educators to enhance their skills as park educators. Workshops include Interpretation and Environmental Education for Young Children, Astronomy Interpretation, Interpretive Writing for Exhibits and Fire Ecology.
- Twelve division staff are certified by the American Canoe Association as instructors in kayak, canoe, and stand-up paddleboard. Park staff leading paddling excursions for park visitors attend a one-day workshop taught by these certified instructors.

Science Education and Cultural History Field Trips

- Each park offers field trip experiences that are correlated with the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Standard Course of Study.
- The Junior Ranger Activity Guide offers outdoor activities for teachers and parents that are correlated with teaching standards.
- The Division continues to operate its residential program at Haw River State Park. Typically, 5,000 students and adults participate annually in the park's environmental education program. School groups are immersed in outdoor learning while spending up to four nights in the park cabins and lodges.

Schools In Parks Collaborative

In 2019, the Division launched the Schools in Parks Collaborative (the Collaborative) as a yearlong professional development program for third-through fifth-grade teachers and state parks rangers. Coordinated with support from the Center for Public Engagement with Science at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Institute for the Environment, the Collaborative aims to make a state park field trip a focal point for the science curriculum for an entire school year. Teachers are presented with resources and skills to engage students in outdoor learning in the schoolyard, which helps students be more comfortable, engaged, and receptive to learning during their field trips. During the 2019-2020 school year, 45 teachers from five counties participated in a three-day summer workshop. During the 2020-2021 school year, the COVID-19 pandemic caused a shift to virtual professional development, and 42 teachers from 25 counties participated. During the 2021-2022 school year, the program shifted to enroll both park rangers and schoolteachers to work together as a team, and 24 teachers and 11 park rangers were enrolled. Based on formal program evaluations teachers reported:

- That students exhibited increased excitement toward learning, including heightened curiosity, awareness of nature, and new stewardship behaviors, and
- Participants felt increased confidence in facilitating outdoor learning experiences aligned with core curriculum content after participating in the Collaborative.

Self-Guided Interpretive Trails

Forty-one TRACK Trails across the state parks system offer self-guided brochures and trailhead signs geared towards children. This program is a partnership with Kids in Parks, a program of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation and maintains long-term engagement with families to support healthy living and nature appreciation.

Big Canoe Adventures

The Friends of State Parks purchased two Big Canoes and donated them to the North Carolina state parks system in July 2018. The Big Canoes hold 14 passengers and are 29.5 feet long. Adventurers of all ages have been treated to amazing experiences on North Carolina's water resources. With a trained guide at the stern, the canoes can get an entire school classroom safely out in the middle of a lake, where bald eagles soar overhead. High school service organizations can test water quality and clean up litter along shorelines. The Division has guided more than 3,000 park visitors in the Big Canoes from July 2018 through April 2023. The Big Canoes are an exciting promotional opportunity for state parks and Friends of State Parks, as many people enjoy attending events and simply watching them paddle.

Among many of the Big Canoe Adventures:

- The first annual Lost Colony Festival on the Cashie River in partnership with Salmon Creek State Natural Area
- At Lake James State Park for McDowell County's Juneteenth Freedom Festival
- With more than 60 children from the Boys and Girls Club of the Piedmont on Lake Norman
- Collecting litter on Jordan Lake with Dedicated to Our Community, a high school service organization from Cary
- In North Carolina's and Virginia's premier paddling event, Paddle for the Border, along the Dismal Swamp Canal
- For an astronomy paddle at Morrow Mountain State Park, as part of the Statewide Star Party and the North Carolina Science Festival
- To celebrate National Girl Scouts Love State Parks Day at Jockey's Ridge State Park

Exhibits and Museums

- The state parks system operates 30 exhibit halls and museums across the state.
- Every operated unit of the state parks system maintains outdoor interpretive exhibits and informational signs to enhance the experience of visitors.

Park Planning Program

The Planning Program is responsible for all planning that is done for the Division. The program consists of a program manager, park planners, state trail planners and a grant manager.

The planning program handles all planning for new state parks or lands acquired. This includes planning for all visitor amenities at a park and where those amenities should be located to reduce any impact to the natural environment. There are several plans undertaken for the Division's park units, including a systemwide plan, master plans, general management plans, small area concept plans and capacity plans.

New master plans have been created for Hanging Rock State Park (2018), Elk Knob State Park (2020), and Mayo River State Park (2021). Currently, Pisgah View State Park is undergoing a master plan that is expected to be completed in the fall of 2024.

Master plans, general management plans and small area plans are all utilized in looking at future needs for the system. To allow a simpler ability to look at future needs, the Project Priority List was created, which allows the Division to quickly search through and run scenarios for future development and financial needs.

State Trail Planning – North Carolina's State Trails

Dan River State Trail: The Dan River crosses the North Carolina and Virginia border eight times on its 214-mile journey from the Blue Ridge Mountains to Kerr Lake. The 90 miles of the river in Surry, Stokes and Rockingham counties were authorized as a state trail in 2021. This is a paddle trail.

Deep River State Trail: The Deep River State Trail was authorized in 2007 by the General Assembly. The DRST is unique in that it is a hybrid trail for the entire length — both a land-based and paddle trail. Randolph County and its towns along the river have led the efforts in planning and constructing segments of the DRST. Much of the land trail in Randolph County is a rail trail open to hiking and biking.

East Coast Greenway State Trail: The East Coast Greenway is a walking and biking route stretching 3,000 miles from Maine to Florida — connecting 15 states and 450 communities. The East Coast Greenway State Trail is a portion of the greenway in North Carolina. It is shaped like a large "V," with one arm passing through Raleigh, Durham, and Fayetteville. The coastal arm will connect Greenville and Jacksonville. These will join in Wilmington. Along the way, hikers and bicyclists can experience rolling hills of pine, oak, and hickory forests; cypress swamps; thriving cities; and coastal beaches.

Fonta Flora State Trail: Authorized in 2015, the Fonta Flora State Trail will connect Morganton to Asheville with a hiking and biking trail. Included in the trail is a loop around Lake James. The trail will traverse Lake James State Park, part of Pisgah National Forest, and Fonta Flora County Park in Burke County. It will also connect to the Overmountain Victory State Trail and the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail. When complete, it will be approximately 100 miles long. It is named after the local settlement of African American sharecroppers, whose homes were flooded when the Catawba River was dammed to create Lake James.

French Broad River State Trail: The French Broad River State Trail was established in 1987 on one of the oldest rivers in the world. The 115-mile river flows north from Rosman to the Tennessee border, through Buncombe (including the heart of western North Carolina's largest city, Asheville), Henderson, Madison, and Transylvania counties. Most of the river offers gently flowing water with occasional class I and class II rapids. However, only experienced paddlers should attempt the stretch between Barnard and Hot Springs, which has class III and IV rapids. This section is popular with rafters.

Hickory Nut Gorge State Trail: Hickory Nut Gorge State Trail will provide a connection between Chimney Rock State Park; Lake Lure; Upper Hickory Nut Gorge, including Bearwallow Mountain, Florence Nature Preserve, and Wildcat Rock; and Buffalo Creek Park. Local citizens, visitors, and even wildlife will be able to use this connection to access natural lands while protected from vehicular traffic. Much of the land that the HGST will be constructed on is protected by both Chimney Rock State Park and Conserving Carolina, a western North Carolina land trust.

Mountains-to-Sea State Trail: The Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is North Carolina's flagship state trail. The notion of a trail extending across the width of North Carolina was proposed in 1977 by Howard Lee, who was then the Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development. In 2000, the MST became a state trail and a unit of the state parks system. In 2017, the General Assembly authorized a major addition to the MST: the Coastal Crescent route that loops through southeastern North Carolina. When completely constructed, the MST will be about 1,400 miles long. Currently, there are more than 675 miles of trail that are completed and designated.

The Division is completely committed to developing the MST as a continuous, off-road trail across the state. To that end, the Division has dedicated considerable financial and staff resources to the planning and coordination of the entire trail. One of the hallmarks of its efforts is developing partnerships with local, state, and federal land management agencies, along with nonprofit organizations, land trusts and volunteers, to advance the development of the MST. The Friends of Mountains-to-Sea Trail provides information on the trail, sponsors most of the task forces that build and maintain sections of trail and promotes thru-hiking the trail by providing interim routes that connect completed portions of the MST.

Northern Peaks State Trail: When constructed, the Northern Peaks State Trail will connect Boone to Elk Knob State Park to West Jefferson and Mount Jefferson State Natural Area. The planning corridor is approximately 40 miles long.

Overmountain Victory State Trail: The Overmountain Victory National Historic Trail stretches roughly 330 miles from its southern terminus in South Carolina through North Carolina and into Tennessee and Virginia. It follows the paths that the patriot militia took as they mustered to fight the Battle of Kings Mountain in 1780. This battle proved to be pivotal in the Revolutionary War. The Overmountain Victory State Trail will follow the 225 miles of the planned route of the National Historic Trail that passes through North Carolina. The Division will work closely with the National Park Service on the development of the trail.

Roanoke River State Trail: The Roanoke River State Trail is a paddle trail extending from Weldon to the Albemarle Sound. Despite meandering through the Coastal Plain of North Carolina, this paddle trail offers a unique wilderness experience to all who venture along its length. While there are some opportunities for day trips on the eastern end of the river, most paddlers need to be prepared for a multiday journey on this state trail. Bear, beaver, river otter, white-tailed deer, bobcat, and over 200 bird species will provide company on the expedition. Overhead are ancient bald cypress and tupelo trees. Riverside camping platforms make spending the night along the river a true adventure.

Wilderness Gateway State Trail: The vision for the Wilderness Gateway State Trail rests on three pillars: conservation, recreation, and tourism. The trail will protect and conserve riparian and other important habitats and serve as an ecological corridor between larger tracts of natural lands. It will create pathways and walkable downtowns in more urban areas to provide safe and pleasant recreation and exercise opportunities where people live and work. Finally, by creating recreational opportunities with access to scenic wilderness and connections to multiple downtowns, the trail will attract visitors from all areas of North Carolina and beyond.

Yadkin River State Trail: The headwaters of the Yadkin River are in Blowing Rock, and it flows for 203 miles to Lake Tillery, where its name changes to the Pee Dee River. The Yadkin River State Trail is a paddle trail that starts at the tailwaters of the dam that creates the Kerr Scott Reservoir and goes for 163 miles to the confluence of the Uwharrie River at Morrow Mountain State Park. The river has always been vital to the region. Over 10,000 years ago, Native Americans depended on the river for sustenance and transportation. Remnants of their fish traps are still visible in the river today. European settlers powered their lumber and grist mills using the Yadkin. The 20th century brought dams to the Yadkin, which powered steam turbines to generate electricity for the increasingly urbanized region. Today, the river continues to contribute to energy production, as a drinking water source, and a tremendous recreation resource.



Mountains-to-Sea State Trail



Northern Peaks State Trail



Yadkin River State Trail

Complete the Trail Grant Program

The Planning program administers the Complete the Trail Program funds, which were part of historic legislation passed in 2021 and provides an unprecedented level of funding for state trails in North Carolina. This legislation created the \$29.25 million Complete the Trail Fund. These funds will go to small communities to support the development of trails that will connect those communities to the state trails.

The legislation requires that the funds be distributed by the Division to a nonprofit partner for each state trail. To be the recognized partner, an organization must have a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Division and an approved three- to five-year plan for deploying the funds to develop the state trail.

The fund also grows the Division's Planning program by adding a grant manager to assist with MOUs between the Division and state trail partners.

As of 2022, there are 12 state trails authorized by the General Assembly: six land-based trails, four paddle trails, and two that have both a land-based and paddle component. The planned mileage for the system is over 3,406 miles. Over 30 state parks, state natural areas, and state recreation areas host or are adjacent to state trail segments.

Trails Program

The mission of the North Carolina Trails Program is "to promote sustainable trail planning; to conserve our natural resources; ensure the responsible use of public funds; and to facilitate low infrastructure economic development opportunities across the state," as codified in N.C. Gen. Stat. §143B-135.90¹. The term "trails" includes hiking trails, bicycling trails, bridle trails, paddle trails, off-highway vehicle trails, and multiuse greenways.

The Trails program consists of a program manager, three regional trails specialists, and a grants manager. The program's mission is accomplished by providing two main areas of services:

Construction and Technical Assistance

Trails Program staff provide professional-level consulting and technical assistance in the areas of sustainable trail planning, sustainable trail design, and contract management, especially for state parks field staff. Professional design services traditionally account for approximately 30% of a standard trail contract. With staff providing these services, parks can convert that savings into the building of more trails.

Upon request, the staff also provides training and education to agencies and volunteers. The program supports local communities, nonprofit organizations, and regional councils in planning, promoting, and designing sustainable trails.

Federal Recreational Trails Program Grants

The Trails Program administers the federal Recreational Trails Program (RTP) and has historically administered the Adopt-A-Trail funding, which has been suspended due to lack of funding. The Trails Program is responsible for coordinating the RTP grants with the Division, DNCR, and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA).

The Bipartisan Infrastructure Law of 2021 in the U.S. Congress reauthorized RTP through 2026. Funding comes from the FHWA through the North Carolina Department of Transportation. Since 1993, RTP funding in North Carolina has been used to provide recreational opportunities for hikers, equestrians, bikers, paddlers, and off-highway vehicle users.

From 1999 to 2022, the state has received approximately \$76.9 million in requests for funding. From those requests, North Carolina has awarded \$40.7 million to sustainable trail projects across the state. These funds, in combination with \$68.6 million of in-kind services and matching funds, total more than \$109 million that have been applied to trail and greenways projects for the citizens of North Carolina.

In 2022, Trails Program staff received 27 applications requesting \$2.4 million in funding. Eighteen projects were selected totaling \$1,632,903 and leveraging \$872,815 in grantee matching funds to provide economic development and recreational resources to North Carolina counties.

¹ North Carolina Trails System Act, ch. 670, 1973 N.C. Sess. Laws 995.

Grants Management

The Division's Recreation Grants and Outreach section provides guidance to local governments in applying for and managing grants for land acquisition and development of parks and recreation facilities. The section also administers the Recreation Resources Service (RRS) jointly with North Carolina State University's Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management; RRS consultants provide technical assistance to eligible grant applicants within their assigned region in the state. The Division added a second permanent position of grants specialist to support the management of the four grant programs: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF), North Carolina Accessibility for Parks (AFP), federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), and federal Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program (ORLP). One grants specialist focuses on state-funded grants (PARTF and AFP), while the other focuses on federally funded grants (LWCF, ORLP).

In 2022, the redesign of the Division's website made major improvements on the grants information provided online. A main page provides an overview of all the grant programs that the Division manages, including RTP and CTP. RRS staff created an interactive map that shows local parks and recreation facilities that have benefited from PARTF and LWCF funding; other pages provide the full list of PARTF and LWCF grants awarded in a searchable table.

State Grants – PARTF and AFP

Over the four fiscal year cycles from 2018 to 2022, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund awarded local governments grants in 64 of North Carolina's counties. These grants funded 121 projects at a total of \$37.1 million. Almost half of these projects were funded during fiscal year 2021-2022, a particular banner year for PARTF, thanks to the establishment of the State Capital and Infrastructure Fund and a generous bequest by Ms. Barbara Rose McIntyre upon her passing in 2019. Ms. McIntyre gifted over \$1 million dollars to the fund, which was allocated by her request to the rehabilitation of Vade Mecum at Hanging Rock State Park, the establishment of an endowment for environmental education in state parks, and the funding of local park projects. The Parks and Recreation Authority selected the local projects — all located in Tier 1 counties — based on inclusion of child-focused facilities and activities, accessibility under the Americans with Disabilities Act, and environmental education.

In 2019, PARTF celebrated the 25th anniversary of its establishment, and the Division used the occasion to accomplish one of the objectives identified in the 2018 Systemwide Plan: to better educate local governments about parks grants opportunities. With assistance from DNCR staff, promotional photos were also taken at a few PARTF-funded parks to showcase the fund's accomplishments across the state; these photos are now front and center on the main PARTF page on the Division website, along with revamped information about the fund and its history.

In 2021, the General Assembly approved a one-time allocation of \$10 million dollars from the State Capital and Infrastructure Program for parks and recreation projects that benefit children and veterans with disabilities in North Carolina. Accessibility for Parks matching grants can be used to build accessible facilities or adapt existing facilities that meet the unique needs of children and veterans with physical and developmental disabilities. Local governments can request a maximum of \$500,000 with each application and must match the grant with at least \$1 of local funds for every \$5 in grant funds. Like PARTF, the Parks and Recreation Authority will select the grant recipients.

Federal Grants

The Land and Water Conservation Fund is a federal grant program of the Department of the Interior that is funded through royalties from offshore oil and natural gas. The Division manages North Carolina's allocation, overseeing and evaluating submitted applications and recommending a list of projects to the National Park Service for final review and funding. The program has provided more than \$85 million in matching grants to protect land and support more than 900 state and local projects in North Carolina.

From 2018 through 2022, 18 local park projects have been approved across North Carolina for a combined total of \$4.9 million. Funds can be used to either acquire land for a public park, develop outdoor recreational and support facilities, or a combination of both. Applicants can request up to \$500,000 and must match the grant awarded at least dollar for dollar. Grant recipients range from smaller communities such as Mars Hill and Hookerton, to larger towns and cities like Concord and Kernersville, and counties such as Johnston County and Gaston County. In addition to the awards to Gaston and Johnston counties, 12 other counties are represented among the awardees.

The Outdoor Recreation Legacy Partnership Program is a subset of LWCF program. ORLP is intended to provide new or significantly improve recreation opportunities for economically disadvantaged communities in larger urbanized areas (population of 50,000 or more, as designated by the U.S. Census Bureau) that are underserved in terms of parks and other outdoor recreation resources. The city of Raleigh received a \$747,000 award to renovate its John Chavis Park in 2018, and the city of Greensboro received a \$600,000 award to develop Peeler Community Park in 2020. Both cities were chosen out of applicants nationwide, and these granted funds are not counted against North Carolina's LWCF apportionments.

Customer Service and Communications

Centralized Reservation System: Aspira (ReserveAmerica)

The centralized reservation system was awarded in 2018, and the first one-year extension will be awarded in spring 2023.

The current contract has allowed the Division to move the webstore from Yahoo Business Solutions to Aspira (ReserveAmerica) and enabled the Division to provide ferry ticketing at Hammocks Beach State Park. Beginning April 2023, Haw River State Park will also be able to use the system for the reservation of its facilities at The Summit, a residential environmental education and conference center. Still to come under the contract will be online payments and reservations for the Carolina Beach State Park marina and online payments for pier permitting at some of the state lakes.

Advance reservations are not required for a campsite or picnic shelter at a state park if the facility is available, and at many parks, some campsites will be set aside for walk-in registration. Reservations for most facilities can be made up to 6 months ahead. A \$2.50 surcharge per night's stay or per reservation supports the system. The state of North Carolina did not make any out-of-pocket expenditures for system development.

The state-of-the-art system helps state parks and their staff manage the ever-growing visitation and provides valuable insight into visitor preferences and demographics. Demographic information, visitor-use patterns, and other critical information gathered through the system provide the agency with vital facts and figures that enhance planning and operations. Visitor contact information obtained through the system provides the Division with the ability to market facilities and services, which were not available prior to launching the centralized reservation system.

This system has also increased the Division's exposure and led to higher visitation and revenues, which boosts the opportunity to reach more citizens with the message of environmental stewardship. Visitors now have the peace of mind to know, unlike before, that a campsite is available and reserved for their use upon arrival. Under the previous practices, campsites and facilities were only available on a first-come, first-served basis at most parks.

New Division Website

In 2018, the Division's website at www.ncparks.gov was custom-built in-house and overdue for a redesign. However, the redesign of the custom-built site to upgrade it to the state's websites standards would require resources beyond the capacity of the Division. Working with the North Carolina Department of Information Technology, staff rebuilt a new site from scratch on the Digital Commons platform, which was quickly becoming the standard for most North Carolina agency websites and prioritized mobile-first and accessibility.

Using extensive input from state parks website users and park staff, the new state parks website was developed on Drupal 9, with a focus on providing easier access to the information and tools that users want the most. The new website launched in August 2022.

The Division's mission, "Conservation, Recreation, and Education," is the starting point for navigation on the site. A one-click map of the state parks and a "Find a Park Catalog" allows users to filter by activity, region, facilities, and more. The site also has guides for visiting parks with pertinent information about pets, fees, family-friendly activities, and accessibility.

All pages have the option to automatically translate the text to more than 15 languages through Google Translate. Photos, videos, interactive graphics, and search-and-filter tables provide visual interest while making it easy to find important information.

Each park's home page has an up-to-date status of trails and facilities, improved navigation, and quick links for camping, activities, facilities, and more. An overview of the park's amenities is provided on the home page, and additional pages provide more comprehensive detail for first-time and frequent visitors alike. Information about hosting events at the park, as well as educational materials related to the park's ecology and history, are also included.

Plans for future additions for the website include a "Find a Campground Catalog," a searchable trails chart, and more information about the Division's conservation work. Expanded education pages will focus on Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) camps, Black history, and Indigenous roots of parkland.



Campsite at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area



Community Building at Kerr Lake State Recreation Area



Picnic Shelter at Lake Norman State Park



Hammocks Beach State Park

Trails Website

In 2018, the Division launched a new website specifically for the North Carolina Trails Program at www.trails.nc.gov. The primary intent was to make it more convenient for applicants to find information about the RTP grant process. The website has comprehensive information on the grant application process, as well as resources for grant recipients. One particularly helpful tool was an interactive map of North Carolina counties to assist applicants in finding their regional trails specialists for questions and information about the grants process, as well as other services that the Trails Program staff provide.

The website also houses information about North Carolina's state trails. The 2018 launch was timely as North Carolina has doubled the number of state trails since. The website includes master plans for trails and sections, where available, as well as maps of the planned trails. The website is also the primary means of providing information for public comment opportunities for state trails. Following the establishment of the Complete the Trails Program, the website information was revamped to add information about the state trail partners and their five-year plans.

Social Media

As of December 2022, the official social media accounts for the Division have 102,855 followers on Facebook, 17,984 followers on Twitter, and 49,051 followers on Instagram. A few state parks have also created their own social media accounts to share park-specific content, though most state parks send updates and information to the official Division accounts and to their park's friends group's accounts.

Social media has become a powerful tool for the Communications and Marketing section of the Division. While the Division website remains the primary source of information for the state parks system, social media allows staff to "blast" specific timely information, such as closures during inclement weather events and during the COVID-19 pandemic. Primarily, the Division utilizes social media for promotional purposes due to limited resources that can be allocated towards marketing and advertising. Promotional efforts typically focus on specific initiatives, such as the Passport program and First Day Hikes, or public service announcement efforts like waterfall and cliffside safety and pet etiquette.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, Division staff turned to YouTube to continue to provide educational programming to the public even when state parks were closed or were unable to offer in-person programming. Park field staff created homemade "Nature at Home" videos that provided virtual field trips and lessons about nature. Once restrictions eased, the Division worked with the North Carolina Outdoor Heritage Advisory Council to create more professionally shot videos that covered topics such as macroinvertebrates and dendrology. The Division also partnered with DNCR to create a similar NC Culture Kids program that offers videos and worksheets around specific aspects of natural and cultural resources within parks. The NC Culture Kids program correlates with the North Carolina Standard Course of Study and continues to grow to more parks.

Publications

Demand for printed materials onsite at the parks remains high, especially since cellular service can be unreliable in remote areas of the state. To keep costs low, the Division has shifted to providing alternatives to full-color folded brochures at many state parks. The primary need for printed materials is park maps, but most visitors utilize a park map on a single visit only. As a result, state parks now offer tear-off maps, typically letter-sized, to minimize the amount of paper wasted on single-use publications.

The Division has also begun to offer Spanish-language maps and brochures, especially at parks in counties with large Spanish-speaking populations. The Junior Ranger Activity Guide was revamped with a brand-new design and now offers a Spanish-language version. Communications staff continue to look at other ways to make promotional and informational materials more accessible to a wide variety of visitors.

Annual Passes

The Annual Pass program has been redesigned and revamped since 2018. Because most North Carolina state parks are free to access, the primary benefits of the Annual Pass are equipment rentals, though they remain popular with boaters at the state reservoirs.

The Division currently offers three types of passes: a Seasonal Parking Pass to allow unlimited vehicle access to Falls Lake, Jordan Lake, and Kerr Lake state recreation areas; an Annual Pass that includes entrance to the reservoirs but also offers ferry tickets at Hammocks Beach State Parks, equipment rentals at nine state parks, and swim passes at six state parks, among other benefits; and a Four-Wheel-Drive Beach Annual Pass that includes the benefits of the Annual Pass but adds unlimited entry to the Fort Fisher State Recreation Area four-wheel-drive beach.

2.0 State of the System

System Units

As of December 31, 2022, the North Carolina state parks system consists of 87 units, 43 of which are operated for the visiting public with on-site staff and regular gate hours. The remaining units are managed in one of the following ways: as part of an operated park, as a satellite unit, or through cooperative and partnership agreements. For example, Lake Phelps is managed as part of Pettigrew State Park. Run Hill State Natural Area is a satellite of Jockeys Ridge State Park. Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area is leased to the town of Cary in a cooperative agreement, and the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is an example of a state park unit that is both inside and outside of park boundaries and requires ongoing partnerships with other agencies and organizations.

Table 2.1: Size of the State Parks System as of December 2022

Unit Type	Units	Size (Acres)	Length (Miles)
State Parks	35	173,887 [†]	0
State Recreation Areas	4	12,401	0
State Natural Areas	25	40,505	0
State Lakes	7	29,135	0
State Rivers	4	0	146
State Trails	12	3,850 [†]	3,406*
Total:	87	259,778	4,126

Land Area	80	230,643
Water Area (State Lakes)	7	29,135
Total:	87	259,778

*Planned length

[†]Includes conservation easements

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

Figure 2.1: Map of the North Carolina State Parks System

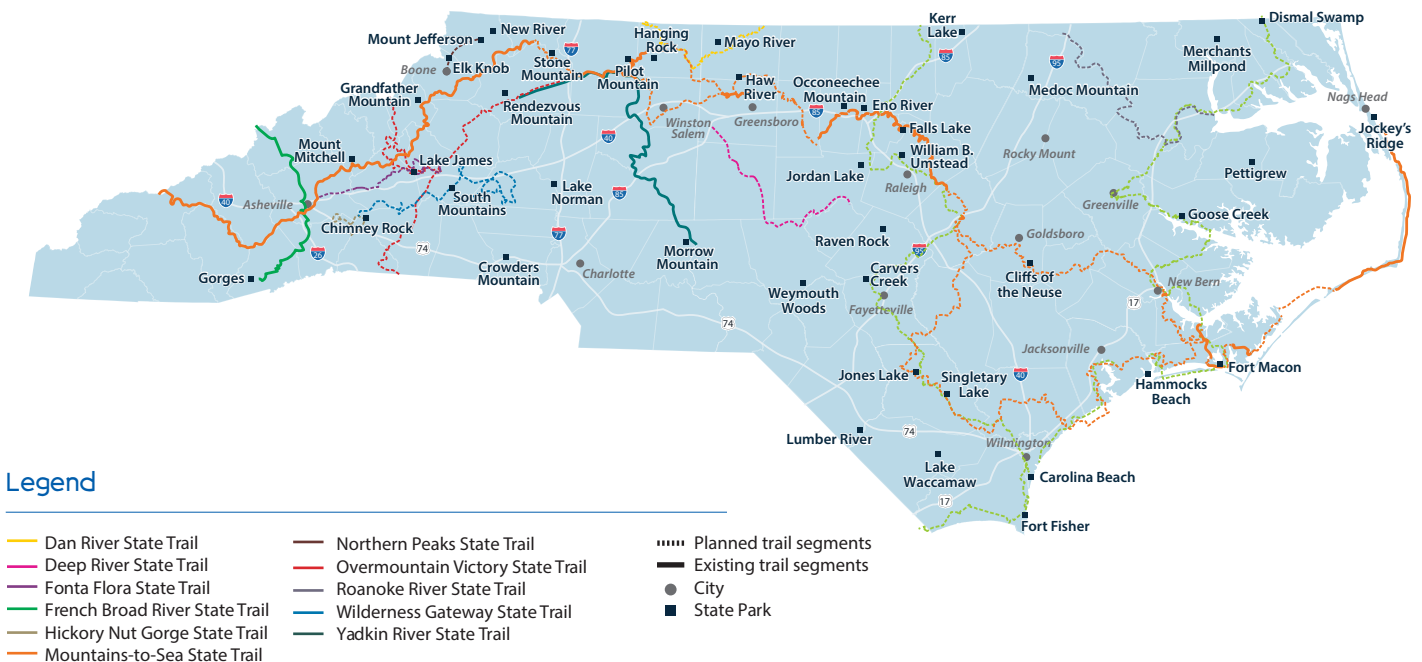


Table 2.2: State Parks System Units with Acreages as of December 2022

State Park	Size (Acres)	State Natural Area	Size (Acres)
Carolina Beach State Park	628	Bakers Lake State Natural Area*	0
Carvers Creek State Park	4,897	Bald Head Island State Natural Area	5,970
Chimney Rock State Park	7,156	Bay Tree Lake State Natural Area	626
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park†	1,066	Bear Paw State Natural Area	384
Crowders Mountain State Park	5,207	Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area	310
Dismal Swamp State Park	14,353	Bob's Creek State Natural Area	6,090
Elk Knob State Park	4,546	Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area	430
Eno River State Park†	4,463	Bushy Lake State Natural Area	6,936
Fort Macon State Park	537	Chowan Swamp State Natural Area	6,031
Goose Creek State Park	1,699	Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area	97
Gorges State Park	8,120	Lea Island State Natural Area	27
Grandfather Mountain State Park†	3,746	Lower Haw River State Natural Area	1,357
Hammocks Beach State Park	1,770	Masonboro Island State Natural Area	106
Hanging Rock State Park	8,461	Mitchell Mill State Natural Area	91
Haw River State Park	1,488	Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	1,143
Jockey's Ridge State Park	437	Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area	229
Jones Lake State Park	1,391	Pineola Bog State Natural Area	94
Lake James State Park	3,920	Run Hill State Natural Area	120
Lake Norman State Park†	1,956	Salmon Creek State Natural Area	1,305
Lake Waccamaw State Park	2,328	Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area	3,042
Lumber River State Park	13,351	Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area	122
Mayo River State Park	2,966	Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area	281
Medoc Mountain State Park	3,939	Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area	990
Merchants Millpond State Park	3,347	Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve	919
Morrow Mountain State Park	5,810	Yellow Mountain State Natural Area	3,805
Mount Mitchell State Park†	4,498	Total:	40,505
New River State Park†	3,432		
Pettigrew State Park	5,185	State Lake (water area only)	Size (Acres)
Pilot Mountain State Park	3,918	Bay Tree Lake	1,418
Pisgah View State Park*	1,400	Jones Lake	224
Raven Rock State Park	4,899	Lake Phelps	16,600
Singletary Lake State Park	747	Lake Waccamaw	8,938
South Mountains State Park	21,341	Salters Lake	315
Stone Mountain State Park	13,605	Singletary Lake	572
William B. Umstead State Park†	5,588	White Lake	1,068
Total:	172,195	Total: 7	29,135
		State River	Length (miles)
		Horsepasture River	4.5
		Linville River	13
		Lumber River	102
		New River	26.5
		Total: 4	146

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

* Indicates a park unit that was authorized after 2018

† Does not include conservation easements. Conservation easements add 1,692 acres to the state parks acreage total.

Continued: Table 2.2: State Parks System Units with Acreages as of December 2022

State Trail	Size [†] (acres)	Planned Length (miles)	Designated Length (miles)
Dan River State Trail*	0	90	0
Deep River State Trail	2,151	125	4
East Coast Greenway State Trail*	0	795	102
Fonta Flora State Trail	240	100	30
French Broad River State Trail	0	117	117
Hickory Nut Gorge State Trail	0	50	0
Mountains-to-Sea State Trail	778	1,400	679
Northern Peaks State Trail*	0	40	0
Overmountain Victory State Trail*	0	132	0
Roanoke River State Trail*	0	225	0
Wilderness Gateway State Trail*	681	170	0
Yadkin River State Trail	0	162	163
Total:	3,850	3,406	1,095

Note: The Division has switched to a new and more accurate method of determining acreage, using geographic information systems data.

* Indicates a park unit that was authorized after 2018

† Does not include conservation easements. Conservation easements add 1,692 acres to the state parks acreage total.

Types of Units

The State Parks Act of 1987 lists six types of units included in the North Carolina state parks system: state parks, state natural areas, state recreation areas, state trails, state rivers, and state lakes.

State Park: North Carolina's first state park was established at Mount Mitchell in 1916 to protect the summit of the highest mountain in the eastern U.S. There are currently 35 state parks in the system. Generally, state parks are expected to possess both significant natural resource values and significant recreational values. State parks are expected to accommodate the development of facilities but may vary in the extent of development, depending on what can be provided without damage to the scenic or natural features. Facilities are planned and constructed to keep disturbance of natural resources to a minimum and to leave a large portion of each park undisturbed and free from improvements and structures, except for trails.

State Natural Area: State natural areas were established as a separate type of system unit in 1963 with the adoption of separate principles for management. The first state natural area was created that same year. There are currently 25 state natural areas. The purpose of state natural areas is focused on preserving and protecting areas of scientific, aesthetic, or ecological value. Facilities are limited to those needed for interpretation, protection, and minimum maintenance. Generally, recreational and public use facilities such as camping, swimming, picnicking and the like are not provided in state natural areas.

State Recreation Area: State recreation areas are sites where the primary purpose is outdoor recreation, rather than preservation. More intensive development of facilities is provided than in state parks. Protection and enjoyment of the natural resources are still important, and the sites are expected to contain scenic and attractive natural features. Development is planned and constructed to keep a "reasonable amount" of each area undisturbed and free from improvements and structures. The first state recreation area was added to the system in 1971, and principles to guide the development and operation of state recreation areas were adopted in 1974. There are currently four state recreation areas.

State Trail: The North Carolina Trails System Act was passed in 1973 to help provide for the state's outdoor recreation needs and to promote public access to natural and scenic areas. North Carolina's 12 state trails are the backbone of a statewide trail system and essential components to its identity as the Great Trails State. Authorized by the General Assembly, each state trail is a unit of the North Carolina state parks system. However, unlike the more traditional state parks, the state trails are not owned, managed, or maintained by the Division, unless the trail segment is located within a state park. Instead, the state trails are built and sustained through dedicated partnerships with nonprofit organizations, land conservancies, and federal, state, and local agencies.

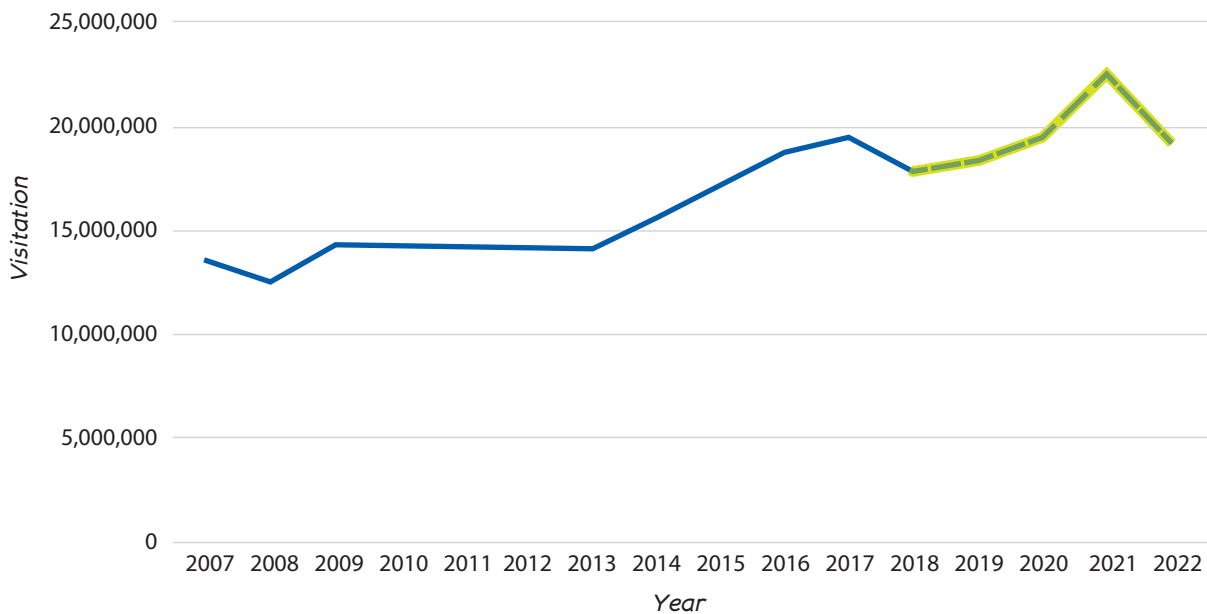
State River: The Natural and Scenic Rivers System was created by the 1971 General Assembly to preserve and protect certain free-flowing rivers, their water quality, and their adjacent lands for the benefit of present and future generations. The Natural and Scenic Rivers Act established criteria and methods for inclusion of components to the system. Components of the Natural and Scenic Rivers System are state rivers and are also units of the state parks system. Currently, there are four state rivers.

State Lake: Chapter 165 of the Laws of 1929 specified that “all lakes now belonging to the State having an area of 50 acres or more” should be “administered as provided for other recreational areas now owned by the State.” This allowed the then-Department of Conservation and Development to assume management authority for seven Coastal Plain lakes that became units of the state parks system known as state lakes. Most of these are administratively included as part of an adjoining state park, but one of the lakes (White Lake) has no public ownership on its shoreline.

Visitation

Total visitor attendance for 2022 was 19,418,791. Visitation fluctuates from year to year based on weather conditions, facility closures, and the state of the economy, but the trend over time is for increasing visitation (Figure 2.2).

Figure 2.2: Visitation to North Carolina State Parks



Park units with the highest attendance have been the state recreation areas located on reservoirs (Falls Lake, Jordan Lake, and Kerr Lake state recreation areas) as well as coastal parks and recreation areas located in popular vacation destinations (Jockey’s Ridge, Fort Macon, Carolina Beach state parks, and Fort Fisher State Recreation Area). These seven park units accounted for over 8.5 million visits (Table 2.3). Other parks that have seen a large increase in visitation are those near densely populated areas of the state, such as the Triangle and Charlotte areas. These parks include Eno River, Raven Rock, and Carvers Creek State Parks. While the parks near higher populations are increasing more rapidly, the Division is also seeing increases at locations that are more remote, such as South Mountains, Gorges and New River state parks and Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve.



Lake Phelps at Pettigrew State Park

Table 2.3: State Parks Visitation by Park Unit, 2022

State Park	Total Visits in 2022
Carolina Beach State Park	856,418
Carvers Creek State Park	151,734
Chimney Rock State Park	371,276
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park	200,931
Crowders Mountain State Park	760,330
Dismal Swamp State Park	43,551
Elk Knob State Natural Area	46,005
Eno River State Park	843,439
Falls Lake State Recreation Area	1,244,806
Fort Fisher State Recreation Area	1,108,980
Fort Macon State Park	1,020,663
Goose Creek State Park	146,155
Gorges State Park	180,052
Grandfather Mountain State Park	96,035
Hammocks Beach State Park	210,236
Hanging Rock State Park	872,657
Haw River State Park	80,733
Jockey's Ridge State Park	982,328
Jones Lake State Park	148,719
Jordan Lake State Recreation Area	2,055,579
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area	1,395,789
Lake James State Park	530,415
Lake Norman State Park	881,370
Lake Waccamaw State Park	185,333
Lumber River State Park	155,510
Mayo River State Park	95,789
Medoc Mountain State Park	173,627
Merchants Millpond State Park	130,609
Morrow Mountain State Park	209,236
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	117,755
Mount Mitchell State Park	332,691
New River State Park	365,702
Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area	172,716
Pettigrew State Park	42,799
Pilot Mountain State Park	1,052,678
Raven Rock State Park	343,851
Singletary Lake State Park	25,360
South Mountains State Park	420,132
Stone Mountain State Park	413,274
Weymouth Woods State Natural Area	126,711
William B. Umstead State Park	826,817
System Total:	19,418,791

Visitor Facilities

The state parks system contains numerous facilities to enhance the visitor experience. This figure does not include bridges, walkways, pavement, trails, or other structures.

Table 2.4: Summary of Visitor Facilities in the State Parks System, December 2022

Facility	Total	Facility	Total
Amphitheater	27	Information Station	6
Auditorium	17	Interpretive Building	8
Bathhouse	18	Laboratory	1
Boat Dock	72	Lodge	8
Boat Ramp	42	Meeting Room	12
Boathouse	7	Museum/Exhibit Hall	23
Cabin – Group	95	Park Office	20
Cabin – Improved	41	Picnic Area	64
Campsite – Electric Hookups	481	Picnic Shelter	121
Campsite – Equestrian	20	Pier	8
Campsite – Full Hookups	74	Play Area	3
Campsite – No Hookups	1303	Play Area with Equipment	27
Campsite – Water and Electric	796	Pool	3
Canoe Launch Point	24	Primitive Campsite – Boat In	30
Canoe Rental Building	2	Primitive Campsite – Drive To	28
Classroom	19	Primitive Campsite – Hike In	72
Community Building	8	Primitive Campsite – Paddle To	41
Concession	11	Primitive Campsite – Walk In	150
Dining Hall	6	Restaurant	3
Disc Golf (Total Holes)	9	Shelter	11
Entrance Station	24	Showerhouse	76
Ferry Boat Dock	3	Swimming Area – Freshwater	18
Fishing Pier	27	Swimming Area – Ocean or Sound	5
Group Campsite – Drive To	69	Swimming Platform	2
Group Campsite – Hike In	12	Toilet Building	208
Group Campsite – Paddle To	3	Visitor Center	27
Group Campsite – Walk In	31	Environmental Education Center	6

Future Needs

Park master plans and general management plans (GMPs) have identified future needs for facility development and land acquisition in each park. Table 2.5 shows new construction and major renovation needs. New construction projects include projects identified for bond funding, capital improvement projects, projects that are dependent on the acquisition of new land as identified in a current GMP, and projects identified in a master plan. Major renovations include projects that are repairing current park facilities. Parks that are noted with an * have current GMPs, which plan for the next five years of facility development. Table 2.6 shows identified land acquisition needs for each park. For more details on GMP projects or land protection plans, please visit the Division Planning Page at www.ncparks.gov/planning.

Table 2.5: Construction and Repair Needs at Existing Parks

Park Name	New Construction	Major Renovations	Total
Bay Tree Lake State Natural Area*	\$323,900	0	\$323,900
Carolina Beach State Park*	0	\$1,258,237	\$1,258,237
Carvers Creek State Park*	\$11,146,494	0	\$11,146,494
Chimney Rock State Park	\$6,491,000	\$313,000	\$6,804,000
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park*	0	\$2,282,300	\$2,282,300
Crowders Mountain State Park*	\$1,264,125	\$2,769,280	\$4,033,405
Dismal Swamp State Park *	\$210,941	\$2,018,554	\$2,229,495
Elk Knob State Park*	\$25,990,400	\$50,000	\$26,040,400
Eno River State Park*	\$2,080,000	\$4,403,000	\$6,483,000
Falls Lake State Recreation Area*	\$5,141,625	\$3,805,010	\$8,946,635
Fort Fisher State Recreation Area*	\$200,000	0	\$200,000
Fort Macon State Park*	\$631,544	\$274,843	\$906,387
Goose Creek State Park*	\$129,910	\$659,133	\$789,043
Gorges State Park*	\$2,645,600	0	\$2,645,600
Grandfather Mountain State Park*	\$874,900	\$180,000	\$1,054,900
Hammocks Beach State Park*	\$7,770,000	\$555,000	\$8,325,000
Hanging Rock State Park*	\$16,707,950	\$7,507,750	\$24,215,700
Haw River State Park	\$13,000,000	\$8,000,000	\$21,000,000
Jockey's Ridge State Park*	\$2,207,268	0	\$2,207,268
Jones Lake State Park*	\$652,627	\$244,472	\$897,099
Jordan Lake State Recreation Area*	\$221,403	\$9,541,022	\$9,762,425
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area*	\$20,493,500	\$10,593,750	\$31,087,250
Lake James State Park*	\$11,378,186	\$249,689	\$11,627,875
Lake Norman State Park	\$2,202,500	\$150,500	\$2,353,000
Lake Waccamaw State Park*	\$2,744,900	\$190,000	\$2,934,900
Lower Haw River State Natural Area	\$1,100,000	0	\$1,100,000
Lumber River State Park*	\$7,325,900	\$2,635,625	\$9,961,525
Mayo River State Park	\$13,536,500	0	\$13,536,500
Medoc Mountain State Park*	\$6,470,000	\$15,000	\$6,485,000
Merchants Millpond State Park*	\$3,350,500	\$2,558,479	\$5,908,979
Morrow Mountain State Park*	\$4,310,000	\$3,600,000	\$7,910,000
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area*	\$5,135,600	0	\$5,135,600
Mount Mitchell State Park*	\$400,500	\$4,695,258	\$5,095,758
New River State Park*	\$485,000	0	\$485,000
Pettigrew State Park*	\$3,555,000	\$100,000	\$3,655,000
Pilot Mountain State Park*	\$4,005,950	\$1,941,670	\$5,947,620
Raven Rock State Park*	\$8,724,900	\$820,000	\$9,544,900
Singletary Lake State Park*	\$1,750,500	\$75,000	\$1,825,500
South Mountains State Park	\$6,799,500	\$750,000	\$7,549,500
Stone Mountain State Park*	\$1,381,173	\$5,127,644	\$6,508,817
Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve*	\$1,335,600	\$1,053,900	\$2,389,500
William B. Umstead State Park*	\$3,025,363	\$8,405,208	\$11,430,571
Total:	\$207,200,759	\$86,823,324	\$294,024,083

* Park has a current general management plan

Table 2.6: State Parks System Land Acquisition Needs

Unit	Planned Acres	Current Acres	Future Needs			
			Critical Acres	Important Acres	Total Acres	Est. Cost
Bakers Lake State Natural Area	1,107	0	0	1,107	1,107	0
Bald Head Island State Natural Area	5,970	5,970	0	0	0	0
Bay Tree Lake State Natural Area**	2,890	2,044	766	80	846	\$2,000,000
Bear Paw State Natural Area	826	384	0	442	442	\$6,000,000
Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area	788	310	14	464	478	\$8,000,000
Bob's Creek State Natural Area	6,090	6,090	0	0	0	0
Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area	1,234	430	186	618	804	\$9,000,000
Bushy Lake State Natural Area	8,059	6,936	138	985	1,123	\$2,500,000
Carolina Beach State Park	771	628	143	0	143	\$20,000,000
Carvers Creek State Park	8,277	4,897	107	3,273	3,380	\$10,000,000
Chimney Rock State Park	10,000	7,156	610	2,234	2,844	\$12,000,000
Chowan Swamp State Natural Area	6,031	6,031	0	0	0	\$0
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park	3,474	1,066	402	2,006	2,408	\$3,500,000
Crowders Mountain State Park	6,019	5,207	433	379	812	\$15,000,000
Deep River State Trail	3,710	2,151	74	1,485	1,559	\$10,000,000
Dismal Swamp State Park	14,884	14,353	354	177	531	\$750,000
Elk Knob State Park	13,063	4,546	1,258	7,259	8,517	\$30,000,000
Eno River State Park	6,452	4,463	1,208	781	1,989	\$40,000,000
Falls Lake State Recreation Area	4,898	4,891	0	7	7	\$250,000
Fort Fisher State Recreation Area	475	475	0	0	0	0
Fonta Flora State Trail	240	240	0	0	0	0
Fort Macon State Park	695	537	0	158	158	\$3,000,000
Goose Creek State Park	2,541	1,699	231	611	842	\$3,000,000
Gorges State Park	9,802	8,120	421	1,261	1,682	\$9,000,000
Grandfather Mountain State Park	3,954	3,746	208	0	208	\$4,000,000
Hammocks Beach State Park	2,009	1,770	0	239	239	\$5,000,000
Hanging Rock State Park	10,050	8,461	0	1,589	1,589	\$8,000,000
Haw River State Park	2,000	1,488	0	512	512	\$3,500,000
Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area	97	97	0	0	0	0
Jockey's Ridge State Park	450	437	13	0	13	\$3,000,000
Jones Lake State Park**	1,930	1,930	0	0	0	0
Jordan Lake State Recreation Area	4,548	4,545	0	3	3	\$100,000
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area	2,512	2,490	0	22	22	\$2,000,000
Lake James State Park	6,184	3,920	493	1,771	2,264	\$6,000,000
Lake Norman State Park	2,043	1,956	18	69	87	\$6,000,000
Lake Waccamaw State Park**	15,171	11,266	1,957	1,948	3,905	\$7,000,000
Lea Island State Natural Area	118	27	0	91	91	\$1,000,000
Lower Haw River State Natural Area	3,819	1,357	150	2,312	2,462	\$12,000,000
Lumber River State Park	25,949	13,351	1,489	11,109	12,598	\$16,000,000
Masonboro Island State Natural Area	106	106	0	0	0	0
Mayo River State Park	7,347	2,966	771	3,610	4,381	\$20,000,000
Medoc Mountain State Park	8,526	3,939	1,408	3,179	4,587	\$9,000,000
Merchants Millpond State Park	6,252	3,347	945	1,960	2,905	\$6,000,000

Continued – Table 2.6: State Parks System Land Acquisition Needs

Unit	Planned Acres	Current Acres	Future Needs			
			Critical Acres	Important Acres	Total Acres	Est. Cost
Mitchell Mill State Natural Area	147	91	0	56	56	\$6,000,000
Morrow Mountain State Park	6,825	5,810	333	682	1,015	\$7,000,000
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	1,300	1,143	95	62	157	\$7,000,000
Mount Mitchell State Park	5,728	4,498	552	678	1,230	\$13,000,000
Mountains-to-Sea State Trail	1,080	778	0	302	302	0
New River State Park	7,093	3,432	700	2,961	3,661	\$30,000,000
Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area	273	229	4	40	44	\$2,000,000
Pettigrew State Park**	26,713	21,785	107	4,821	4,928	\$8,000,000
Pilot Mountain State Park	6,879	3,918	564	2,397	2,961	\$9,500,000
Pineola Bog State Natural Area	151	94	57	0	57	\$4,000,000
Pisgah View State Park	1,571	1,400	0	171	171	\$4,000,000
Raven Rock State Park	7,977	4,899	79	2,999	3,078	\$50,000,000
Run Hill State Natural Area	120	120	0	0	0	0
Salmon Creek State Natural Area	1,305	1,305	0	0	0	0
Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area	3,042	3,042	0	0	0	0
Singletary Lake State Park**	1,493	1,319	0	174	174	\$1,000,000
South Mountains State Park	23,173	21,341	876	956	1,832	\$10,000,000
Stone Mountain State Park	17,735	13,605	262	3,868	4,130	\$20,000,000
Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area	324	122	0	202	202	\$2,000,000
Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area	281	281	0	0	0	0
Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area	990	990	0	0	0	0
Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve	1,577	919	232	426	658	\$20,000,000
White Lake*	1,068	1,068	0	1	1	\$24,000
Wilderness Gateway State Trail	681	681	0	0	0	0
William B. Umstead State Park	5,969	5,588	178	203	381	\$80,000,000
Yellow Mountain State Natural Area	12,629	3,805	6,950	1,874	8,824	\$40,000,000
Total:	357,485	258,086	24,786	74,614	99,400	\$606,124,000

*White Lake current acreage is 1,042 acres water. The future needs of 1 acre is for land.

**Includes water acreage of state lake(s)

Note: This chart does not include conservation easements. Conservation easements add 1,692 acres to the state parks acreage total.



Stone Mountain State Park

3.0 Resource Evaluation

As stated in the Division’s mission, the significant archaeological, geological, scenic, recreational, and biological resources of North Carolina should be represented in a comprehensive state parks system. These resources have been categorized into 108 themes. Continued progress has been made in the last five years to improve the representation of these themes in the state parks system. Continual progress is being made to increase theme representation within the state park system with the ongoing land acquisition program. However, despite the recent gains several themes continue to be underrepresented.

This chapter contains an evaluation of the archaeological, geologic, scenic, and biological resources in the state parks system and identifies themes inadequately protected by the system. Expansion of the state parks system to provide additional protection to these inadequately represented themes is a high priority. The provision of recreational resources will be addressed through the planning process for individual units of the state parks system. This site-specific analysis is needed to mesh the system’s mission of preserving unique natural resources and providing public recreation.

Evaluation

To fulfill these mandates for the first Systemwide Plan, five committees were formed to analyze the unique resource categories cited in the Act. Committees were composed of academic and state experts and representatives of relevant citizen groups. They were charged with fulfilling the following objectives:

1. Define resource themes within each of the five resource categories.
2. Determine the significance of themes within geographic regions.
3. Identify representation of themes within state parks system units.
4. Evaluate the representation of themes within geographic regions.
5. Rank the amount of protection that park units provide for significant biological, geological, scenic, and archaeological resources.

Biological, geological, scenic, and recreational resources were reevaluated by the Division for this plan update. The archaeological resources have not been reevaluated since the original plan because there are no “very high” protection needs. The evaluation of biological and geological resources has been revised in consultation with the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program and the North Carolina Geological Survey.

Definition of Resource Themes

Within each resource category cited in the State Parks Act (archaeological, geological, scenic, recreational, and biological) are subcategories called resource “themes”. The committees identified 108 themes that should be protected to preserve representative examples of unique biological, geological, scenic, and archaeological resources in a comprehensive state parks system (Table 3.1). Definitions of themes are included in Appendix B.

Significance of Themes Within Regions

After identifying resource themes, the committees rated their significance within four natural regions: Tidewater, Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain. The committees determined the level of significance of each theme in each region and rated the level of significance as “high,” “moderate,” “low,” or “none” based on the quality, quantity, and diversity of the theme in the region. For themes that did not exist in a region, no rating is assigned. The significance of themes within regions is found in the columns labeled “Significance” in Tables 3.2 through 3.5.

Figure 3.1: Natural Regions of North Carolina

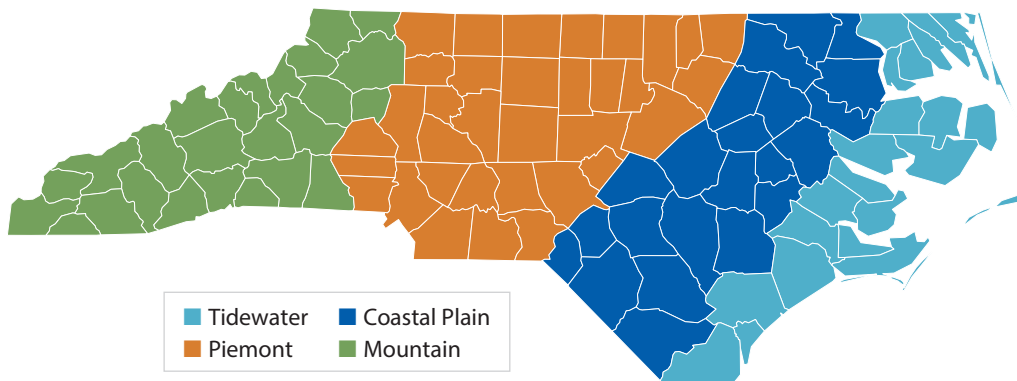


Table 3.1: Themes Identified by Resource Evaluation Committees

Archaeological	Geological	Scenic	Biological
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Prehistoric <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Village › Campsite/Activity Area › Shell Midden › Burial/Cemetery › Quarry – Soapstone › Quarry – Other › Shelter/Cave › Rock Art › Trail/Path › Underwater › Other ■ Historic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Recreation › Public Works › Public/Civic/Religious › Commercial › Urban – Domestic › Rural – Domestic › Cemetery › Industrial › Mills › Transportation › Military › Underwater › Other ■ Standing Structure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Recreation › Public Works › Public/Civic/Religious › Commercial › Urban – Domestic › Rural – Domestic › Cemetery › Industrial › Mills › Transportation › Military 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Barrier Islands and Shoreline ■ Estuaries ■ Continental Shelves ■ Relict Coastal Features ■ Carolina Bays ■ Fluvial Depositional Features ■ Peatlands and Interstream Wetlands ■ Natural Lakes and Ponds ■ Caves, Sinks, and Springs ■ Dissected Uplands ■ Inselbergs (Monadnocks) ■ Cliffs ■ Exfoliation Outcrops ■ Gorges, Rapids, and Waterfalls ■ Mass Wasting Features ■ Faults, Joints, and Related Features ■ Folds and Related Features ■ Intrusions ■ Volcanic Features ■ Metamorphic Features ■ Sedimentary Features ■ Fossils ■ Unusual Rock Types 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Scenic Vistas ■ Reservoirs/Lakes ■ Waterfalls ■ Rivers ■ Whitewater Streams ■ Forests ■ Meadows and Grasslands ■ Swamps ■ Pocosins ■ Marshes ■ Gorges ■ Rock Outcrops ■ Islands ■ Caves and Cliffs ■ Bays and Estuaries ■ Seashores ■ Scenic Highways 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Spruce-Fir Forests ■ Grass and Heath Balds ■ Northern Hardwood Forests ■ Mountain Cove Forests ■ Piedmont and Coastal Plain Mesic Forests ■ Mountain Dry Coniferous Woodlands ■ Mountain Oak Forests ■ Piedmont and Coastal Plain Oak Forests ■ High-Elevation Rock Outcrops ■ Low-Elevation Cliffs and Rock Outcrops ■ Coastal Plain Marl Outcrops ■ Granitic Flatrocks ■ Piedmont and Mountain Glades and Barrens ■ Maritime Grasslands ■ Maritime Upland Forests ■ Dry Longleaf Pine Communities ■ Coastal Plain Floodplains ■ Piedmont and Mountain Floodplains ■ Mountain Bogs and Fens ■ Upland Seepages and Spray Cliffs ■ Piedmont and Mountain Upland Pools and Depressions ■ Coastal Plain Nonalluvial Wetland Forests ■ Peatland Pocosins ■ Streamhead Pocosins ■ Wet Pine Savannas ■ Coastal Plain Depression Communities ■ Natural Lake Communities ■ Maritime Wetlands ■ Freshwater Tidal Wetlands ■ Estuarine Communities

Representation of Themes in Parks Within Geographic Regions

The next step in the process is to determine whether resource themes are adequately represented in the state parks system within each region. The adequacy of the protection within the regions is rated as either “adequate,” “moderate,” “little,” or “none”. Themes that do not exist in a region were not labeled. Judgments were based upon the quality, quantity and diversity of the theme being protected. Committee results and staff updates from the additional acreage added in the state parks system are listed in columns labeled “Representation” in Tables 3.2 through 3.5.

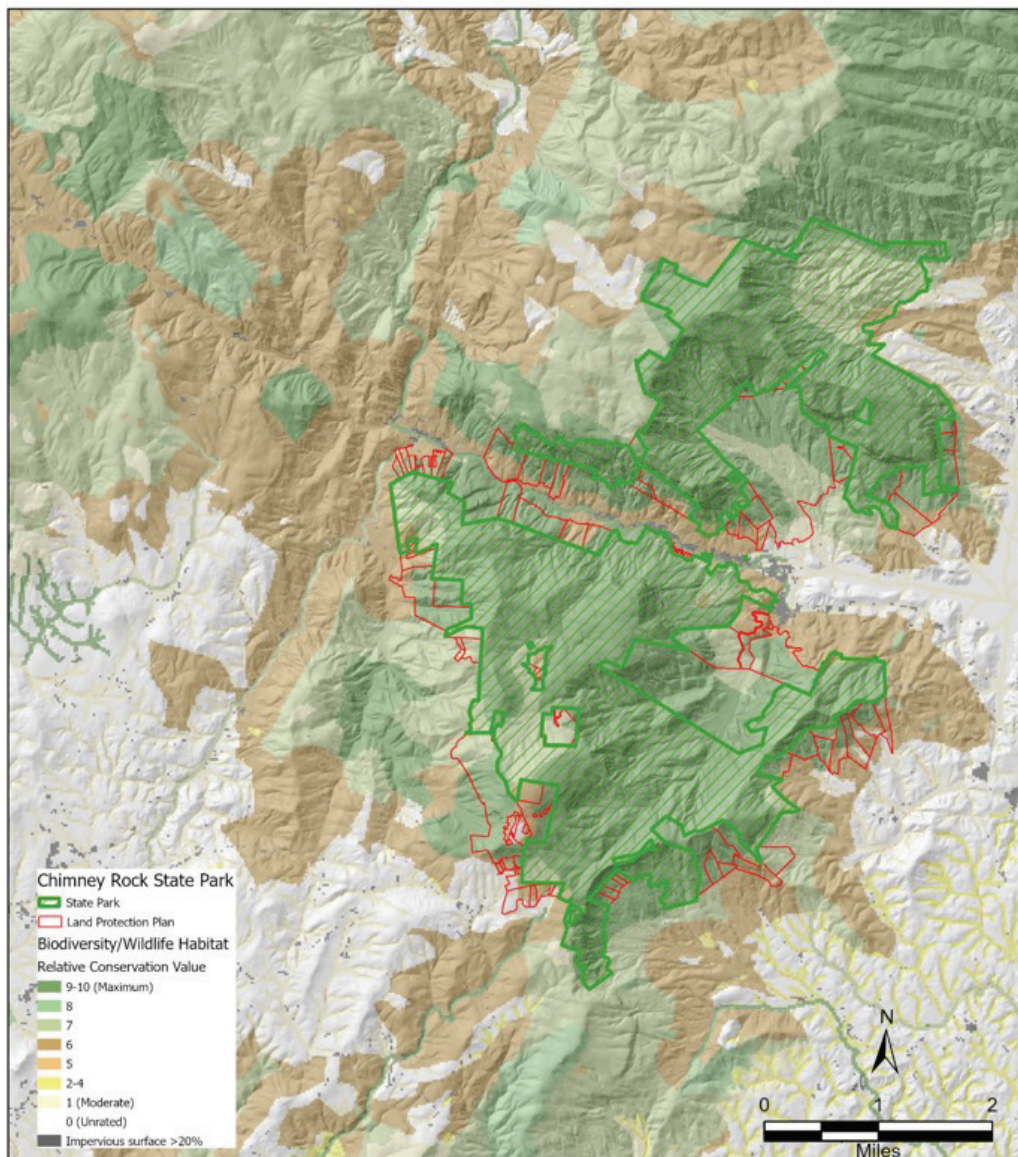
Duplications and Deficiencies in the State Parks System

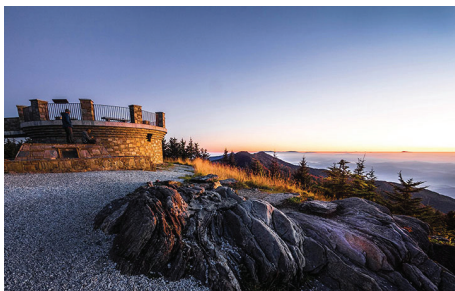
Deficiencies in the North Carolina state parks system exist where there is inadequate representation of unique archaeological, geological, scenic, recreational, and biological themes (Tables 3.2 through 3.5). An indication of deficiencies and duplications can be derived by examining the representation and significance of themes defined by the resource committees.

Role of the North Carolina Conservation Planning Tool

The Division has committed to participating in the Department’s North Carolina Conservation Planning Tool (CPT). The CPT provides a framework for land conservation and sustainable growth across the state by identifying the resources required for a healthy environment. The primary assessment used by the Division is the Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat Assessment. This assessment contains summaries of much of the information already used by the Division, as well as additional information. Although the CPT does not contain enough detail in its assessments to fully evaluate a potential new park unit, it is very useful for estimating the scope of a unit and potential connections to other conservation priorities.

Figure 3.2: Chimney Rock State Park Area Overlay of the Conservation Planning Tool: Biodiversity and Wildlife Habitat Assessment





Observation Deck at Mount Mitchell State Park



Hutchinson Homestead at Stone Mountain State Park



Kron House at Morrow Mountain State Park

Archaeological Theme Representation

Four archaeological themes have been identified as high priorities: prehistoric village (Coastal Plain, Piedmont), prehistoric burial/cemetery (all regions), historic industrial (Piedmont, Mountain), and standing structure mills (Mountain). These are identified by light blue shading in Table 3.2.

Archaeological themes as defined by the archaeological committee are relatively well covered by the state parks system. This is not to say they are well-preserved or interpreted, but simply that most archaeological themes exist, or are likely to exist, within the state parks system. The most well-represented themes across all regions are prehistoric campsite/activity area, historic recreation, historic rural – domestic, and historic cemeteries. The committee recommended that the state should take action to preserve inadequately protected themes before establishing new units to represent themes that are already well-represented and protected within the state parks system.

Archaeological surveys have been conducted in portions of 19 units of the state parks system as part of the capital development construction process. Prior to ground disturbing activities (e.g. road construction, capital improvements), archaeological surveys are often required to identify and evaluate any cultural resources that may be adversely affected. Such a piecemeal approach to identifying archaeological values within state parks has resulted in an uncoordinated and inadequate inventory. The archaeological committee also made the following recommendations:

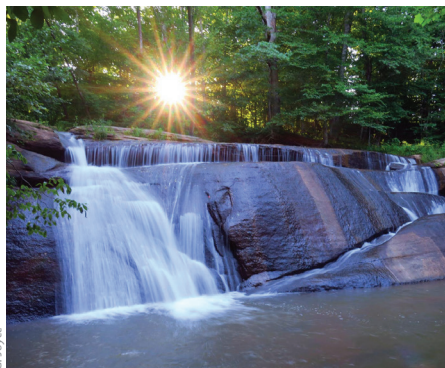
The state parks system should consider conducting cultural resource surveys and evaluations in-house. Doing so would considerably speed up the planning process, facilitate compliance with regulatory requirements, and aid in the development of interpretive programming. It is recommended that the Division employ two professional archaeologists (master's degree or better) and one laboratory technician to manage the cultural resource program. In addition, an architectural historian should be hired under contract to conduct a comprehensive inventory and evaluation of all standing structures in parks.

1. The Division should continue training staff in the overall principles and procedures of cultural resource management. Proposed program topics include:
 2. Current state cultural resource protection laws (e.g. the Archaeological Resources Protection Act, the Unmarked Human Burial and Human Skeletal Remains Protection Act)
 - › The general prehistory and history of North Carolina
 - › Identification and treatment of cultural materials
 - › Proper approaches to recording and interpreting cultural resources in general
 - › Cultural resource preservation and management procedures
 3. The Division should employ one or more trained individuals to compile and synthesize the extant cultural resource information available within the Division and the North Carolina Office of Archives and History.

Geological Theme Representation

Thirteen geological themes were rated as high priorities in at least one region. Three were high priorities in three regions: caves, sinks and springs (Coastal Plain, Piedmont, and Mountain); fossils (Tidewater, Coastal Plain, and Piedmont); and unusual rock types (Tidewater, Piedmont, Mountain). Three were high priorities in two regions: relict coastal features (Tidewater, Coastal Plain); mass wasting features (Coastal Plain, Mountain); and sedimentary features (Piedmont, Mountain). Other high priorities are continental shelves and cliffs in the Tidewater Region; gorges, rapids, and waterfalls in the Coastal Plain; and fluvial depositional features, fault, joints, and related features, folds and related features, and volcanic features in the Mountain region.

On the other hand, barrier islands and shorelines, Carolina bays, peatlands and interstream wetlands, natural lakes and ponds, and metamorphic features are pretty well-represented in the state parks system. The Piedmont region offers the most protection to geological themes within the state parks system. Additional surveys of geological resources in the system should be conducted in partnership with the North Carolina Geological Survey.



Mayo River State Park



Pilot Mountain State Park



Fort Fisher State Recreation Area



Stone Mountain State Park

Scenic Theme Representation

All scenic themes have some representation in the state parks system. However, most scenic themes remain a high priority in at least one region. As shown in Table 3.4, meadows/grasslands and scenic highways are priorities across all regions. Others of note are waterfalls in the Piedmont, rivers in the Tidewater, rock outcrops in the Coastal Plain, caves/cliffs in all regions except Mountain, and bays/estuaries in the Tidewater. Swamps are the one scenic theme that is well-represented in the state parks system.

Additional park units in the Piedmont are proposed to serve a rapidly expanding population and in the Mountain to preserve significant resources.

Biological Theme Representation

Over 344 natural community types have been identified and described in North Carolina. These have been grouped into 30 biological themes based on similarities in environment and vegetation. Each of the themes is described more fully in Michael P. Schafale's *Guide to the Natural Communities of North Carolina* (Fourth Approximation), published by the North Carolina Heritage Program in 2012.

As land within North Carolina is altered for agriculture, forestry, industry, and residential development, one of the consequences is a reduction of natural diversity in the landscape. Undisturbed natural communities in North Carolina are very diverse, varying in geology, soil type, topography, moisture, flora, and fauna. It is the purpose of the state parks system to protect representative examples of the state's natural diversity for the benefit and enjoyment of all the citizens. At present, the state parks system includes representative examples of many of the state's biological themes. However, many themes are not adequately represented. Expansion of the state parks system for the protection of biological diversity should focus on themes that are not yet adequately represented.

Among the most significant themes but have limited representation are: grass and heath balds in the Mountain; low-elevation cliffs and rock outcrops in the Tidewater; granitic flatrocks in the Piedmont and Mountain; piedmont and mountain glades and barrens in the Piedmont and Mountain; streamhead pocosins in the Coastal Plain; and depression communities in the Coastal Plain.

In the last five years, 32 example of themes not previous known in the park have been added to the state parks system on newly acquired lands. Twenty of the themes were on six new units where any theme is new. The remaining new themes have been document in seven parks on lands identified in the land protection plans and added to the park.

Table 3.2: Statewide Significance of Archaeological Themes and Their Representation in the State Parks System

Theme	Regions											
	Tidewater			Coastal Plain			Piedmont			Mountain		
	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation
Prehistoric Archaeological	Village	High	Adequate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Adequate
	Campsite/Activity Area	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Shell Midden	High	Adequate									
	Burial/Cemetery	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate
	Quarry – Soapstone			None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	Moderate
	Quarry – Other			None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	Moderate
	Shelter/Cave			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Rock Art			None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	Moderate
	Trail/Path	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	Moderate
	Underwater	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
Historic Archaeological	Other	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	None	Little	Little
	Recreation	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Public Works	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Public/Civic/Religious	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Commercial	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Urban – Domestic	None	Little	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	None	Little	None	Little	Little
	Rural – Domestic	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Cemetery	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Industrial	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Mills	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Little
Historic Archaeological	Transportation	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Military	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	
	Underwater	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	
	Other	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	
	Recreation			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Public Works			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Public/Civic/Religious			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
	Commercial			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Urban – Domestic			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Rural – Domestic			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Adequate
Standing Structures	Cemetery			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Industrial			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Mills	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Transportation			High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
	Military	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
				High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
				High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
				High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
				High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate
				High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	Moderate

■ High priority No entry – theme not applicable

Table 3.3: Statewide Significance of Geological Themes and Their Representation in the State Parks System

Theme	Regions											
	Tidewater			Coastal Plain			Piedmont			Mountain		
	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation
Barrier Islands and Shorelines	High	Adequate	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Estuaries	High	Adequate	Little	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Continental Shelves	High	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Relict Coastal Features	High	Little	High	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Carolina Bays	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Fluvial Depositional Features	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Little
Peatlands and Interstream Wetlands	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Natural Lakes and Ponds	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Caves, Sinks, Springs	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Dissected Uplands	Little	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	Moderate
Inselbergs (Monadnocks)	None	None	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Cliffs	High	None	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Exfoliation Outcrops	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None	None
Gorges, Rapids, and Waterfalls	None	None	High	Little	High	Little	High	Little	High	Little	High	Moderate
Mass Wasting Features	None	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	Moderate
Faults, Joints, and Related Features	None	None	Little	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	Moderate
Folds and Related Features	None	None	Little	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	Little
Intrusions	None	None	Little	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Volcanic Features	None	None	Little	None	High	None	High	None	High	None	High	None
Metamorphic Features	None	None	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate
Sedimentary Features	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	None
Fossils	High	None	High	Little	High	Little	High	Little	High	Little	High	None
Unusual Rock Types	High	None	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Little

■ High priority No entry – theme not applicable

Table 3.4: Statewide Significance of Scenic Themes and Their Representation in the State Parks System

Theme	Regions											
	Tidewater			Coastal Plain			Piedmont			Mountain		
	Significance	Representation		Significance	Representation		Significance	Representation		Significance	Representation	
Scenic Vistas	High	Moderate		High	Moderate		High	Moderate		High	Moderate	
Reservoirs/Lakes	High	Moderate		High	Adequate		High	Adequate		High	Moderate	
Waterfalls							High	Little		High	Adequate	
Rivers	High	Little		High	Moderate		High	Moderate		High	Moderate	
White Water Streams							High	Moderate		High	Moderate	
Forests	High	Moderate		High	Adequate		High	Adequate		High	Adequate	
Meadows/Grasslands	High	Little		High	Little		High	Little		High	Little	
Swamps	High	Adequate		High	Adequate		High	Adequate				
Pocosins	High	Moderate		High	Moderate		High	Moderate				
Marshes	High	Moderate		High	Moderate		High	Moderate				
Gorges										High	Moderate	
Rock Outcrops				High	Little		High	Moderate		High	Moderate	
Islands	High	Moderate					High	Little		High	Moderate	
Caves/Cliffs	High	None		High	Little		High	Little		High	Adequate	
Scenic Highways	High	None		High	None		High	None		High	Little	
Bays/Estuaries	High	Little										
Seashores	High	Moderate										

■ High priority No entry – theme not applicable

Table 3.5: Statewide Significance of Biological Themes and Their Representation in the State Parks System

Theme	Regions											
	Tidewater		Coastal Plain		Piedmont		Mountain					
	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation	Significance	Representation				
Spruce-Fir Forests								High		High	Moderate	
Grass & Heath Balds								High		High	Little	
Northern Hardwood Forests								High		High	Adequate	
Mountain Cove Forests								High		High	Adequate	
Piedmont & Coastal Plain Mesic Forests	High	Moderate	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Little		High	None	
Mountain Dry Coniferous Woodlands					Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	High		High	Adequate	
Mountain Oak Forests					Moderate	Adequate	Moderate	High		High	Adequate	
Piedmont/Coastal Plain Oak Forests	Moderate	Little	High	Adequate	High	Adequate	High	Little		High	Little	
High Elevation Rock Outcrops												
Low Elevation Cliffs & Rock Outcrops	High	None	Moderate	Adequate	High	Moderate	High	High		High	Moderate	
Coastal Plain Marl Outcrops	High	None	Moderate	None	Moderate	None	Moderate	High		High	Moderate	
Granitic Flatrocks								High		High	Little	
Piedmont & Mountain Glades & Barrens								High		High	Little	
Maritime Grasslands	High	Adequate										
Maritime Upland Forests	High	Moderate										
Dry Longleaf Pine Communities	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None		None		
Coastal Plain Floodplains	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	High	None		High	None	
Piedmont & Mountain Floodplains			Moderate	Adequate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate		High	Moderate	
Mountain Bogs & Fens			Moderate	Adequate	High	Moderate	High	Moderate		High	Adequate	
Upland Seepages & Spray Cliffs					Moderate	Adequate	Moderate	Moderate		High	Moderate	
Piedmont & Mountain Upland Pools & Depression								High		High	None	
Coastal Plain Nonalluvial Wetland Forests	High	Moderate	Moderate	Little								
Peatland Pocosins	High	Moderate	High	Adequate								
Streamhead Pocosins	Little	Little	High	Little								
Wet Pine Savannas	High	Moderate	High	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	None				
Coastal Plain Depression Communities	High	Moderate	High	Little								
Natural Lake Communities	High	Moderate	High	Adequate								
Maritime Wetlands	High	Moderate										
Freshwater Tidal Wetlands	High	Moderate										
Estuarine Communities	High	Adequate										

■ High priority No entry – theme not applicable

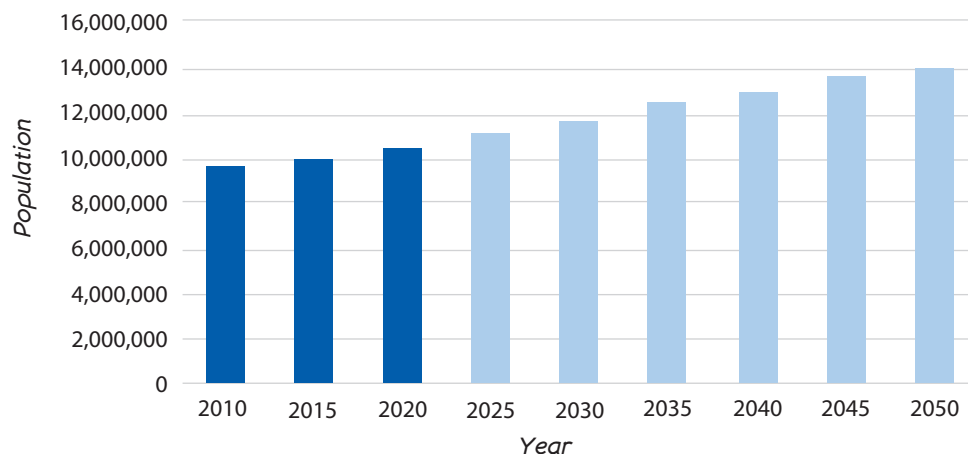
Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation in the State Parks System

North Carolina's population and landscape are always changing. The state parks system is part of the natural landscape and offers places where people love to recreate outdoors. As the state's population grows and people's preferences for enjoying state parks change, it's important to consider the impacts these changes will have on the state parks system. The mission of the state parks system remains a constant. How to best accomplish the mission is an ongoing challenge. This chapter highlights important trends affecting state parks and provides recommendations for how to address the impacts.

Population Growth

The 2020 U.S. Census counted a 9.5% growth in population for North Carolina in the decade since 2010, as it passed the 10-million mark.² The pace of growth has only accelerated in the last two years, with the estimate as of July 1, 2022 at nearly 10.7 million North Carolina residents. It was 15th in the country in growth between 2010 and 2020 and has moved up to 10th with a growth of 2.5% in the last two years. The State Demographer projects that the state will reach 14 million people by 2050, adding 3.5 million people from 2021 to 2050, which is about a 32.7% increase.³

Figure 4.1: North Carolina's Population Increase 2010-2050



Though the three fastest-growing counties from 2010 and 2020 are Johnston, Brunswick, and Cabarrus counties — suburbs of Raleigh, Wilmington, and Charlotte, respectively — a total of 13 of the 24 counties that outpaced the state's population growth are rural counties.⁴ In fact, across the country, North Carolina has the second largest rural population, only after Texas, per the 2020 Census. By 2030, 25 counties are projected to outpace North Carolina's anticipated growth of 11.1% over the decade, including three rural counties that did not in the previous decade: Camden, Clay, and Granville counties. Nine counties currently considered rural are expected to outpace Wake County's population increase (20.7%) over the next decade: Currituck (46.1%), Brunswick (38.1%), Franklin (33.5%), Johnston (30.1%), Pender (23.9%), Iredell and Moore (23.6%), Union (22.5%), and Hoke (22.2%).

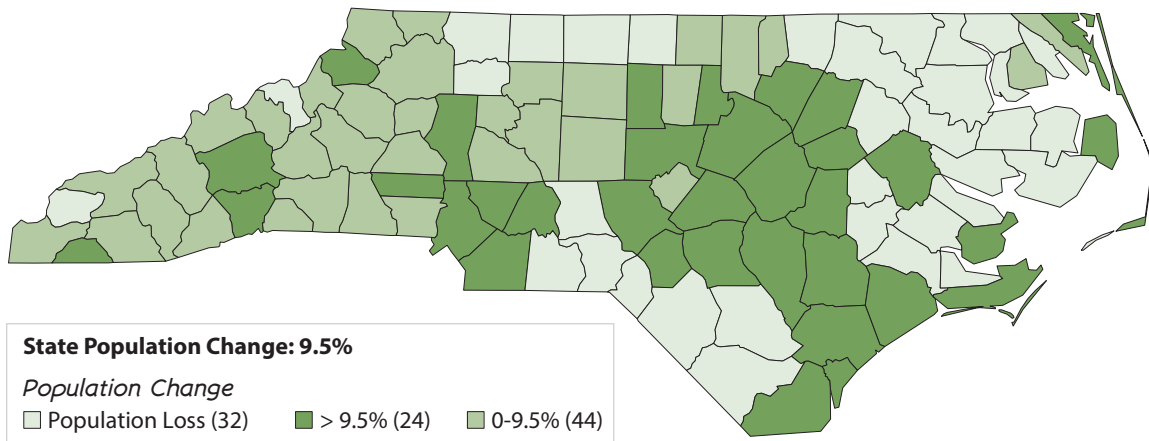
The increased pertinence of rural counties is evident in the statewide initiative, Hometown Strong, launched in 2018 and is dedicated to supporting the rural counties of North Carolina by providing resources and support to improve the quality of life for residents. The focus of the program is economic development, education, healthcare, and community engagement.

² U.S. Census Bureau, "North Carolina Gained Around 900,000 People Last Decade," Quick Facts, accessed September 1, 2023, <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/fact/table/NC/PST045222>

³ North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, "Standard Population Estimates, Vintage 2021 and Population Projections, Vintage 2022," County/State Population Projections, accessed September 1, 2023, <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/facts-figures/population-demographics/state-demographer/countystate-population-projections>

⁴ Rural counties are defined here as counties where 50% or more of the population lives in municipalities, as depicted on Figure 1 map at: North Carolina Office of State Budget and Management, "Is North Carolina Rural or Urban?," Recent Blogs, accessed September 1, 2023, <https://www.osbm.nc.gov/blog/2020/11/19/north-carolina-rural-or-urban>

Figure 4.2: Population Change by County in North Carolina, 2010-2019



Population demographics are also expected to change. In 2010, the percentage of North Carolinians who identified as Hispanic or Latino in the Census was 8.6%; this number has increased to 10.7% in the 2020 census and is projected to reach 12% in the 2030 census. The percentage of people who identify as non-Hispanic and non-white racial groups (Black, Asian, American Indian, or multiracial) will increase from 28.1% in 2020 to 29.5% by 2030.

The baby boom has also contributed to changes in the makeup of the population. Currently, North Carolina is the 9th largest state in overall population nationwide but ranks 8th in size of the population 65 years old and over. By 2029, 1 in 5 North Carolinians will be at least 65 years old. By 2031, North Carolina will have more people 65 years old and over than children under 18 years old. Interestingly, the number of older North Carolinians is projected to increase in urban areas but decrease in rural areas.

Health and Wellness in Parks

NORTH CAROLINA



Research has shown that exposure to parks and green space can positively impact human health and well-being. Parks often create environments that encourage active lifestyles and improve access to exercise opportunities. With the high correlation between physical activity and decreased risk factors for cardiovascular health, parks provide an opportunity for public health initiatives⁵. Such an initiative is the Parks and Trails for Health Program (NC PATH). This is an online campaign by DNCR that features

virtual activities and educational series focused on diverse voices in the outdoors to encourage physical activity in North Carolina's parks, greenways, and other outdoor spaces.

Exposure to parks and greenspace can benefit mental health as well in many ways. Research suggests that contact with nature enhances cognitive functioning and emotional well-being by improving attention restoration and reducing stress². These benefits have been particularly useful during the COVID-19 pandemic. During the pandemic, state parks saw a record number of visitors with 22.6 million visitors in 2021. This was 3 million more than any other year on record.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Access in Parks

Researchers have documented the racial and ethnic disparities among the usage of public parks, and these disparities are opposite to the foundation of the field and the mission and values of the Division. Centering equity in the actions of parks and recreation organizations is crucial in addressing the gaps that remain in the field and profession. The Division is committed to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) and wants to see these values infused in all areas of the state parks system.

Diversity is understanding that everyone is unique and recognizing individual differences and similarities. It encompasses acceptance and respect while embracing various backgrounds, professional experience, skills and specialization, values and culture, and socioeconomic status.

Equity refers to the qualities of justness, fairness, impartiality, and even-handedness. This involves factoring in aspects of the system that have put particular groups at a disadvantage. Equity is inclusive equality.

⁵ Larson, Lincoln R., and Hipp, J. Aaron. "Nature-based pathways to health promotion: the value of parks and greenspace." *North Carolina Medical Journal* 83, no. 2 (2022): 99-102.

4.0 Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation in the State Parks System

Inclusion is acknowledging, welcoming, respecting, supporting, and valuing the authentic participation of any individual or group. It is creating an environment that engages multiple perspectives, differing ideas, and individuals from different backgrounds, while providing a sense of belonging.

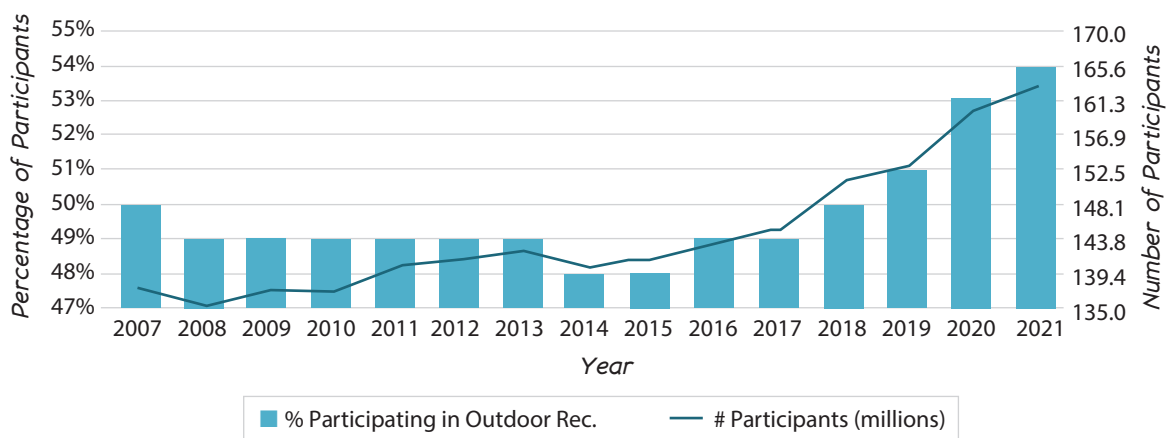
Access is access for all, as well as the acknowledgment that for it all to work cohesively, access must be integrated. Integration not only acknowledges the variety of racial and ethnic backgrounds, but it accepts, encourages, and thrives in it.

A recent study⁴ found that one-third of park and recreation agencies currently have formal DEIA programs, and another 32% anticipate establishing formal DEIA activities within the year. Investing in DEIA practices throughout the organization — including hiring practices, policies, expressed commitment in vision and mission — and educational programs — are critical and increasingly more common.

Outdoor Recreation Preferences

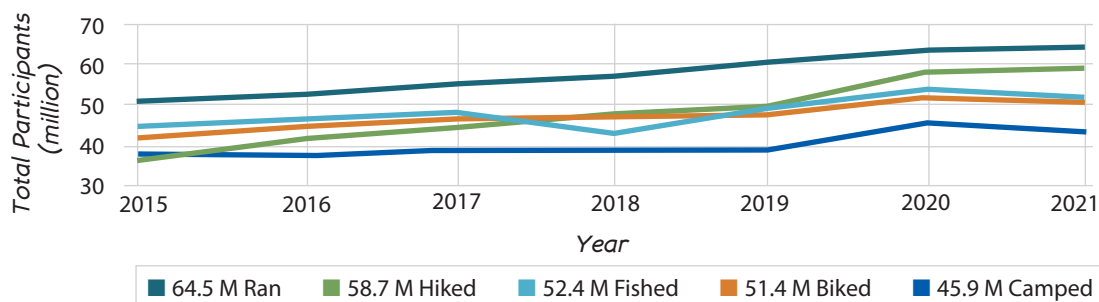
Recreational behaviors and preferences are ever-changing, and the COVID-19 pandemic has had a lasting impact on trends. Not only did overall participation in outdoor recreation increase, but the activities that individuals engaged in changed. A national study on outdoor participation trends detailed these changes across the United States, and North Carolina is experiencing similar trends within the state. Following the onset of the pandemic, the number of new and returning participants increased by 26% and this momentum was retained in 2021.

Figure 4.3: Outdoor Participation Growth Trends, 2007-2021⁶



The five primary outdoor activities include camping, biking, fishing, hiking, and running. Overall, these activities have been growing in popularity over the past five years.

Figure 4.4: Top Five Outdoor Activities, 2015-2021⁷



⁶National Recreation and Park Association. (2022). *NRPA Diversity, Equity and Inclusion in Parks and Recreation*. Ashburn, VA: National Recreation and Park Association.

⁷Outdoor Foundation. 2023. *2022 Outdoor Participation Report*. Boulder, CO: Outdoor Industry Association.

4.0 Trends Affecting Outdoor Recreation in the State Parks System



Hiking at William B. Umstead State Park



Camping at Elk Knob State Park

Hiking and Running

Hiking and running gained 889,000 and 739,000 participants respectively from 2021 to 2022⁸. Historically, the Division has found that hiking, nature, and multiuse trails were among the most popular facilities utilized by visitors, and this newer study suggests that this will remain the case.

Camping

Camping has been experiencing steady annual growth, and in 2021, camping accounted for 40% of all leisure trips taken and approximately 7 in 10 households camp at least occasionally⁹. Camping continues to attract a diverse range of participants, and 54% of new campers from 2020 to 2021 came from non-white groups. The pandemic also encouraged city and urban citizens to travel to natural spaces. The concept of “glamping,” or a form of camping involving accommodation and facilities more luxurious than those associated with traditional camping, is growing in popularity, and is expected to continue to garner interest.

⁸ Outdoor Foundation. 2023. 2022 Outdoor Participation Report. Boulder, CO: Outdoor Industry Association.

⁹ Kampgrounds of America, Inc. 2022. KOA North American Camping Report 2022. Billings, MT: Kampgrounds of America, Inc.

5.0 Strategic Directions

Although expressed in different words over the years, the mission and long-term goals of the North Carolina state parks system have been adhered to since the first state park was established at Mount Mitchell in 1916. The strategies used to achieve these goals have adapted to changing circumstances, trends, and opportunities.

Mission Statement

The North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation exists to inspire all its citizens and visitors through conservation, recreation, and education.

Conservation: To conserve and protect representative examples of North Carolina's natural beauty, ecological features, recreational and cultural resources within the state parks system;

Recreation: To provide and promote safe, healthy, and enjoyable outdoor recreational opportunities throughout the state; and

Education: To provide educational opportunities that promote stewardship of the state's natural and cultural heritage.

Long-Term Vision

- Preserve and protect high-quality and representative examples of the biological, geological, archaeological, scenic, and recreational resources of North Carolina by including such resources in the state parks system for public enjoyment, education, and inspiration.
- Offer a wide range of safe and enjoyable outdoor recreation opportunities in the state parks system by developing and staffing appropriate public facilities.
- Support recreation opportunities provided by other agencies and local governments by offering training and technical assistance, and by administering grant programs for parks, trails, and greenways acquisition and development.
- Maintain and enhance the ecological quality of park resources by conducting appropriate stewardship activities, ensuring adequate staffing levels and carefully planning and managing visitor use patterns and park development projects.
- Promote understanding of and pride in the natural and cultural heritage of the state by providing environmental education and interpretive materials and programming for teachers, students, and park visitors.
- Make parks more accessible to all.

Twenty Years Ago

At the end of 2003, the status of the state parks system was quite different. The number of units had increased to 63, total acreage had increased to 172,814, and annual visitation was 11.2 million. Revenue to the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for fiscal year 2002-2003 was \$28.5 million, of which \$12.6 million was available for state parks capital needs and \$5.4 was available for land acquisition. With bond and PARTF funding, many of the most urgent land inholdings and critical safety and health project needs were being addressed. The prospect of annual recurring funds made it possible to conduct facility planning in a systematic and predictable way.

Meanwhile, funding had become available from other sources as well. The Natural Heritage Fund, also funded by the excise stamp tax, provided grants for the acquisition of lands with important natural and cultural resource value. The Clean Water Management Trust Fund (now the North Carolina Land and Water Fund), established in 1996, provides grants for the acquisition of riparian buffer lands. Both trust funds have provided generous grants to the state parks system.

In addition, public support for the protection of open spaces was growing. In 1999, Governor James B. Hunt proposed to permanently protect an additional 1 million acres of farmland, open space, and conservation lands in the state. In 2000, the General Assembly codified this goal in statute.

The time was right for a major expansion of the state parks system. The strategic directions in the 2000 Systemwide Plan were to complete the land acquisition and development envisioned in master plans for existing parks and to add carefully selected new park units to the system. Criteria were identified, proposed sites were evaluated, and new units were added to enhance the system as a whole and to help the system fulfill its statutory purpose for future generations. Because PARTF was indexed to the real estate excise tax, the booming real estate market of the 2000s generated excess revenue projections. The legislature also authorized special indebtedness (bonds) for land acquisition. Prior planning made it possible for the Division to take advantage of significant opportunities to add important new state parks, state natural areas, and state trails to the system.

Ten Years Ago

At the end of 2013, the situation changed. The state parks system had grown to 74 units with a total of 219,905 acres. Visitation in 2013 was 14.2 million. After nearly two decades of unprecedented growth, the expansion of the state parks system slowed considerably from 2009 through 2013 due to the economic recession. Growth and capital development in the parks were also curtailed by the General Assembly's decision to fund PARTF through appropriations and eliminate its dedicated funding source. From 2004 to 2008, North Carolina established eight new park units and acquired 29,984 acres. The next four years saw only two new park units and 14,169 acres — about half of the acreage growth in the previous time frame.

Like many states, North Carolina suffered the effects of the nationwide economic downturn. Long-term goals for the state parks system remained the same, yet the system's strategic directions responded to the challenging times. From 2009 to 2013, the state parks system implemented many improvements to efficiency and contributed in significant ways to supporting job growth and economic development in North Carolina.

Five Years Ago

By 2017, the parks system had seen a few years of increased visitation and increased funding. Visitation has continued to increase from 14 million in 2013 to over 19 million in 2017, fueled by new parks, new facilities, and the Division's first-ever marketing program funded as part of the 2016 centennial. More people from both within and outside of North Carolina are visiting state parks, supporting the state and local economies.

The General Assembly allocated \$75 million in Connect NC Bond funds, later approved by voters, for 45 projects at state parks. These projects include expanded visitor centers, campgrounds, day-use facilities, and land acquisitions for parks, natural areas, and trails. Every existing state park at the time had a project identified in the bond package. The General Assembly also increased PARTF by \$10.6 million, almost doubling the amount of funding allocated for state parks in 2017.

With this additional funding, facilities were added to state parks, and over 7,800 acres of land were acquired for existing park units. In 2017, the General Assembly also crafted a bill authorizing three new natural areas to be added to the state parks system. Governor Roy Cooper signed the legislation in July 2017, which added Bob's Creek in McDowell County, Warwick Mill Bay in Robeson County, and Salmon Creek in Bertie County, all of which represent diverse and rare ecosystems across the state.

As the popularity of the parks continued to increase, the Division was faced with challenges that affected its ability to provide the best user experience to visitors. With increased visitation, state parks were becoming overcrowded with parking capacity issues and the general user experience was being compromised. The Division was continually struggling with how much is too much development in a park. While the Division strived to accommodate all users, there was a point that this accommodation could begin to threaten the resources that the state parks system is protecting.

Today

By the end of 2022, the state parks system has seen more changes and weathered a global pandemic. Visitation continues to increase, with a high of over 22 million in 2021, as people from across the country and North Carolina looked for ways to get outside in open spaces to rejuvenate themselves after being quarantined during the pandemic. The visitation fell in 2022 to just over 19 million visitors, but the trend of increased visitation of an average of 3-4% a year continues. The influx of visitors due to the pandemic has broadened the diversity of the visitors to state parks and brought many people to the outdoors who have little to no experience recreating in a natural setting. These new visitors have stayed, which is fueling the continued increase in visitors. The DNCR's PATH initiative has also helped increase visitation, as well as Division programs like the Passport book.

While more visitation is great for the mission of the Division and allows staff to educate more people about the importance of conservation, it has caused strain on resources. The large volume of visitors due to the pandemic has beset the Division's ability to manage the park units to provide a quality visitor experience. The challenges of being able to fully staff parks became very quickly with the rapid increase in visitation.

In the last five years, 19 major capital improvement projects were completed and 56 have begun design or construction totaling over \$105 million. In 2021, the General Assembly approved the budget providing a windfall for recreation across North Carolina. Highlights of this budget include \$101 million for PARTF, \$115 million for the North Carolina Land and Water Fund, \$12 million to complete the acquisition of Pisgah View State Park, funding for other major park projects, and \$29.5 million for state trails. The Division is actively working to get these projects underway and into construction. Many of the anticipated major Division projects revolve around updating or replacing the aging infrastructure in the state parks system.

Since the last plan, the General Assembly authorized the addition of Pisgah View State Park in Buncombe and Haywood counties, Bakers Lake State Natural Area in Bladen County, and the Dan River, East Coast Greenway, Northern Peaks, Overmountain Victory, Roanoke River, and Wilderness Gateway state trails. The Division has added nearly 29,000 acres of land, increasing the system size to nearly 260,000 acres. As of 2022, the system has 35 state parks, four state recreation areas, 25 state natural areas, seven state lakes, four state rivers, and 12 state trails.

As the popularity of outdoor recreation — and in turn, the state parks system — grows, the Division continues to face challenges with park overcrowding, putting extra stress on the facilities in the parks that were not designed for this level of use. This is true for both the structural infrastructure such as bathrooms and campgrounds, as well as the natural infrastructure such as trails, overlooks, riverbanks, and shorelines. The added visitation can also have an impact on the natural resources that the park was created to help protect. The Division continues to monitor these impacts and plan for ways to address this in the near- and long-term.

Goal #1 – Continue to Expand the State Parks System

As the state's population keeps growing, there remains a demand for a wide variety of parks and recreation services, and an ongoing need to protect important natural and cultural resources. There must be continued emphasis on careful planning and evaluation of statewide priorities to ensure the best use of funding.

Objective #1 – Expansion of the system:

Initiative 1A. Update the New Parks for a New Century study to identify areas that are of statewide significance and include a wide variety of natural resources and potential recreation opportunities. The study should also account for geographic deficiencies and identify underrepresented communities.

Initiative 1B. Continue to develop future acquisition plans for each park unit, with the aim of providing locations for future facilities and protecting high-priority resource themes.

Initiative 1C. Continue to work with land conservation partners to implement land acquisition plans from willing sellers.

Objective #2 – Evidence-based approaches and tools for proactive planning both at newly established and existing parks:

Initiative 2A. Update the Project Priority List (PPL) to reflect current needs through a data-centered capital development plan for the planning, design, maintenance, and construction of park facilities. Train Division staff on the PPL.

Initiative 2B. Continue to refine the PPL to better prioritize projects across the system. Use the PPL to look at the role of revenue in the system by looking at utilization rates and revenue generated by different facilities.

Objective #3 – Carrying capacity and visitation plans:

Initiative 3A. Develop a process for determining carrying capacity for both existing and newly created park units.

Initiative 3B. Create visitation plans for each park unit in the system.

Goal #2 – Make Parks More Accessible to Provide the Best Possible Visitor Experience

The Division seeks to improve the accessibility to parks for all people and improve visitors' experience through a better understanding of needs and creating specific actionable tasks.

There are many barriers to access at state parks. Some of these barriers are tangible, such as steps on trails, or the remoteness of some areas of the park, while some are perceived, such as certain visitors not feeling secure or welcomed during their visit. In some instances, barriers can be as minute as verbiage choices, such as "walking" versus "hiking." All are barriers that the Division is striving to erase to the practicable extent. Visitor experience can be viewed as having two components, internal and external experiences, and it is important to understand both types of barriers.

The internal experience is the visitor's perspective, which is created by a combination of feelings, sensations, and prior experiences. This is unique to every visitor but likely has components that are similar across all visitors. The external experience consists of many separate pieces outside of the visitor's perspective, such as the road conditions in the park, the cleanliness of the campgrounds, the clarity and readability of park signs, and the friendliness of park staff. Integrating all these pieces is the key to providing great visitor experiences.

By determining current visitor experience and satisfaction, the Division can create actionable tasks to improve that experience and make state parks more accessible for all.

Objective #1 – New program(s) to understand barriers (real or perceived) to access state parks:

Initiative 1A. Create a working group(s) within the Division to undertake this objective.

Initiative 1B. Survey individuals of different races, ethnicities, age groups, park use types, socioeconomic resources, and physical ability and mobility to determine barriers.

Initiative 1C. Convene focus groups with underrepresented communities to determine barriers.

Initiative 1D. Create a report(s) identifying these barriers.

Objective #2 – Better understanding of visitor experience:

Initiative 2A. Create an internal working group from across disciplines in the Division to review visitor experience.

Initiative 2B. Create a method(s) to gather information on visitors' experience such as which facility they used and their satisfaction with that experience.

Initiative 2C. Disseminate the finding(s) of the visitor experience study.

Objective #3 – Improvements in accessibility and experience for visitors:

Initiative 3A. Synthesize findings from objectives 1 and 2 under this goal.

Initiative 3B. Work with communities and organizations throughout North Carolina to determine ways to reduce barriers and address the gap in park visitation among different groups.

Initiative 3C. Create an action item list that the Division can undertake to improve accessibility and experience.

Goal #3 – Increase Operational Efficiency

New additions to the state parks system, increased visitation, and high public interest have placed great demands on the Division's resources and capabilities. The Division operates and maintains state park units open to the public 364 days per year (all park units are closed on Christmas Day), including law enforcement, public safety, education, natural resource protection, and visitor services. In addition, much work remains to be done to acquire, plan, staff, and develop newly established park units. It also remains a challenge to meet staffing needs at both new and existing units at the same pace as the record growth of the system and public usage.

The Division must manage these challenges while maintaining excellence in state parks operations and stewardship. It will be essential to increase the Division's organizational adaptability and to foster efficient use of funds and resources available to the Division.

Objective #1 – Project efficiency:

Initiative 1A. Create design guidelines to be used in planning, design, maintenance, and operations. This will ensure all facilities are planned, designed, constructed, and maintained to avoid direct and indirect adverse impacts on high-quality natural communities, rare plants and animal species, major archaeological sites, and other significant natural and cultural resources.

- Document processes for projects in the Division. This should include planning, design, construction, maintenance, land protection, and trails. This will allow the Division to review and refine these processes to increase efficiency.
- Improve interdisciplinary collaboration in all sections to ensure projects identify constraints early, as well as potential efficiencies and cost savings throughout the project development, construction, and operation.
- Create a coordinated and efficient preventative maintenance program for the Division, which collaborates with all sections.
- Identify activities that maximize revenue and incorporate the activities into future projects.

Initiative 1B. Implement a post-project review process to determine ways to improve and optimize the process in the future. This review should look at the process from planning to occupancy to operation.

Objective #2 – Staff retention:

Initiative 2A. Continue efforts to remedy permanent and seasonal pay inequities for similar job classifications in North Carolina.

Initiative 2B. Create a plan that will look at existing and future workloads for sections within the Division to determine staffing needs for these sections.

- Determine existing staffing needs per park.
- Determine staffing needs per facility (campground, visitor center, etc.).
- Develop a staffing plan to identify minimum needs for the entire parks system.
- Develop a succession plan for different employee categories for all sections across the Division.

Initiative 2C. Strongly encourage program managers, park superintendents, and Division management to undertake and complete a certified public manager program or other leadership programs such as the Natural Resources Leadership Program offered by North Carolina State University.

Initiative 2D. Document the human resources hiring process to determine ways to improve and streamline the hiring process.

Create training sessions for the Division on this process for a better understanding of the steps involved.

Initiative 2E. Create a program to increase volunteering in parks to assist with staff workload where appropriate.

Initiative 2F. Create training modules for different programs, systems, and policies that can be used for staff training.

Objective #3 – Technology and data information efficiency:

Initiative 3A. Purchase equipment to improve web-based information sharing and meetings to enhance staff performance.

Initiative 3B. Create a plan to integrate data sources and formats used within the Division.

Initiative 3C. Continue to develop and implement a Divisionwide fiscal data management system.

Initiative 3D. Determine inefficiencies in the centralized reservation system and work with the vendor to improve these inefficiencies.

Initiative 3E. Continue to look for processes that can be automated and create a plan to automate them.

Initiative 3F. Continue to research opportunities to streamline Division processes with processes and technologies available at the Department level, within state government, or external to government.

Objective #4 – Public outreach and education:

Initiative 4A. Determine the effectiveness of using online communication, such as Facebook, X (formerly known as Twitter), Instagram, and other technological innovations for public outreach. As new communication methods become available and are embraced by the public, the Division will explore and initiate utilization where appropriate.

Initiative 4B. Continue to improve the Division website to make it more user-friendly and easier to navigate. This increases the transparency of Division activities for the public.

Initiative 4C. Determine strategies to better educate local governments on grant programs including the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the Recreational Trails Program, and the Land and Water Conservation Fund.

Objective #5 – Operational productivity:

Initiative 5A. Review purchasing and distribution of supplies through the Division to determine if improvements can be made to increase efficiency.

Initiative 5B. Evaluate the use of vehicles throughout the Division and develop strategies for ways to reduce vehicle and fuel costs. Implement a vehicle replacement strategy based on this evaluation to ensure that staff have working and safe vehicles to properly execute the Division's mission.

Initiative 5C. Create a plan for the continuation of updates to operational resources (radios, etc.).

Objective #6 – Update of Division policies and procedures:

Initiative 6A. Create a program to review aged policies and procedures to determine their appropriateness today.

Initiative 6B. Create an internal working group to review these and revise them as deemed warranted.

Goal #4 – Support Local Economic Development

State parks not only protect, conserve, and offer recreational opportunities, but they are also a key component of economic development in nearby communities. State parks are important regional attractions that can form the cornerstone of local efforts for ecotourism. In addition, the Division can support local economic development by participating in local and regional tourism initiatives, coordinating multijurisdictional recreation planning, offering grants to local park and trail projects, and providing environmental education opportunities for schools and universities.

Objective #1 – Prioritization of acquisition and development in and around underserved communities:

Initiative 1A. Develop a regional trail plan in the northern Coastal Plain.

Initiative 1B. Prioritize support for park units in Hometown Strong communities.

Initiative 1C. Provide grant funding and technical assistance for the implementation of trail and greenway projects in local communities.

Objective #2 – Continued development and improvement of partnerships with local communities:

Initiative 2A. Increase support for and participation in community festivals, regional tourism initiatives, local planning projects, and youth job projects.

Initiative 2B. Actively seek community input on park planning efforts and participate in community planning efforts for recreation and ecotourism development.

Initiative 2C. Provide and facilitate educational programming to support local districts.

Objective #3 – Efforts to obtain and disseminate the resources needed to promote and maintain economic development at the local level:

Initiative 3A. Pioneer a study to determine the value and breadth of the economic impact of state parks through partnerships with universities.

Initiative 3B. Ensure that proper staffing is available to support local communities and provide vital additions to the labor force.

Initiative 3C. Provide information on trail and grant opportunities available across the state through the Division website.

Goal #5 – Support State and Local Health and Wellness

Studies show that the average American boy or girl spends just four to seven minutes in unstructured outdoor play each day, and more than seven hours each day in front of an electronic screen. This lack of outdoor activity has profoundly impacted the wellness of children. In addition, recent surveys found that the COVID-19 pandemic has made people more concerned for their health and their mental well-being. However, as the pandemic showed, many disparities exist that create barriers for certain groups of individuals to access wellness resources. State parks and trails can help by providing free outlets for physical activity. The Division will develop partnerships with public and private health organizations to explore ways to use the state parks to encourage physical activity and healthy lifestyles for all.

Objective #1 – Study on health benefits of state parks:

Initiative 1A. Undertake a study to determine the health benefits of state parks to North Carolinians.

Initiative 1B. Work with communities to understand this benefit.

Objective #2 – Healthy activities at state parks for visitors:

Initiative 2A. Continue to sponsor and promote First Day Hikes, educational hikes, and other outdoor activities for all ages, abilities, and cultural groups.

Initiative 2B. Steer visitation to underutilized parks or underused park areas to ensure that parks have the capacity to allow visitors to recreate.

Initiative 2C. Update the 100-Mile Challenge website and continue to promote its use.

Initiative 2D. Increase events and programs at state parks that focus on the mental health benefits of nature and the outdoors.

Objective #3 – Public education on the health benefits of outdoor recreation:

Initiative 3A. Incorporate health benefits — both physical and mental — of outdoor recreation into our education programming.

Initiative 3B. Explore partnerships with healthcare providers and community organizations to promote outdoor recreation, especially among populations that experience health disparities.

Initiative 3C. Continue to partner with organizations in support of fitness and wellness activities that are appropriate to host in state parks.

Objective #4 – Continuation and expansion of the Schools in Parks program:

Initiative 4A. Continue yearly training and workshops for rangers and teachers.

Initiative 4B. Create a plan to expand this program to include teachers from all 100 North Carolina counties.

Goal #6 – Increase Natural and Cultural Resource Stewardship

The ecosystems and cultural features protected by the state parks system often represent the highest quality examples of the state's natural landscape and heritage. In many cases, these ecosystems and cultural features are also among the most threatened. The primary objective of the Division's natural resource management initiatives is to correct or compensate for the disruption of natural processes caused by human activities. These initiatives include the reintroduction of natural fire regimes, the restoration of natural communities, and the removal of invasive species. The primary goal of cultural resource management is to protect and preserve historically significant features.

Objective #1 – Coordination between park units and the Nature Resource Program:

Initiative 1A. Identify a staff liaison at each park unit to coordinate with the Natural Resources staff and take a lead on the natural resource management initiative.

Initiative 1B. Create a database that identifies these individuals for each park.

Initiative 1C. Invest in Division staff's education to ensure that they are aware of the latest research and information available in their areas of expertise.

Initiative 1D. Increase and improve relationships across other agencies in North Carolina and beyond to expand resources, capital and human, available to the Division.

Objective #2 – Increase in acreage burned in the parks system each year:

Initiative 2A. Develop park fire prescriptions for all areas known to support communities with fire-adaptive species. Update fire prescriptions as needed, based on the needs of the fire adaptive species in the park unit. Post these plans for internal review and use.

Initiative 2B. Ensure all staff have received appropriate fire training. This will include chainsaw use, off-road vehicle usage, heat exhaustion, and other fire safety as deemed necessary by current requirements.

Initiative 2C. Identify and train a burn boss at park units that are required to burn frequently based on the fire prescriptions.

Objective #3 – Ongoing restoration efforts and new projects:

Initiative 3A. Work with regional biologists to create a geographic information systems-based natural community dataset. This dataset will be used as the basis for documenting natural community types and planning restoration efforts.

Initiative 3B. Develop timber management plans for restoring damaged forests. Plans will include a description of existing conditions, restoration goals, monitoring objectives, and public involvement. Post these plans for internal review and use.

Objective #4 – Improvements in invasive species control:

Initiative 4A. Develop a strategic plan for controlling invasive species at each park unit in the system. Post these plans for internal review and use.

Initiative 4B. Provide appropriate invasive species management training for staff.



BOBS CREEK State Natural Area



Acreage:
6,090 land acres



2022 Visitation:
0



County:
McDowell

Visitor Facilities

Bob's Creek State Natural Area is currently not open to the public. The Division is working on adding facilities for passive recreation such as hiking and wildlife viewing, and trails including connections to the planned Wilderness Gateway State Trail.

Summary:

Located in McDowell County 42 miles east of Asheville, Bob's Creek State Natural Area covers more than 6,000 acres of sheltered coves and ravines, unique rock formations, and diverse natural ecosystems in the Foothills. Conservation and low-impact recreation are paramount for the protection of numerous streams in the river basins of the Broad and the Catawba and the preservation of rare species that have been documented by the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Park Rangers
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician



CAROLINA BEACH State Park



Contact

1010 State Park Road
 Carolina Beach, NC 28428
 (910) 458-8206
 carolina.beach@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.0472, -77.9066



Acreage:
628 land acres



2022 Visitation:
856,418



County:
New Hanover

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Bathhouse
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Dump station
- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – walk in
- Improved cabins

Recreation

- Boat slips
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Marina
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking
 - > Offers bicycle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK Trail

Summary:

Located in New Hanover County 12 miles south of Wilmington, Carolina Beach State Park is home to the Venus flytrap, a unique carnivorous plant. The park is known for habitats like Sugarloaf Dune, a 50-foot dune that once served as a navigational marker for river pilots, as well as three limesink ponds that each feature a unique plant community. The park’s marina provides access to the Cape Fear River and the Intracoastal Waterway, making the area popular for boaters and anglers.

Interpretive Themes:

- Carnivorous plants
- Diverse plant communities

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 3 Park Rangers
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 1 Processing Assistant

Seasonal Staff:

- 5 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 2 Park Attendants/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 5 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors





CARVERS CREEK State Park



Contact

2505 Long Valley Road
 Spring Lake, NC 28390
 (910) 436-4681
 carvers.creek@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.0472, -77.9066



Acreage:
4,897 land acres



2022 Visitation:
151,734



County:
Cumberland
Harnett

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Boathouse
- Historic buildings
- Historic house
- Park office
- Toilet buildings

Recreation

- Fishing pier
- Observation deck
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking
 - › Offers bicycle and bridle trails
 - › Kids TRACK Trail

Summary:

Located in Cumberland County 13 miles northwest of Fayetteville, Carvers Creek State Park features Long Valley Farm, which was once the winter retreat of James Stillman Rockefeller, and the Sandhills access that offers multiuse trails through beautiful longleaf pine ecosystems. The park provides plenty of opportunities for recreation and experiencing natural and cultural history. Both accesses include diverse habitats that are home to unique species like the federally endangered red-cockaded woodpecker and the Pine Barrens tree frog.

Interpretive Themes:

- Cultural history of the region
- Environmental restoration
- The Longleaf pine ecosystem

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Supervisor
- 2 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 3 Park Rangers

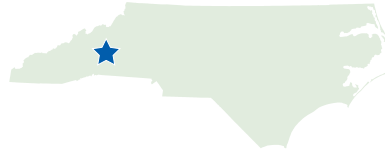
Seasonal Staff:

- 2 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 1 Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- 1 Park Intern
- 1 Park Naturalist/Educator





CHIMNEY ROCK State Park



Contact

743 Chimney Rock Park Road
Chimney Rock, NC 28720
(828) 625-1823
chimney.rock@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.4327, -82.2502



Acreage:
7,156 land acres



2022 Visitation:
371,276



County:
Rutherford
Henderson
Buncombe
Polk

Summary:

Located in Rutherford county 25 miles southeast of Asheville, Chimney Rock State Park offers some of North Carolina’s most dramatic mountain scenery, overlooking Hickory Nut Gorge and Lake Lure. At the fee-based Chimney Rock attraction, hike to Hickory Nut Falls and take an elevator or climb to the top of the park’s namesake, a 315-foot freestanding rock spire. It also has the most facilities, including riverside areas, interpretive exhibits, and gift shops. The free Rumbling Bald and Eagle Rock accesses provide a more rugged backcountry experience.

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Classroom
- Interpretive building
- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Recreation

- Fishing
- Picnic area
- Rock climbing
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking
 - › Offers bicycle trails

Miscellaneous

- Concession stand
- Elevator
- Restaurant

Interpretive Themes

- Living on the edge
- Geology of Hickory Nut Gorge
- Partnerships of preservation and sustainable tourism

Permanent Staff

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff

- 1 General Utility Worker
- 2 Park Attendants/Fee Collectors
- 2 Park Technicians/Fee Collectors





CLIFFS OF THE NEUSE State Park



Contact

240 Park Entrance Road
 Seven Springs, NC 28578
 (919) 778-6234
 cliffs.neuse@ncparks.gov
GPS: 32.2354, -77.8932



Acreage:
 1,066 land acres



2022 Visitation:
 200,931



County:
 Wayne

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Bathhouse
- Boathouse
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Dump station
- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – drive to
- Improved cabins

Recreation

- Canoe tie-up area
- Fishing area
- Paddle launch
- Picnic area
- Swim beach
- Trails
 - › Offers bicycle trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Wayne County 15 miles southeast of Goldsboro, Cliffs of the Neuse State Park sits on 90-foot bluffs overlooking the Neuse River. Layers of sand, clay, seashells, shale, and gravel create a spectrum of colors on the face of the cliff. Completing the landscape are longleaf pine restoration areas and creeks that were once used to make moonshine and cornmeal and now offer quiet fishing spots. An 11-acre lake complements the river in providing opportunities for water recreation.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Neuse River
- Longleaf pine and the naval stores industry
- Cliffs geology
- Area history
- Cypress swamp and Spanish moss

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 1 Environmental Specialist
- 4 General Utility Workers
- 5 Lifeguards
- 6 Park Attendants/Fee Collectors
- 5 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors





Acreage:
5,207 land acres



2022 Visitation:
760,330



County:
Gaston
Cleveland

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Group camping – hike in
- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Fishing pier
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail



CROWDERS MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact
522 Park Office Lane
Kings Mountain, NC 28086
704-853-5375
crowders.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.2133, -81.2935

Summary:

Located in Gaston County 32 miles west of Charlotte, Crowders Mountain State Park boasts two mountain peaks that offer magnificent views of the surrounding Piedmont. Trails offer challenging hikes and towering cliffs — and even the opportunity to traverse two states through the Ridgeline Trail, which connects to Kings Mountain State Park and Kings Mountain National Military Park in South Carolina. A wide variety of resident birds, from songbirds to birds of prey, make the park a great spot for birdwatching.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Monadnocks of Crowders Mountain and The Pinnacle
- Stream and Lake Ecology
- Diverse Plant Communities

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 6 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 3 Office Assistants
- 2 Park Technician/Fee Collectors



Acres:
14,353 land acres



2022 Visitation:
43,551



County:
Camden

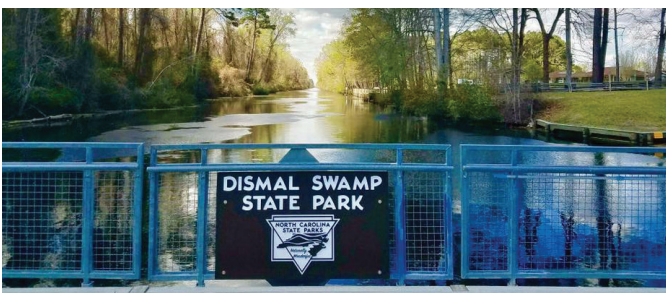
Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Observation structure
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bicycle trails
 - › Accessible trail
 - › Kids TRACK trail



DISMAL SWAMP State Park



Contact

2294 US 17 N.
South Mills, NC 27976
252-771-6593
dismal.swamp@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.5057, -76.3551

Summary:

Located in Camden County abutting the state's northeast border with Virginia, Dismal Swamp State Park provides access to the Great Dismal Swamp, the largest remaining swamp in the eastern United States. This area features unique and abundant plant life and wildlife, as well as a rich cultural history that intertwines with George Washington, the Underground Railroad, and Prohibition. The 22-mile Dismal Swamp Canal is a popular paddling destination and hosts the annual Paddle for the Border event.

Interpretive Themes:

- Formation of the Great Dismal Swamp
- The History of Human Activity in the Swamp
- Restoration of Natural Processes in the Swamp

Permanent Staff:

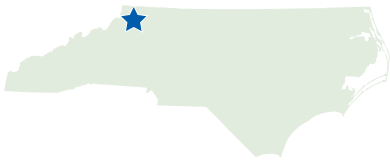
- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Assistant
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 2 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers



ELK KNOB State Park



Contact

5564 Meat Camp Road
Todd, NC 28684
828-297-7261
elk.knob@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.3325, -81.6906



Acreage:
4,546 land acres



2022 Visitation:
46,005



Counties:
Watauga
Ashe

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Classroom
- Toilet buildings
- Park office

Camping

- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Watauga County 11 miles north of Boone, Elk Knob State Park was established in 2003 to protect the mountain and the headwaters of the North Fork of the New River. An overlook summit rewards visitors with a panoramic view of North Carolina’s high country. Backcountry campsites, located 1 to 2 miles into a cover forest with beautiful streams, offer the ultimate primitive overnight experience. In the winter, about 1 mile of ungroomed trail is open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 2 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 5 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant





ENO RIVER State Park



Contact

6131 Cole Mill Road,
Durham, NC 27705
(984) 250-1370
eno.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.0783, -79.0050



Acreage:
4,463 land acres



2022 Visitation:
843,439



Counties:
Durham
Orange

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Historic buildings
- Historic houses
- Picnic shelter
- Shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Durham and Orange counties 10 miles northwest of downtown Durham, Eno River State Parks spans across five access areas along its namesake river. The swift, but often shallow stream of the river can make for difficult paddling but provides beautiful landmarks like the Cascades. This riparian environment is popular with anglers, birdwatchers, and photographers alike. The park offers plenty of recreational opportunities just minutes from city amenities, and it is one of the state parks along the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail.

Interpretive Themes:

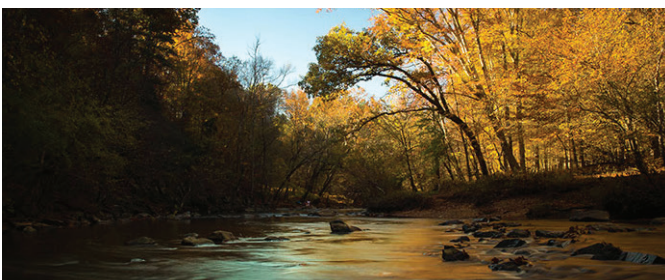
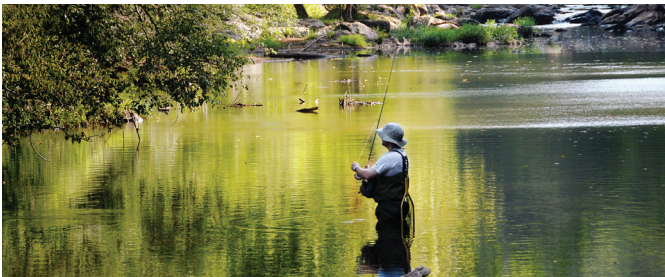
- River Basin Ecology
- Cultural History
- Wildlife Habitat Conservation
- Geologic Features

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent (*also manages Occaneechee Mountain State Natural Area*)
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician

Seasonal Staff:

- 9 General Utility Workers
- 1 Natural Resource Technician
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Naturalist/Educator
- 3 Park Technician/Fee Collectors
- 2 Office Assistant





FALLS LAKE State Recreation Area



Contact

13304 Creedmoor Road
Wake Forest, NC 27587
984-867-8000
falls.lake@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.0116, -78.6888



Acreeage:
4,891 land acres



2022 Visitation:
1,244,806



Counties:
Durham
Wake

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Bathhouse
- Community building
- Historic buildings
- Historic houses
- Park Office
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Dump station
- Campsites – electric and water hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – drive to
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Marina
- Picnic area
- Play areas with equipment
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bicycle trails

Summary:

Located in Durham and Wake counties 15 miles east of downtown Durham, Falls Lake State Recreation Area provides seven access areas to the reservoir. More than 300 campsites offer a variety of overnight experiences. Trails include a portion of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail, as well as one of the premier mountain bike trail systems in the Triangle area, located at Beaverdam access. During the spring and fall, migrating monarch butterflies add to the picturesque beauty of the lake.

Interpretive Themes:

- Water-based Recreation and Safety
- Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 2 Park Superintendents
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- 7 Maintenance Mechanics
- 12 Park Rangers
- 1 Wastewater Treatment Area Operator

Seasonal Staff:

- 23 General Utility Workers
- 1 Natural Resource Technician
- 22 Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- 10 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 2 Office Assistant
- 4 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collector



FORT FISHER State Recreation Area

Contact

1000 Loggerhead Road
Kure Beach, NC 28449
910-458-5798
fort.fisher@ncparks.gov
GPS: 33.9534, -77.9290



Summary:

Located in New Hanover County 18 miles south of Wilmington, Fort Fisher State Recreation Area is the only park in the system that allows four-wheel-drive beach access, making it popular for surf fishing. Warm weather months bring loggerhead sea turtles to nest along the park’s sandy shores. A trail traverses the salt marsh and ends at an observation deck with views of Zeke’s Island and the Cape Fear River. The marsh, brimming with wildlife, provides plenty of watching opportunities for birders and photographers year-round.



Acreage:
475 land acres



2022 Visitation:
1,108,980



County:
New Hanover

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Bathhouse
- Classroom
- Historic area
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Recreation

- 4-wheel-drive beach
- Picnic area
- Swimming area – ocean/sound

Misc

- Concession stand

Interpretive Themes:

- Coastal Waterbirds
- Sea Turtles
- Barrier Spit Ecology
- Recreation

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 2 General Utility Workers
- 5 Lifeguards
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- 2 Park Technician/Fee Collectors
- 2 Office Assistants
- 1 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Manager





FORT MACON State Park



Contact

2303 E. Fort Macon Road
 Atlantic Beach, NC 28512
 252-726-3775
 fort.macon@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.6979, -76.6783



Acreage:
537 land acres



2022 Visitation:
1,020,663



County:
Carteret

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Fort
- Picnic shelter
- Shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Swimming area – ocean/sound
- Trails
 - › Offers bicycle trails

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Carteret County 39 miles southeast of New Bern, Fort Macon State Park is centered on an impeccably restored pre-Civil War fort that offers daily guided tours and frequent cannon and musket demonstrations. Extensive exhibits educate visitors on fort history and the natural surroundings. The beach is perfect for swimming, beachcombing, or even spotting a dolphin or two. Trails traverse the salt marsh and dune fields and provide the opportunity to see one of the 300-plus species of birds found in the park.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Fort
- Barrier Island Dynamics

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 5 General Utility Workers
- 8 Lifeguards
- 6 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 5 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 1 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Manager





GOOSE CREEK State Park



Contact

2190 Camp Leach Road
Washington, NC 27889
252-923-2191
goose.creek@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.4818, -76.9014



Acres:
1,699 land acres



2022 Visitation:
146,155



County:
Beaufort

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Information station
- Interpretive building
- Laboratory
- Meeting room
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Group camping – drive to
- Improved cabins
- Primitive campsites – drive to

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Fishing Pier
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Swimming area – ocean/sound
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers paddle trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Beaufort County 34 miles southeast of Greenville, Goose Creek State Park offers a broad range of coastal experiences, from wetlands along the Pamlico River to a cypress swamp viewed from a long boardwalk. Remnants of boat piers, a trackless railroad bed, and burnt remains of tar kilns provide a glimpse of the heyday of a lumber industry that was once the center of life in the area. The park’s estuarine habitats can be explored on foot or by paddling the Pamlico River.

Interpretive Themes:

- Wetlands
- Diversity of Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Environmental Specialist
- 1 Housekeeping Supervisor
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 5 General Utility Workers
- 4 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 1 Section Intern Information Processing Technician



GORGES State Park



Contact

976 Grassy Ridge Road
Sapphire, NC 28774
828-966-9099
gorges@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.0960, -82.9510



Acreage:
8,120 land acres



2022 Visitation:
181,623



County:
Transylvania

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Improved cabins
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bicycle and bridle trails

Summary:

Located in Transylvania County near the tripoint where North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia meet, Gorges State Park sports plunging waterfalls, rugged river gorges, and sheer rock precipices. Backcountry-style recreation is a hallmark of the park, from backpacking to horseback riding. This park located in the Blue Ridge Escarpment spans over 8,000 acres of temperate rainforest and hosts extraordinary biodiversity. The park features 26 waterfalls, the northern boundary of Lake Jocassee, and a portion of the 70-mile Foothills Trail.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Steep Terrain of the Blue Ridge Escarpment
- Wet Climate and Abundant Surface Waters
- Natural Communities and Rare Species

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 3 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 4 Park Rangers

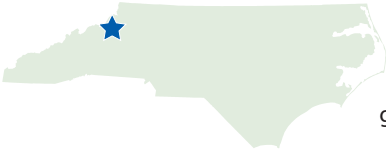
Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Worker
- 2 Office Assistants
- 2 Park Attendant/fee Collectors
- 1 Park Naturalist/ Educator





GRANDFATHER MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact

9872 N.C. 105 S., Suite 6
 Banner Elk, NC 28604
 828-963-9522
 grandfather.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.1549, -81.7872



Acreage:
3,746 land acres



2022 Visitation:
96,035



Counties:
Avery
Caldwell
Watauga

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Backcountry campsites
- Group camping – hike in
- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails

Summary:

Located in Avery, Caldwell, and Watauga counties 13 miles southwest of Boone, Grandfather Mountain State Park showcases a stunning mountain known for severe weather and challenging terrain that has hikers scrambling along cliffs, gripping cables, and climbing up ladders. It also boasts an unmatched ecological diversity that has been recognized as a United Nations International Biosphere Reserve. The state parkland sits between privately owned Grandfather Mountain attraction (admission fee charged) and Blue Ridge Parkway trails managed by the National Park Service.

Interpretive Themes:

- Biosphere Reserve
- Ecological Transition Zones
- Headwaters of Watauga
- Linville Rivers/Water Quality

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 2 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector





HAMMOCKS BEACH State Park



Contact

1572 Hammock Beach Road
Swansboro, NC 28584
910-326-4881
hammocks.beach@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.6710, -77.1429



Acreage:
1,770 land acres



2022 Visitation:
192,182



County:
Onslow

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Bathhouse
- Classroom
- Environmental education center
- Interpretive building
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Canoe launch point
- Ferry boat dock
- Observation structure
- Pier
- Swimming area – ocean/sound
- Trails
 - > Offers paddle trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Onslow County 19 miles southeast of Jacksonville, Hammocks Beach State Park comprises a mainland area and three barrier islands, including the 4-mile-long Bear Island. A passenger ferry transports visitors to the pristine beach that provides an opportunity to camp oceanside — an experience unique amongst North Carolina's state parks. Alternatively, visitors can rent or bring their own kayak or canoe for a closer exploration of the marshlands and maritime swamp forests that surround the park's island areas.

Interpretive Themes:

- Loggerhead Sea Turtle
- Barrier Island Ecology
- Local Cultural History

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 1 Mechanic
- 1 Park District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 Deckhands
- 4 Ferryboat Operators
- 6 General Utility Workers
- 5 Lifeguards
- 3 Office Assistants
- 1 Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- 6 Park Interns
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 2 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors



HANGING ROCK State Park



Contact

1790 Hanging Rock Park Road
Danbury, NC 27016
336-593-8480
hanging.rock@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.4119, -80.2541



Acreage:

8,461 land acres



2022 Visitation:

872,657



County:

Stokes

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Dump station
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – walk in
- Improved cabins

Recreation

- Beach
- Boathouse
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Pier
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle and bridle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Stokes County 30 miles north of Winston-Salem, Hanging Rock State Park started as a Civilian Conservation Corps project and has become a park that offers every part of a traditional outdoor experience. Trails lead to picturesque mountain views, rock outcrops, waterfalls, and even a mountain cave. Some are open to horseback riding and mountain biking, and a portion is part of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail. Campgrounds, a swim lake, and access to paddling on the Dan River complete the gamut of recreational opportunities.

Interpretive Themes:

- Geology of Hanging Rock

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 4 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Supervisor
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 1 Environmental Education Instructor
- 5 General Utility Worker
- 7 Lifeguards
- 2 Office Assistants
- 5 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Intern
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 5 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 2 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Managers



HAW RIVER State Park



Contact

339 Conference Center Drive
 Browns Summit, NC 27214
 336-342-6163
 haw.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.2508, -79.7563



Acreage:
1,488 land acres



2022 Visitation:
80,733



Counties:
Guilford
Rockingham

Summary:

Located in Guilford and Rockingham counties 15 miles north of Greensboro, Haw River State Park is a unique park that centers on The Summit, a residential environmental education and conference center, accommodating retreats and conferences for groups big or small. Trails and a boardwalk offer a journey into wetlands and a floodplain swamp. The park also houses the Iron Ore Belt Access, which is perfect for day-use visitors to enjoy views of wetlands rich in flora and fauna while meandering through piedmont oak-hickory forests.

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Classroom
- Conference center
- Environmental education center
- Meeting room
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Lodges

Recreation

- Boathouse
- 9-hole Disc golf course
- Fishing pier
- Swimming platform
- Swimming pool
- Tennis court
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Dining hall

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Cook
- 1 District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 2 Food Service Supervisors
- 1 Housekeeping Supervisor
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Parks Chief Naturalist
- 2 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 10 Environmental Education Instructors
- 2 Environmental Facility Culinary Section Interns
- 16 General Utility Workers
- 1 Natural Resource Technician
- 1 Office Assistant
- 1 Park Intern
- 4 Park Technician/Fee Collectors
- 1 Section Intern Information Processing Technician





JOCKEY'S RIDGE State Park



Contact

300 W. Carolista Drive
Nags Head, NC 27959
252-573-6108
jockeys.ridge@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.9642, -75.6330



Acres:
437 land acres



2022 Visitation:
982,328



County:
Dare

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Recreation

- Observation structure
- Swimming area – ocean/sound
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Dare County in the Outer Banks, Jockey's Ridge State Park is home to the tallest living sand dune system on the Atlantic coast and provides an ideal location for flying kites and watching sunsets. Hang gliding is a hallmark activity at the park, and a private concessionaire offers lessons. A second access area takes visitors through wetland habitats and allows for swimming, paddling, kiteboarding, and windsurfing on the Roanoke Sound. The park also marks the eastern terminus of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail.

Interpretive Themes:

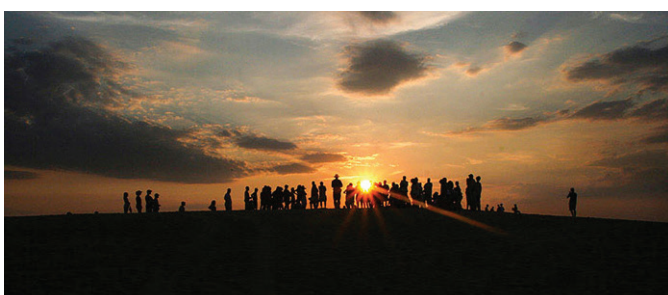
- Sand Dunes
- Diversity of Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 3 Park Technician/Fee Collectors





JONES LAKE State Park



Contact

4117 N.C. 242 N.
 Elizabethtown, NC 28337
 910-588-4550
 jones.lake@ncparks.gov
GPS: 4.6827, -78.5954



Acreage:
1,391 land acres



2022 Visitation:
148,719



County:
Bladen

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Bathhouse
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – drive to

Recreation

- Fishing pier
- Picnic area
- Play area with equipment
- Swimming area – freshwater

Summary:

Located in Bladen County 40 miles southeast of Fayetteville, Jones Lake State Park opened as the first state park to welcome Black Americans and has since been a community destination for picnicking, swimming, hiking, and paddling. Tea-colored waters hide the shallow depth of the lake, which reaches to just 8 feet. Jones Lake and the adjacent Salters Lake are two of the mysterious geological formations known as Carolina bays, a series of elliptical depressions along the Atlantic coast, the origins of which are unknown.

Interpretive Themes:

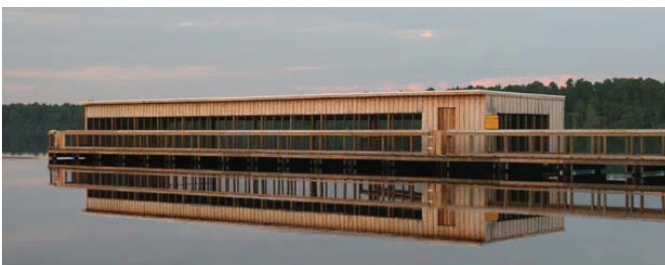
- Origin of Carolina Bays
- Carolina Bay Ecology

Permanent Staff:

- Park Superintendent: 1
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 2 General Utility Workers
- 4 Lifeguards
- 2 Office Assistants
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 2 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors





JORDAN LAKE State Recreation Area



Contact

280 State Park Road
Apex, NC 27523
919-362-0586
jordan.lake@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.7355, -79.0165



Acreage:
4,545 land acres



2022 Visitation:
2,055,579



County:
Chatham

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Bathhouse
- Classroom
- Meeting room
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – electric hookups
- Campsites – electric and water hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – drive to
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Marina
- Picnic area
- Play areas with equipment
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Chatham County 30 miles west of downtown Raleigh, Jordan Lake State Recreation Area includes seven access areas that provide plenty of camping, boating, and swimming opportunities. Campers have more than 1,000 campsites at five accesses to choose from, whether they use a tent, trailer, or RV, and whether they camp with family, friends, or a group. The beautiful lake is one of the largest summertime homes of the bald eagle, and an observation platform makes for easy spotting of our national bird.

Interpretive Themes:

- Aquatic Resources
- Fish and Wildlife Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 2 Park Superintendents
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- 4 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Supervisor
- 1 Mechanic
- 12 Park Rangers
- 1 Trades Worker
- 1 Wastewater Treatment Area OP

Seasonal Staff:

- 35 General Utility Workers
- 2 Office Assistants
- 36 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 17 Park Technician/Fee Collectors



KERR LAKE State Recreation Area



Contact

6254 Satterwhite Point Road
Henderson, NC 27537
252-438-7791
kerr.lake@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.4411, -78.3688



Acreage:
2,490 land acres



2022 Visitation:
1,395,789



Counties:
Vance
Warren

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Community building
- Information station
- Meeting room
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – electric hookups
- Campsites – electric and water hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – drive to

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Marinas
- Play area with equipment
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Vance and Warren counties at North Carolina’s north-central border with Virginia, Kerr Lake State Recreation Area is a collective of eight access areas around the shoreline of this 50,000-acre reservoir. Campers can choose from seven campground and hundreds of campsites to enjoy a serene night by the lake. All access areas provide at least one boat ramp, offering access to one of the best fishing lakes in the eastern United States. Amenities like community buildings provide popular venues for local gatherings.

Interpretive Themes:

- Kerr Reservoir Water Management
- Water-related Recreation
- Fish of Kerr Reservoir

Permanent Staff:

- 2 Park Superintendents
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 1 Facility Maintenance Supervisor
- 10 Maintenance Mechanics
- 2 Mechanics
- 10 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 32 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 59 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors



LAKE JAMES State Park



Contact

2229 Lake James State Park Road
Nebo, NC 28761
828-544-6800
lake.james@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.7503, -81.8920



Acreage:
3,920 land acres



2022 Visitation:
530,415



Counties:
Burke
McDowell

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Bathhouse
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Boathouse
- Fishing pier
- Horseshoe pit
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Pier
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Burke and McDowell counties 50 miles northeast of Asheville, Lake James State Park includes two areas to access this picturesque lake that is perfect for boating, swimming, and fishing. Campsites at both Catawba River and Paddy’s Creek accesses provide an opportunity to spend the night by the lake, with some sites accessible only by paddling. Trails include bike trails at Paddy’s Creek, the kid-friendly Holly Discovery Trail, the historic Overmountain Victory Trail, and the Fonta Flora State Trail.

Interpretive Themes:

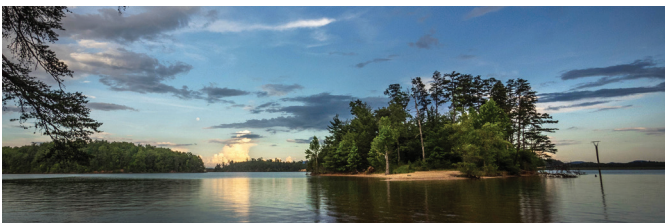
- Responsible Aquatic Recreation
- Wildlife Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Supervisor
- 4 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 7 General Utility Workers
- 7 Lifeguard
- 2 Office Assistants
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Naturalist/Educator
- 4 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 2 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Managers





LAKE NORMAN State Park



Contact

759 State Park Road
Troutman, NC 28166
704-528-6350
lake.norman@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.6725, -80.9325



Acreage:
1,956 land acres



2022 Visitation:
881,370



County:
Iredell

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Bathhouse
- Community building
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – walk in
- Improved cabins

Recreation

- Beach
- Boat docks
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Picnic area
- Swimming area – freshwater
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Iredell County 40 miles north of Charlotte, Lake Norman State Park boasts the region’s popular mountain biking trail system, the Itusi Trail, offering nearly 31 miles of single-track trail. The namesake lake is the largest manmade lake within the state, and the park covers about 17 miles of its northern shoreline. Park Lake, set off from the larger Lake Norman by a dam, offers quiet fishing spots and paddling. Heron rookeries on two islands shelter over 25 great blue heron nests.

Interpretive Themes:

- Responsible Aquatic Recreation
- Wildlife Habitats

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 2 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 4 General Utility Workers
- 5 Lifeguards
- 1 Office Assistant
- 4 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 2 Park Technician/Fee Collectors
- 4 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 1 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Manager
- 1 Section Intern – Exhibits



Acreage:
2,398 land acres



2022 Visitation:
185,333



County:
Columbus

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Group camping – walk in

Recreation

- Boardwalk
- Fishing pier
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Accessible trail



LAKE WACCAMAW State Park



Contact

1866 State Park Drive, Lake
Waccamaw, NC 28450
910-646-4748
lake.waccamaw@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.2790, -78.4654

Summary:

Located in Columbus County 40 miles west of Wilmington, Lake Waccamaw State Park sits on the shores of the largest Carolina bay. There are 500,000 of these mysterious craters, and the lake is one of the few that contains open water instead of vegetation. A limestone bluff reduces the lake’s acidity, making it an ideal home for several aquatic species that are found nowhere else in the world. A pedestrian bridge over Waccamaw Dam allows visitors to travel the lake’s entire 14-mile shoreline.

Interpretive Themes:

- Lake Waccamaw Aquatic Life
- Freshwater Mollusks
- Endemic Fish

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 2 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 1 Park Attendant/Fee Collector



LUMBER RIVER State Park



Contact

2819 Princess Ann Road
Orrum, NC 28369
910-628-4564
lumber.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.390023, -79.00222



Acreage:
13,351 land acres



2022 Visitation:
155,510



Counties:
Columbus
Hoke
Robeson
Scotland

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – drive in
- Primitive campsites – paddle to

Recreation

- Boat ramp
- Canoe launch point
- Horseshoe pit
- Picnic area
- Observation structure
- Trails
 - › Offers paddle trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Columbus, Robeson, Scotland, and Hoke counties 60 miles south of Fayetteville, Lumber River State Park has two access areas located about 1 hour from each other: Princess Ann and Chalk Banks. Possibilities for paddling on this 115-mile river are extraordinary. An abundance of wildlife and plant life, including the belted kingfisher and the rare Carolina bogmint, helped Lumber River earn federal designation as a National Wild and Scenic River, the only blackwater river in the state to have that honor.

Interpretive Themes:

- Water Quality of the Lumber River
- Natural Communities within the Lumber River Corridor
- Water-based Recreation and Safety

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors





MAYO RIVER State Park



Contact

500 Old Mayo Park Road,
Mayodan, NC 27027
336-427-2530
mayo.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.4391, -79.9475



Acreeage:
2,966 land acres



2022 Visitation:
95,789



County:
Rockingham

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Historic building
- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Group camping – walk in

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

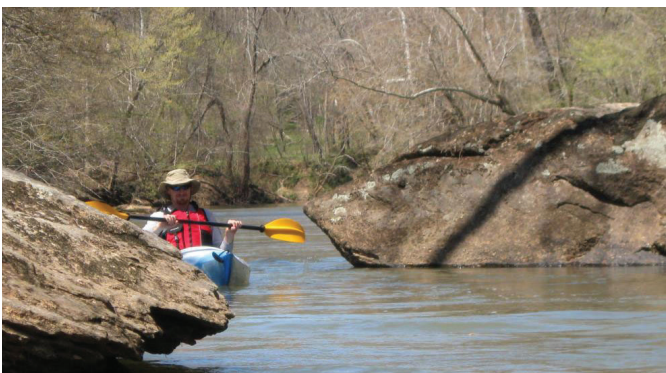
Located in Rockingham County 30 miles northwest of Greensboro, Mayo River State Park offers various recreational opportunities at the main Mayo Mountain access and at multiple accesses along the Mayo River. At the main access, visitors can enjoy hiking trails, fishing ponds, a picnic area and shelter, and a group campsite. Four accesses — Deshazo Mill, Anglin Mill, Hickory Creek, and Mayodan — allow entry to the river, home to rich wildlife and Class II rapids. Deshazo Mill also features a picturesque waterfall on Fall Creek.

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 1 Maintenance Mechanic
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors





MEDOC MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact

1541 Medoc State Park Road,
Hollister, NC 27844
252-586-6588
medoc.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.2639, -77.8883



Acreage:
3,939 land acres



2022 Visitation:
173,627



County:
Halifax

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – equestrian
- Campsites – electric hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – drive to

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Picnic area
- Play area with equipment
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle and bridle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Halifax County 30 miles northwest of Rocky Mount, Medoc Mountain State Park stands on the 325-foot remnant of a once-mighty mountain range from 350 million years ago. Instead of a typical “mountain” adventure, visitors can enjoy picnicking in the park’s open meadow, fishing on Little Fishing Creek, and traversing the trails on foot, bike, or horse. Uncommon species such as Lewis’ heartleaf and the Neuse River waterdog call the park home.

Interpretive Themes:

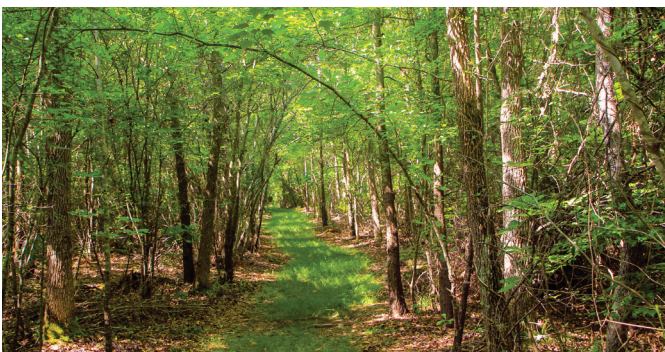
- Geology
- Ecology of Little Fishing Creek
- Park History and Ecology

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Park Ranger

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 2 Office Assistants
- 1 Park Attendant/Fee Collector





MERCHANTS MILLPOND State Park



Contact
 176 Millpond Road
 Gatesville, NC 27938
 252-357-1191
merchants.millpond@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.4371, -76.7016



Acreage:
3,347 land acres



2022 Visitation:
130,609



County:
Gates

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Interpretive building
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – paddle in
- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – hike in
- Primitive campsites – paddle in

Recreation

- Boat dock
- Canoe launch point
- Canoe rentals
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers paddle trails

Summary:

Located in Gates County 10 miles south of North Carolina’s northeastern border with Virginia, Merchants Millpond State Park centers on a 760-acre millpond more than 190 years old. Hiking the surrounding trails or paddling the placid, shallow waters of the pond offer a great way to explore this wetland environment. Old-growth cypress trees adorned with Spanish moss create an “enchanted forest,” particularly at Lassiter Swamp. Visitors have even spotted the American alligator here, at the northernmost point of its range.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Millpond
- Plant Communities
- Scenic Value

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 4 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors





MORROW MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact

49104 Morrow Mountain Road
 Albemarle, NC 28001
 704-982-4402
 morrow.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.3737, -80.0735



Acreage:
5,810 land acres



2022 Visitation:
209,236



County:
Stanly

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Community building
- Historic building
- Historic house
- Information station
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet building
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – electric hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – drive to
- Improved cabins
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Boathouse
- Observation structure
- Pier
- Picnic area
- Swimming pool
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bridle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Stanly County 50 miles northeast of Charlotte, Morrow Mountain State Park provides a myriad of adventures from the summit of the namesake mountain, along the banks of the Yadkin River State Trail, and to the shores of Lake Tillery. The mountain is a study in geologic wonder — with Native American artifacts made of rhyodacite to argillite mined by the Civilian Conservation Corps to create many of the park’s structures. One of these CCC-built structures is the state parks system’s only day-use swimming pool.

Interpretive Themes:

- Geology of the Uwharries
- Native American Culture

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent: 1
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 Chief Lifeguard
- 5 General Utility Workers
- 7 Lifeguards
- 5 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 2 Park Technician/Fee Collectors
- 7 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 2 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Managers



MOUNT JEFFERSON State Natural Area



Acreage:
1,143 land acres



2022 Visitation:
117,755



County:
Ashe



Contact

1481 Mount Jefferson State Park Road
West Jefferson, NC 28694
336-246-9653
mount.jefferson@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.3936, -81.4680

Summary:

Located in Ashe County 25 miles northeast of Boone, Mount Jefferson State Natural Area surrounds a natural landmark that offers vistas as far as Tennessee from its overlooks and Luther Rock. The mountain, first spotted from the Blue Ridge Parkway, rises abruptly from the surrounding landscape. Over 700 plants call the park home, including the Dutchman’s pipevine, which is visited by the beautiful swallowtail butterfly and its distinct black-and-orange-spiked caterpillar. The park’s winding road to the summit hosts an annual downhill skateboarding event.

Interpretive Themes:

- Unique and diverse plant communities
- Luther Rock geology
- Mount Jefferson (National Natural Landmark)

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent (also manages New River State Park)
- 3 Park Rangers
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 1 Administrative Specialist

Seasonal Staff:

- General Utility Worker
- Park Attendant/Fee Collector

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Trails
 - > 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail





MOUNT MITCHELL State Park



Contact

2388 N.C. 128
Burnsville, NC 28714
828-675-4611
mount.mitchell@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.7528, -82.2737



Acres:
4,498 land acres



2022 Visitation:
332,691



County:
Yancey

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Community building
- Interpretive building
- Meeting room
- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups

Recreation

- Observation structure
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Restaurant

Summary:

Located in Yancey County 30 miles northeast of Asheville, Mount Mitchell State Park was the genesis of North Carolina’s state parks system. At 6,684 feet, the mountain is the highest point east of the Mississippi River, and an observation deck provides breathtaking mountain views on a clear day. Easy trails at the summit explore the Fraser fir forest, while a vast network of challenging trails — including the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail — extend into adjacent wilderness areas and lead to backpacking opportunities within Pisgah National Forest.

Interpretive Themes:

- Mountain Building
- Forest Decline
- Biological Islands in the Sky

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance /Construction Technicians
- 4 Park Rangers

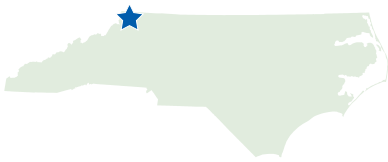
Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Worker
- 2 Office Assistants
- 5 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 2 Park Naturalist/Educators
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector
- 8 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Fee Collectors
- 1 Refreshment Stand/Bathhouse Manager





NEW RIVER State Park



Contact

358 New River State Park Road
 Laurel Springs, NC 28644
 336-982-2587
 new.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.4676, -81.3403



Acreage:
3,432 land acres



2022 Visitation:
365,702



Counties:
Alleghany
Ashe

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Community building
- Meeting room
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – electric and water hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – paddle to
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers paddle trails
 - > Accessible trail
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Ashe and Alleghany counties 35 miles northeast of Boone, New River State Park covers seven accesses along this National Wild and Scenic River that flows north through three states. All accesses allow for launching kayaks and inner tubes to paddle or float along the shallow, gentle river. Paddle-in only campgrounds provide a remote experience. The hellbender — the largest salamander in the U.S. — and 14 species of rare and threatened plant species inhabit the New River valley.

Interpretive Themes:

- The River’s Geologic History
- The River Ecology
- Cultural History
- Water Recreation, Safety, and Ethics

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent (*also manages Mount Jefferson State Natural Area*)
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 4 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 5 Park Rangers
- 1 Processing Assistant

Seasonal Staff:

- 3 General Utility Workers
- 1 Natural Resource Technician
- 2 Office Assistants
- 9 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 2 Park Technician/Fee Collectors





OCCONEECHEE MOUNTAIN State Natural Area



Contact

625 Virginia Cates Road,
Hillsborough, NC 27278
(984) 250-1370
eno.river@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.0608, -79.1169



Acreage:
229 land acres



2022 Visitation:
172,716



Counties:
Orange

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Toilet buildings

Recreation

- Fishing ponds
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Orange County 15 miles northwest of downtown Durham, Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area offers a quick escape into nature with trails winding through forests of mountain laurel and rhododendron. Two quiet fishing ponds complement the nearby Eno River, while the summit overlook affords a great sunset view. The rare brown elfin butterfly has called the mountain home since the Ice Age.

Interpretive Themes:

- Occoneechee Mountain and quarry geology
- Mountain laurel, chestnut oak, and tree identification
- Rare species such as the brown elfin butterfly

Permanent Staff:

**See Eno River State Park*

Seasonal Staff:

**See Eno River State Park*





PETTIGREW State Park



Contact

2252 Lake Shore Road
 Creswell, NC 27928
 252-797-4475
 pettigrew@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.7889, -76.4038



Acreage:
 5,185 land acres



2022 Visitation:
 42,799



Counties:
 Tyrrell
 Washington

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Information station
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Park office
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – walk in

Recreation

- Boat dock
- Boat ramp
- Fishing pier
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bicycle trails
 - › Accessible trail

Summary:

Located in Washington and Tyrrell counties 75 miles northeast of Greenville, Pettigrew State Park showcases the rich habitat of Lake Phelps and the Scuppernong River, home to wintering tundra swans and cypress trees with cavernous archways. It also embodies a rich history, from dugout canoes thousands of years old that have been dredged up from the lake, as well as the nearby Somerset Place, a State Historic Site that preserves a vast plantation worked by hundreds of enslaved Black Americans.

Interpretive Themes:

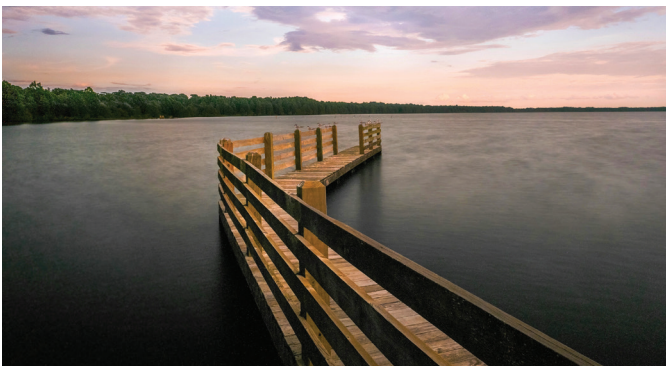
- Native Americans
- Phelps Lake
- Old-Growth Trees
- Astronomy

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors





PILOT MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact

1721 Pilot Knob Park Road
 Pinnacle, NC 27043
 336-444-5100
 pilot.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.3408, -80.461



Acreage:
3,918 land acres



2022 Visitation:
1,053,869



Counties:
Surry
Yadkin

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Historic house
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet building
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – drive to

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bridle and paddle trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail

Summary:

Located in Surry and Yadkin counties 20 miles northwest of Winston-Salem, Pilot Mountain State Park centers around the iconic geologic knob that serves as a beacon, inviting outdoor enthusiasts to a vast array of activities. The park offers the gamut, from hiking and horseback riding to rock climbing and camping, with accesses on both the rugged terrain of the monadnock and the Yadkin River. The Mountains-to-Sea State Trail also traverses both park sections.

Interpretive Themes:

- The Geologic Formation of the Sauratown Mountain Range
- Yadkin River Basin

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 3 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 2 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 3 Office Assistants
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector





Acreage:
1,400 land acres



2022 Visitation:
0



Counties:
Buncombe
Haywood

Visitor Facilities

Bob's Creek State Natural Area is currently not open to the public. The Division is working on adding facilities for passive recreation such as hiking and wildlife viewing, and trails including connections to the planned Wilderness Gateway State Trail.

PISGAH VIEW State Park



Contact

1010 State Park Road
Carolina Beach, NC 28428
(910) 458-8206
carolina.beach@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.0472, -77.9066

Summary:

Located in Buncombe County 18 miles southwest of downtown Asheville, Pisgah View State Park rests in the shade of Mount Pisgah, one of the many beautiful sights of the Blue Ridge seen from the Blue Ridge Parkway. Small spring-fed waterfalls nourish the rich mountain coves that brim with spring wildflowers. Mammals, migratory birds, and amphibians all find a home here.

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent



RAVEN ROCK State Park



Contact

3009 Raven Rock Road
Lillington, NC 27546
910-893-4888
raven.rock@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.4597, -78.9127



Acreage:
4,899 land acres



2022 Visitation:
343,851



County:
Harnett

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – full hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Group camping – walk in
- Primitive campsites – paddle in
- Primitive campsites – walk in

Recreation

- Canoe launch point
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bridle and paddle trails

Misc.

- Concession stand

Summary:

Located in Harnett County 40 miles southwest of Raleigh, Raven Rock State Park boasts the namesake 150-foot crystalline structure that overlooks the Cape Fear River. The trails along the bluffs that lead to the rock are dotted with beautiful wildflowers, including mountain laurel. Alternate hikes towards the river reward visitors with landmarks like Lanier Falls Rapids, Fish Traps Rapids, and the remains of the Northington Lock and Dam. Other accesses offer bridle trails, bike trails, and a campground with RV camping and camper cabins.

Interpretive Themes:

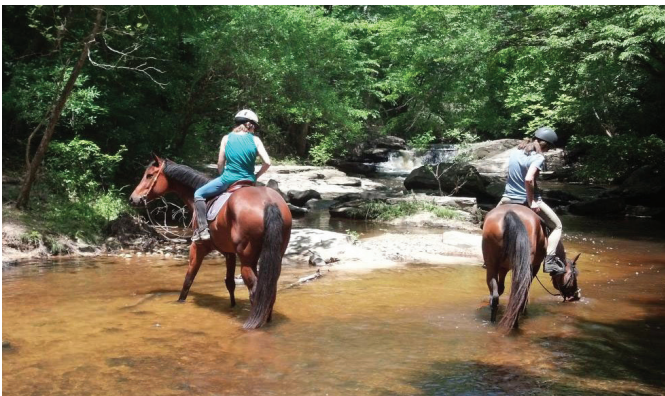
- Geology of Raven Rock
- The Ecology of the Fall Zone
- Natural and Cultural History of the Cape Fear River

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 4 Maintenance Mechanics
- 3 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 2 Office Assistants
- 1 Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- 1 Park Intern
- 5 Park Technician/Fee Collectors





SINGLETERY LAKE State Park



Contact
 6707 N.C. 53 E.
 Kelly, NC 28448
 910-669-2928
singletary.lake@ncparks.gov
GPS: 34.5831, -78.4496



Acreage:
747 land acres



2022 Visitation:
25,360



County:
Bladen

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Environmental education center
- Dining hall
- Interpretive building
- Park office
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings

Camping

- Group cabins
- Group camping – drive to

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Pier
- Play area with equipment
- Trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Dining hall

Summary:

Located in Bladen County 50 miles northwest of Wilmington, Singletary Lake State Park was developed as a group camp but has expanded public access for hiking, fishing, and paddling. The trademark camps provide a unique experience for organized groups to united in work and play in the midst of the distinct Carolina bay environment, complete with dormitory-style cabins, a mess hall, and a 500-foot pier for swimming. The park office also manages limited access to nearby White Lake and Bay Tree Lake.

Interpretive Themes:

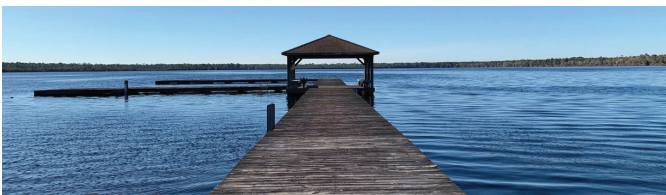
- Origin of Carolina Bays
- Carolina Bay Ecology

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 2 Maintenance Mechanics
- 1 Park Ranger

Seasonal Staff:

- 1 General Utility Worker





SOUTH MOUNTAINS State Park



Contact

3001 South Mountain Park Ave.
 Connelly Springs, NC 28612
 828-433-4772
 carolina.beach@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.5963, -81.6000



Acreage:
21,341 land acres



2022 Visitation:
420,132



County:
Burke

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Information station
- Interpretive building
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Restroom
- Showerhouse
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – equestrian
- Campsites – electric hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Fishing pier
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle and bridle trails

Summary:

Located in Burke County 55 miles east of Asheville, South Mountains State Park is situated at the crossroads of the Appalachian Mountains and the Foothills to provide the ultimate backcountry experience. The park boasts elevations up to 3,000 feet, an 80-foot waterfall, and nearly 50 miles of trail for hikers, horseback riders, and mountain bikers. Water recreation is offered via the Jacob Fork River, which hosts designated trout waters, or to the far west at the separate Clear Creek access that features the namesake lake.

Interpretive Themes:

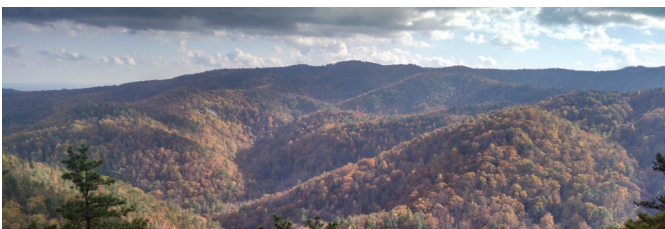
- Jacob's Fork Watershed Ecology

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 3 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 8 Park Rangers

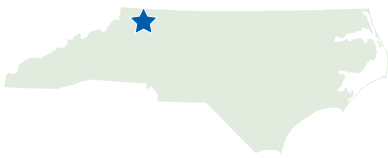
Seasonal Staff:

- 9 General Utility Workers
- 2 Office Assistants
- 2 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 1 Park Technician/Fee Collector





STONE MOUNTAIN State Park



Contact

3042 Frank Parkway
Roaring Gap, NC 28668
336-957-8185
stone.mountain@ncparks.gov
GPS: 36.3873, -81.0273



Acres:
13,605 land acres



2022 Visitation:
409,478



Counties:
Alleghany
Wilkes

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Historic area
- Historic building
- Information station
- Meeting room
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – electric and water hookups
- Campsites – no hookups
- Dump station
- Group camping – drive to
- Primitive campsites – hike in

Recreation

- Fishing pier
- Horseshoe pit
- Picnic area
- Trails
 - › Kids TRACK trail
 - › Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - › Offers bridle trails

Summary:

Located in Alleghany and Wilkes counties 60 miles northwest of Winston-Salem, Stone Mountain State Park is home to the 600-foot granite dome that is a designated National Natural Landmark and the historic Hutchinson Homestead, a restored mid-19th-century farm situated at the mountain base. The park offers nearly all types of outdoor activity to experience a high country landscape adorned with beautiful waterfalls, winding creeks, and bountiful trout streams. A portion of the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail runs through the park near the backcountry campsites.

Interpretive Themes:

- Geology of Stone Mountain

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 2 Administrative Specialists
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Supervisor
- 3 Maintenance/Construction Technicians
- 1 Parks District Interpretation and Education Specialist
- 5 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 6 General Utility Workers
- 2 Office Assistants
- 6 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors



WEYMOUTH WOODS

Sandhills Nature Preserve



Contact

1024 Fort Bragg Road
 Southern Pines, NC 28387
 910-692-2167
 weymouth.woods@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.1470, -79.3716



Acreage:
919 land acres



2022 Visitation:
126,711



County:
Moore

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Discovery classroom
- Exhibit hall
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Recreation

- Picnic area
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking
 - > Kids TRACK Trail

Summary:

Located in Moore County 35 miles northwest of Fayetteville, Weymouth Woods Sandhills Nature Preserve allows visitors to experience the longleaf pine forests that once covered millions of acres in the southeastern United States. The lanky pines – some of the hundreds of years old — tower over a network of trails that traverse expanses of wiregrass. Rare and intriguing species, including the red-cockaded woodpecker, the fox squirrel, the Sandhills pyxie-moss, the pine snake, and the insectivorous purple pitcher plant, characterize the park’s extraordinary plant and wildlife.

Interpretive Themes

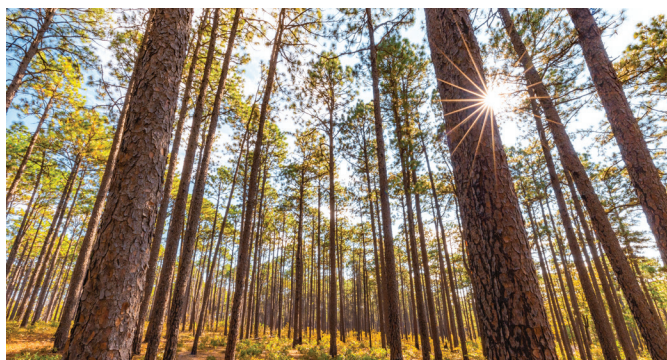
- Longleaf pine and wiregrass
- Benefits of prescribed fire
- Naval stores industry
- Red-cockaded woodpecker and birdwatching

Permanent Staff

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 1 Maintenance/Construction Technician
- 2 Park Rangers

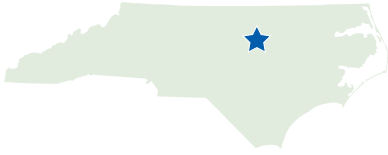
Seasonal Staff

- 2 General Utility Workers
- Park Attendant/Fee Collector
- Park Naturalist/Educator





WILLIAM B. UMSTEAD State Park



Contact

8801 Glenwood Avenue
Raleigh, NC 27617
984-867-8240
william.umstead@ncparks.gov
GPS: 35.8905, -78.7502



Acreage:
5,588 land acres



2022 Visitation:
826,817



County:
Wake

Visitor Facilities

Buildings

- Amphitheater
- Auditorium
- Classroom
- Museum/exhibit hall
- Picnic shelter
- Showerhouse
- Toilet buildings
- Visitor center

Camping

- Campsites – no hookups
- Group cabins
- Group camping – drive to
- Group camping – walk in
- Lodge

Recreation

- Boathouse
- Observation structure
- Picnic area
- Play area
- Trails
 - > Over 5 miles of hiking trails
 - > Offers bicycle and bridle trails
 - > Kids TRACK trail

Misc.

- Dining hall

Summary:

Located in Wake County 10 miles northwest of downtown Raleigh, William B. Umstead State Park is a cherished retreat from bustling urban life. The park features an extensive network of hiking and multiuse trails, as well as three manmade lakes and their tributaries that are perfect for fishing. Both park entrances offer picnic shelters, and Crabtree Creek offers camping areas. Group camps and the historic Maple Hill Lodge let visitors experience a rustic overnight experience without typical modern camping amenities.

Interpretive Themes:

- Reclamation, Regeneration and Recovery
- Successional Processes and Second Growth Forests
- Land Stewardship

Permanent Staff:

- 1 Park Superintendent
- 1 Administrative Specialist
- 4 Maintenance Mechanics
- 6 Park Rangers

Seasonal Staff:

- 4 General Utility Workers
- 1 Office Assistant
- 8 Park Attendant/Fee Collectors
- 3 Park Interns
- 3 Park Technician/Fee Collectors



B Appendix B: Resource Theme Definitions

Archaeological Resources

The resource themes used in this study are general statements of the various kinds of past human activity that are represented by sites or features within the state parks System. These sites and features can be organized into three thematic categories—prehistoric archaeological resources, historic archaeological resources, standing structures and other aboveground features.

Prehistoric Archaeological Themes

For purposes of this planning document, the term prehistory refers to the period of time beginning with the initial entry of Native Americans into what is now North Carolina (sometime prior to ca. 10,000 years ago) until ca. 1670 A.D., by which time European settlement of the North Carolina coast was well underway. A prehistoric archaeological site is therefore defined as any location of prehistoric human activity. As such, a site may be identified by one or more artifacts or features made, modified, or used by prehistoric people. These sites can be divided into a series of generalized site types that reflect differing forms of human activity, which can be identified by specific artifact patterns and features. These site types or themes (for consistency with the state parks planning process) are defined as follows:

- › **Village** – Sites that possess the remains of domestic, ceremonial, subsistence and economic activities, and shelters indicative of year-round habitation.
- › **Campsite/Activity Area** – Sites that consist of the remains of domestic, subsistence and economic activities, and shelters indicative of short-term habitation, or of behavior associated with specific domestic, subsistence, or economic activities. Examples include, but are not limited to, temporary habitation sites, hunting sites, butchery sites, and wild plant gathering sites such as those associated with harvesting nut resources.
- › **Shell Midden** – Sites that consist of the remains of shellfish gathering mixed with the remains of other domestic, subsistence and economic activities, with the mussel shell being the primary component of the remains.
- › **Burial/Cemetery** – Sites that consist of one or more human burials, and the material remains placed with the individual interments. Usually, but not always, prehistoric burials/cemeteries exist as part of some other archaeological site, especially villages and campsites.
- › **Quarry – Soapstone** – A specialized economic site that shows evidence of activity directed toward the extraction of soapstone from the ground for trade or for later fashioning into artifacts such as bowls and ornaments. This site could show evidence of the actual sources of the soapstone mined and/or the artifacts used to extract the soapstone. The habitation area used by the soapstone miners would be classified as a Campsite/Activity Area, or possibly a Village.
- › **Quarry – Other** – A specialized economic site that shows evidence of activity directed toward the extraction of some stone (excluding soapstone), such as quartz, rhyolite, or slate, from the ground for trade or for later fashioning into artifacts such as projectile points, scrapers, and blades. This site could consist of the actual source of the stone mined, the artifacts used to extract the stone, and examples of the stone actually mined. The habitation area used by the stone miners would be classified as a Campsite/Activity Area or possibly a Village.
- › **Shelter/Cave** – A site that consists of a natural rock shelter, rock overhang or cave showing evidence of having been used as a temporary or permanent habitation area. The remains of domestic, economic and subsistence activities would be present.
- › **Rock Art** – A site that consists of drawings, sketches, or engravings executed by prehistoric peoples on stone (such as rock outcrops and the walls of rock shelters and caves).
- › **Trail/Path** – A site used by prehistoric peoples as a route of land travel. A good example is the Occaneechi Trail that can be tentatively identified with certain existing roads in the Eno River State Park. The Occaneechi Trail connected the prehistoric and historic Native American groups of the North Carolina Piedmont with the Native Americans of the Chesapeake, the North Carolina Coast, and the South Carolina Piedmont. It was also a trail used by European traders during early historic times, approximately A.D. 1670 to 1750, to conduct trade with the Native Americans of the interior of the southeastern United States.
- › **Other** – Any site that shows evidence of human activity that cannot be associated with any of the other prehistoric themes.

Historic Archaeological and Standing Structure Themes

For purposes of this planning document the term “historic” refers to the period of time beginning with the European settlement of what is now North Carolina (about the mid-17th century). A historic archaeological site is defined as any location of past human activity associated with historic Native Americans, Afro-Americans, and Euro-Americans and are generally identified by the material remains (artifacts and features) associated with them. These sites can be divided into a series of generalized site types that reflect differing forms of human activity that can be identified by specific artifact patterns and features. The theme definitions used for Standing Structures (which are the result of a specific type of human activity) are the same as those used for historic archaeological resources. The themes in this case reflect different building types. These site types and building types or themes (for consistency with the state parks planning process) are defined below:

- › **Recreation** – Structures and/or sites related to the early development of the state parks system or to earlier private or local parks that preceded the state system, including but not limited to camp structures, sleeping cabins, picnic shelters, lodge halls, bathhouses, and related facilities. Also included would be early Euro-American and Afro-American structures or sites used for leisure or amusement activities such as racetracks, baseball fields, mineral springs, fishing cabins, and any landscaping associated with these features.
- › **Public Works** – Facilities or the archaeological remains of facilities constructed by local, state, and federal governments as part of public works projects, particularly the Civilian Conservation Corps, including but not limited to dams and other engineering facilities and including support facilities such as barracks, mess halls, bath houses, etc. not subsequently used for public recreation and any associated landscape features.
- › **Public/Civic/Religious** – Standing structures and/or sites built for community purposes, including but not limited to churches, lodge/fraternal halls, schools, post offices, and other government facilities, and any associated landscape features.
- › **Commercial** – Structures and/or sites related to the exchange of goods including but not limited to store buildings, wharfs, and any associated landscape features.
- › **Urban – Domestic** – Dwelling houses and/or the archaeological remains of dwelling houses in a town or village setting, including all support structures such as sheds, garages, garden or animal facilities, and any associated landscape features such as fences, plantings, walls, arbors, etc.
- › **Rural – Domestic** – Dwelling structures and sites associated primarily with the agricultural economy, including farm and plantation houses and all their support facilities, including but not limited to barns, granaries, privies, smokehouses, cribs, sheds, springhouses, and similar structures. Also included would be irrigation canals and ditches, trappers cabins and their support structures, and any associated landscape features such as fences, plantings, walls, etc.
- › **Cemetery** – Burial sites with associated aboveground features, including stones and markers, fences and walls, and associated landscaping.
- › **Industrial** – Structures or sites associated with the extraction of resources or the manufacture of materials or goods, including but not limited to mines, furnaces, distilleries, and factories. (Except mill sites — see below)
- › **Mills** – Structures and/or sites associated with the grinding of corn and grains or the cutting of lumber including but not limited to mill buildings, dams, sluices, storage buildings, related support structures, and any associated landscape features.
- › **Transportation** – Roadbeds, bridges, landing docks, canals, lighthouses, and other features or sites related to transportation.
- › **Military** – Forts and fortifications, earthworks, battlefields, barracks, magazines, commissaries, and other features and sites related to defense of territory.
- › **Underwater** – Lost or abandoned vessels or structural parts of these vessels and structures built in the water such as docks, wharfs, dams, bridges, mill sites, lighthouses, and fish traps. Also included are inundated land sites and cultural material that is intentionally or accidentally deposited in the water particularly in areas such as river crossings, landing sites, and city or town waterfronts.
- › **Other** – Any structure or site that shows evidence of human activity that cannot be associated with any of the other historic themes.

Biological Resources

Over 344 natural community types have been identified and described in North Carolina. These have been grouped into 30 biological themes based on similarities in environment and vegetation. Each of the themes is described more fully in the Guide to the Natural Communities Of North Carolina, Fourth Approximation¹⁰.

- › **Spruce-Fir Forests** – Forests dominated by red spruce and Fraser fir occur on the high mountain tops in western North Carolina, generally over 5500 feet in elevation. They provide habitat for large numbers of both endemic Southern Appalachian and disjunct northern species of plants and animals. Like spruce-fir forests elsewhere, the forests in North Carolina have been drastically changed by the balsam woolly adelgid, an introduced insect pest.
- › **Grass and Heath Balds** – Balds are treeless shrub or herb-dominated communities of the high mountains. Grassy balds are open meadows with a diverse mixture of species. Heath balds are dense thickets of tall shrubs, mostly rhododendron, mountain laurel, and other members of the heath family.
- › **Northern Hardwood Forests** – Northern hardwood forests are found on high mountain slopes with a cool climate and high levels of rainfall. They are dominated by combinations of mesophytic hardwoods, such as yellow birch, beech, buckeye, and sugar maple. A good example of northern hardwood forest is found at Mount Jefferson, but the parks system does not include representation of the range of diversity in this broad theme.

¹⁰ Schafale, Michael P. (2012). *Guide to the Natural Communities of North Carolina (Fourth Approximation)*. Raleigh, NC: North Carolina Natural Heritage Program.

- › **Mountain Cove Forests** – Cove forests are relatively stable, uneven-aged climax forests, with trees up to several centuries old, occurring on sheltered, moist, low to moderate elevation sites. They have a dense canopy of moisture loving trees and a high diversity in all vegetation layers.
- › **Piedmont and Coastal Plain Mesic Forests** – Mesic forests occur on sites that are moist but not wet. These sites are among the most favorable environments in these regions for plant growth. They tend to support dense forests of beech, tulip poplar, red oak, and other moisture-loving trees. In the Piedmont and Coastal Plain, mesic sites often contain species that are more common in the mountainous parts of the state or farther north.
- › **Mountain Dry Coniferous Woodlands** – The vast majority of relatively undisturbed land in the Piedmont and Mountain regions is dominated by hardwood forests. While successional pine forests are very common, naturally occurring pine and Carolina hemlock forests are uncommon. They occur at mid to low elevations in specialized sites that are drier than average. They are found primarily in the mountains and in a few mountain-like sites in the Piedmont.
- › **Mountain Oak Forests** – Montane oak forests, which once had chestnut as a codominant, occupy much of the landscape of the Mountain region, covering the dry to intermediate slopes and ridgetops over a broad elevational range. This theme is scarce in the Piedmont.
- › **Piedmont and Coastal Plain Oak Forests** – Oak forests were once the most common natural community type in the Piedmont, occurring over most of the uplands. In the Coastal Plain they were much more limited, occurring primarily in dissected areas near streams. Although still widespread, Piedmont and Coastal Plain oak forests have been substantially reduced from pre-settlement times.
- › **High Elevation Rock Outcrops** – These communities occur on ridgetops, peaks, and upper slopes where soils are thin and discontinuous, vegetation is very patchy, and rock dominates the surface. Even in the most rugged high mountains they represent only a small fraction of the landscape.
- › **Low Elevation Cliffs and Rock Outcrops** – This broad theme contains a wide variety of community types that are too steep or rocky to support a closed tree canopy. Vegetation is generally very patchy, reflecting wide variability in soil depth, rock chemistry, and available moisture.
- › **Coastal Plain Marl Outcrops** – This theme is very rare in North Carolina. Coastal Plain marl outcrops generally occur along stream bluffs or in ravines. Some are true marl while others are coquina or other kinds of limestone. Trees include calcium-loving species such as black walnut, southern sugar maple, and pawpaw, as well as more widespread moisture-loving species such as beech and tuliptree.
- › **Granitic Flatrocks** – Granitic flatrock communities occur on flat to gently sloping exfoliated outcrops of granitic rocks in the Piedmont. The rock outcrop is generally flush with the surrounding soil and has only minor irregularities. Vegetation is sparse and patchy, and includes several species found in no other communities.
- › **Piedmont and Mountain Glades and Barrens** – The communities in this theme are non-forested communities that occur on relatively flat outcrops of unusual, high pH rock types. All have vegetation kept open by the physical structure and chemistry of the rock. These communities have high concentrations of rare plant species.
- › **Maritime Grasslands** – This theme includes the dunes, sandy flats, and dune swales along the coast. These communities are unable to support trees because of heavy salt spray or overwash by salt water during storms.
- › **Maritime Upland Forests** – This theme includes well-developed forests with canopies of live oak, laurel oak, and loblolly pine. It also includes the distinctive scrubby woody growth of stabilized sand dunes and sand flats. Most maritime forests are found on the barrier islands, but a few areas on the mainland share the characteristic species.
- › **Dry Longleaf Pine Communities** – Longleaf pine communities are scattered in most of the Coastal Plain and extend into the Piedmont in the south. They were once the most abundant vegetation type in the Coastal Plain, occupying vast acreages and exhibiting considerable diversity based on moisture, soil, and location.
- › **Coastal Plain Floodplains** – This theme includes the vegetated communities that occur on the floodplains of blackwater and brownwater rivers. Blackwater rivers originate in the Coastal Plain, rather than in the Piedmont or Mountains. They carry little mineral sediment, and the water is generally very acidic and low in nutrients. The forests contain flood-tolerant trees and shrubs, are typically low in diversity, and can cover large areas.
 - Brownwater rivers originate in the Piedmont or Mountains and flow into the Coastal Plain. In contrast to blackwater rivers, they carry heavy loads of mineral sediment, particularly clay and silt. The water is generally near neutral in pH and high in nutrients. Sediment deposition in the floodplain often results in topographic relief such as levees, bars, and sloughs.
- › **Piedmont and Mountain Floodplains** – Floodplains in the Piedmont and mountains tend to be narrow, infrequently inundated, and generally lacking in depositional landforms. The forests contain mixtures of bottomland and moisture-loving species. Small depressions in the floodplain sometimes form pools that provide important amphibian breeding habitats.

- › **Mountain Bogs and Fens** – Montane bogs are among the rarest natural communities in the Southern Appalachians and in North Carolina. Bogs form in poorly drained depressions or on gentle slopes. They vary from being permanently wet to intermittently dry and are generally fed by seepage. Vegetation is generally a mosaic of shrub thickets and herb dominated areas.
- › **Upland Seepages and Spray Cliffs** – The communities in this theme are small wetlands that occur on sloping uplands in the Piedmont and Mountain regions. The soils are generally saturated permanently or for long periods. Spray cliffs are kept wet by waterfalls; the other community types in this theme are fed by seepage.
- › **Piedmont and Mountain Upland Pools and Depressions** – These are shallow depressions that hold water in the wetter parts of the year. They generally dry up by the end of summer but are flooded long enough to contain wetland vegetation, which contrasts with the surrounding uplands. Most occur in the Piedmont.
- › **Coastal Plain Nonalluvial Wetland Forests** – Nonalluvial wetland forests occur on flat, poorly drained areas of the outer Coastal Plain and occasionally in shallow depressions such as Carolina bays. The soils in these sites are saturated in the wetter seasons and may have shallow standing water. Vegetation is dominated by cypress, blackgum, or other wetland hardwoods.
- › **Peatland Pocosins** – Peatlands occur on nearly flat, poorly drained areas of the outer Coastal Plain and in large shallow depressions such as Carolina bays. Peat deposits develop where the soil is saturated for long enough periods that organic matter cannot completely decompose. The peat acts as a sponge, raising water levels in the soil, which is extremely infertile and acidic. Vegetation includes stunted pond pines and low shrubs, often with areas of sphagnum and pitcher plants.
- › **Streamhead Pocosins** – These communities have vegetation similar to peatland pocosins, but the physical setting is very different. They occur in ravines in dissected, sandy Coastal Plain terrain. The soils are mucky, very acidic, and infertile.
- › **Wet Pine Savannas** – The communities in this theme are Coastal Plain mineral soils wetlands that in pre settlement times were frequently burned. With frequent fire, they have an open canopy of longleaf or pond pine over a grassy herb layer. They often contain a high diversity of herbaceous plants, including showy wildflowers and insectivorous plants. Shrubs are short and sparse with frequent fire but become dense if fire is suppressed more than a couple of years.
- › **Coastal Plain Depression Communities** – These occur in various kinds of small basins in Coastal Plain uplands. The basins, which may be limesink depressions, Carolina bays, or swales between recent or older sand dunes, hold standing water for substantial parts of the year. Vegetation is often strongly zoned and varies widely.
- › **Natural Lake Communities** – Natural lakes occur only in the Tidewater and Coastal Plain part of North Carolina. Some lake basins are Carolina bays, while others are depressions in peatlands that may have been created by deep peat burns or other causes. Most of the lakes in North Carolina are very acidic.
- › **Maritime Wetlands** – Maritime wetlands occur in wet sites on barrier islands and near the sounds on the mainland. They are generally sheltered from the most extreme salt spray and from seawater overwash. The soils are saturated for much of the year. This rare theme includes forests and shrub communities.
- › **Freshwater Tidal Wetlands** – Freshwater tidal wetlands occur in sites where flooding occurs in response to lunar or wind tides, but the water has less than 0.5 parts per thousand salt content. They are found on rivers near the coast and along the large sounds.
- › **Estuarine Communities** – Estuarine communities are affected by tidal waters in and along the sounds and drowned river mouths. Salt marshes, brackish marshes, salt flats, and salt shrubs may occur.

Geological Resources

- › **Barrier Islands and Shorelines** – Geomorphic features created by wind and waves at the coast during Holocene times, both on barrier islands and on sections of the mainland coast where barriers are absent. They include beach, foredunes, active and stabilized rear dunes, overwash deposits, interdune ponds and swamps, inlets, sand spits, capes, relict inlets, active flood and ebb tidal deltas.
- › **Estuaries** – Geomorphic features associated with tidally influenced areas in lagoons behind barrier islands and in drowned river mouths. They include regularly and irregularly flooded tidal marshes, estuarine swamps, tidal channels, open water with sand and mud bottom, shell beds, relict flood tidal deltas, and estuarine beaches.
- › **Continental Shelves** – Geomorphic features of offshore areas. They include soft bottom areas and erosional marl outcrops characterized by low scarps.
- › **Relict Coastal Features** – Geomorphic features created by coastal processes before the Holocene, at higher stands of sea level than at present. They include Coastal Plain scarps and terraces, relict beach ridges, and dune systems.
- › **Carolina Bays** – Oriented elliptical depressions that include water-filled, peat-filled, sandy, and clay-based bay interiors, sand rims, and associated aeolian sand deposits.

- › **Fluvial Depositional Features** – Geomorphic features produced by alluvial processes of streams and rivers on floodplains and in river channels, primarily in areas of relatively nonresistant rock. They include mud, sand, and gravel bars, natural levees, point bars; sloughs; ridge and swale systems; oxbows; relict terraces with ridge and swale systems sloughs, etc.; terrace slopes; and Coastal Plain blackwater stream swamps.
- › **Peatlands and Interstream Wetlands** – Areas saturated by nonflowing water for large parts of the year, because of blocked drainage or flat topography without drainage. They include peat domes, other peatlands, upland swamps, and peat deposits in Carolina bays.
- › **Natural Lakes and Ponds** – Natural bodies of fresh water in depressions of various origin. They include lakes in peatlands and Carolina bays, and ponds in naturally blocked drainage systems and sinkholes or dolines, with associated shallow nearshore areas, beaches, and erosional shorelines.
- › **Caves, Sinks, and Springs** – Features produced by solution of rock and other effects of ground water. They include solution caves, speleothems, sinkholes, dolines, natural bridges, and other karst features, and flowing and seeping springs produced by groundwater flow in solution cavities, fractured bedrock, saprolite, and sand.
- › **Dissected Uplands** – Upland areas with well-developed drainage, showing the effects of the common surface geomorphic processes operating on most of the state’s landscape. They include upland ridges, ravines, and slopes along streams, underlain by bedrock, saprolite, or colluvium.
- › **Inselbergs (Monadnocks)** – Isolated erosional remnants that include isolated hills and mountains of unusually resistant rocks and outliers of the Blue Ridge escarpment.
- › **Cliffs** – Steep to vertical or overhanging slopes of exposed rock including cliffs of resistant rock on high peaks and ridges, and cliffs produced by streams and rivers.
- › **Exfoliation Features** – Geomorphic features produced by exfoliation or spalling in hard, generally granite-like rocks. They include flatrocks, dome-shaped mountains and rock faces, and weathering pits, which are most commonly formed on exfoliation surfaces.
- › **Gorges, Rapids, and Waterfalls** – Features produced by stream erosion in high-to moderate-relief terrain or resistant rock. They include steep-walled gorges, waterfalls, waterfall pools, rapids over bedrock, rapids over boulder deposits, and potholes.
- › **Mass Wasting Features** – Landforms illustrating features produced by mass wasting phenomena. They include debris avalanches, tracks, and deposits; earth flows; slumps; talus slopes; and relict periglacial features such as boulder fields and nivation cirques.
- › **Faults, Joints, and Related Features** – Areas illustrating results of faulting and jointing, either directly or indirectly. They include visible high-angle and thrust faults, sheared and cataclastic rocks, large fault-produced features such as windows, fault zones, horsts, and grabens, fissure caves, joint or fault-controlled drainage, and other landforms showing effects of faults or joints.
- › **Folds and Related Features** – Areas illustrating results of folding, either directly or indirectly. They include folds visible in outcrops and series of outcrops, and landforms produced by differential erosion in folded rocks.
- › **Intrusions** – Areas illustrating intrusive igneous bodies. They include batholiths, dikes, sills, ring dikes, and other kinds of plutons, of granitic rocks, syenite, diorite, diabase, gabbro, and ultramafic rocks.
- › **Volcanic Features** – Areas illustrating features produced by extrusive igneous activity. They include lava flows, breccias, tuffs, lahars, pillow lavas, and other features visible in outcrops or expressed in landforms.
- › **Metamorphic Features** – Areas illustrating characteristic minerals, textures, and structures produced by metamorphic processes. They include rocks of different initial composition, metamorphosed to different degrees.
- › **Sedimentary Features** – Areas illustrating sedimentary stratigraphy, rock types, sedimentary structures, and depositional environments. They include sandstone; dolomite; mudstone; graywacke; conglomerate; arkose; lake shale; Coastal Plain sand and shale; marl; coquina; representative strata of different ages or formations of the Coastal Plain, Triassic basins, and Carolina Slate Belt; and windows in the Blue Ridge.
- › **Fossils** – They include representatives of the range of fossil types — animal and plant — marine and terrestrial, different types of preservation, and different ages.
- › **Unusual Rock Types** – Outcrops of rock types rare in North Carolina or in the region. They include ultramafic rocks, dolomite, marble, limestone, orbicular diorite, and notable occurrences of unusual minerals.

Glossary Of Geologic Terms

- **Aeolian** – Deposited or reworked by wind.
- **Batholith** – A large body of intrusive rock frequently covering many square miles of area and extending to great depth.
- **Breccia (volcanic)** – A rock consisting of broken rock fragments produced by volcanic eruptions, with rock fragments greater than 32 millimeters in size.
- **Dike** – A narrow vertical body of intrusive rock, appearing in outcrop as a narrow line.
- **Doline** – A depression on the land surface caused by collapse of surficial sediments into a void created by solution of limestone underground.
- **Drowned river mouth** – Lower reach of a river valley, now occupied by tidal estuarine waters. These valleys were formed when sea level was lower and were inundated when sea level rose.
- **Graben** – A block of rock lowered relative to adjacent areas by vertical fault movement.
- **Holocene** – The most recent period of geologic time, extending from the end of the last ice age (10,000 years ago) to the present.
- **Horst** – A block of rock uplifted relative to adjacent areas by vertical fault movement.
- **Lahar** – A deposit produced by landslides of volcanic ash on the flank of a volcano.
- **Marl** – A sedimentary rock consisting of clay with abundant calcium carbonate material in the form of shells or shell fragments. The term is also frequently used in North Carolina to refer to rocks made up largely of shells.
- **Mass wasting** – A series of geomorphic processes involving movement of large masses of earth material by gravity, either slowly or quickly.
- **Nivation cirque** – A rounded basin-like landform produced by periglacial processes around permanent snowfields.
- **Periglacial** – A series of geomorphic processes resulting from repeated freezing and thawing under cold climate, as occurred during the ice age.
- **Pluton** – General term for bodies of intrusive igneous rock.
- **Ring dike** – A narrow, ring-shaped body of intrusive rock, as in the syenite ring dike in Cabarrus County.
- **Sand spit** – A small point of land or narrow shoal projecting from the shore.
- **Saprolite** – A soft, earthy, clay-rich, thoroughly decomposed rock formed in place by weathering.
- **Scarp (Coastal Plain)** – A relatively steeply sloping area on the Coastal Plain or Continental Shelf, believed to have been formed by coastal processes in the past.
- **Sill** – A thin, horizontal body of intrusive rock. Unlike a dike, it may cover a large area in outcrop.
- **Slough** – An elongate depression in a floodplain that occurs at a former location of a river channel.
- **Spalling** – Breaking in layers parallel to the surface, as sometimes occurs in granite and related rocks.
- **Speleothem** – A cave formation, such as a stalactite or stalagmite.
- **Tuff** – A volcanic rock consisting of broken rock fragments produced by volcanic eruptions, with fragments generally less than 4 millimeters in size.

Glossary Of Scenic Resource Terms

- **Scenic Vistas** – The view from a natural or manmade resource.
- **Reservoirs/Lakes** – The view of a body of flat water.
- **Waterfalls** – The view of a steep descent of water from a height.
- **Rivers** – The view of a large natural stream of water emptying into an ocean, lake, or other body of water, and usually fed along its course by converging tributaries.
- **Whitewater Streams** – The view of a cascading body of running water.
- **Bays and Estuaries** – The view of either a coastal flat body of water enclosed by land but having an outlet to the ocean or the lower portion of a river where its current is met and influenced by the tides.
- **Seashores** – The view of a tract of land adjacent to the ocean.
- **Forests** – The view of a dense growth of trees, together with other plants, covering a large area.
- **Meadows And Grasslands** – The view of a tract of grass covered land.
- **Swamps** – The view of a lowland region saturated with water and primarily vegetated with trees.
- **Pocosins** – The view of a shallow swampy depression vegetated chiefly with shrubs.
- **Marshes** – The view of a low lying wetland vegetated primarily with grasses.
- **Gorges** – The view of a deep, narrow passage with precipitous rocky sides often enclosed between mountains.
- **Rock Outcroppings** – The view of an expansive natural stone formation occurring either vertically or horizontally.
- **Islands** – The view of a body of land surrounded on all sides by salt or fresh water.
- **Caves and Cliffs** – The view of geologic formations of either a hollow beneath the earth's surface or of a vertical rock wall.
- **Scenic Highways** – The view from a highway or road of visually diverse and natural or manmade