



NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
www.ncparks.gov

December 2017



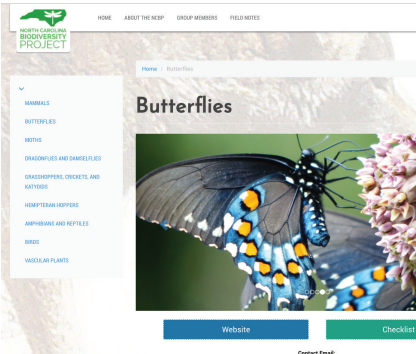
Friends of Lake James State Park presenting gifts to supporters



Eno River State Park



Pettigrew State Park



N.C. Biodiversity website

Lake James State Park Celebrates 30 Years

Thirty years ago, leaders in McDowell and Burke counties joined together to lobby their legislators for a state park on Lake James—and it worked. Dedicated in 1987, the park consisted of the Catawba River Area that features Fox Den Loop, walk-in tent camping sites and Sandy Cliff Overlook. Today, the park also includes the larger Paddy’s Creek area including Long Arm Peninsula, offering boat-in and drive-in camping, a large day-use area, beach and bathhouse, and several trails.

On Oct. 5, the community came together to celebrate three decades of the beloved park. Local, state and federal government officials attended a ceremony alongside volunteers, staff, supporters, and business leaders. Park Superintendent Nora Coffey hosted tours of both the Catawba and Paddy’s Creek sections of the property. Guests gathered at Paddy’s Creek picnic area for a barbeque lunch and a program hosted by Friends of Lake James State Park.

The park also has a lot to look forward to in the coming years thanks to the CONNECT NC Bond funds. The much-anticipated Cove Bridge will connect Paddy’s Creek and Long Arm Peninsula and serve as a centerpiece for the Fonta Flora State Trail, which loops through the park and is 16 miles long thus far. A new 6,500 square foot visitor center will serve as the main park office and will host an exhibit hall, classroom, restrooms, retail space, and an outdoor amphitheater. A new parking area will support the visitors center and access to trails.

Parks and Recreation Authority Approves \$11 Million for New Land, Capital Improvements

North Carolina’s Parks and Recreation Authority approved over \$11 million in Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) monies for land acquisition and capital improvement projects for the next fiscal year at their fall meeting. The Nov. 17 meeting was held at Jordan Lake State Recreation Area.

Land acquisition projects approved for funding include new lands at Eno River, Grandfather Mountain, Hanging Rock, Lake James, Morrow Mountain, Elk Knob, Stone Mountain, South Mountains, Jockey’s Ridge, and Pettigrew state parks and Warwick Mill Bay, Salmon Creek, and Bushy Lake state natural areas.

Funds approved for capital improvement projects will be used for design of a pedestrian bridge at Eno River State Park, system-wide exhibit and trail maintenance, major maintenance projects, demolition needs and to support Connect NC Bond projects.

N.C. Biodiversity Website Blooms

Beginning in the 1990s, Harry LeGrand, then with the state’s Natural Heritage Program, and Tom Howard of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation developed a Butterflies of North Carolina database. It started with records based on Natural Heritage Program surveys and was supplemented with data collected in North Carolina State Parks staff through the Natural Resources Inventory Database (NRID).

Hosted by N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, the database grew to include birds of North Carolina, dragonflies and damselflies, mammals, moths, hoppers, and vascular plants. There are several databases in development including freshwater, coastal, and marine fishes, freshwater mussels, terrestrial and aquatic snails, and crayfishes.

The database is a place for observers to upload photos with common name, county, date, observer, number, and comments (usually including a location). This allows database users to see the geographic distribution of species found across the state and determine their rarity. The purpose of the site is to ultimately delineate the geographic range of each species across the state. The N.C. Biodiversity Website can be accessed at www.nc-biodiversity.com.



NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Roy Cooper
Governor

Susi H. Hamilton
Secretary, DNCR

Heavy Rains Cause Land Slide at Chimney Rock

On Oct. 23, a landslide caused by heavy rains collapsed a portion of the parking lot at the base of the Chimney Rock, rounding out a chaotic year for the state park. The park was just beginning to recover from the extensive Party Rock Fire in 2016. It also faced multiple challenges this year, including extensive construction for new stairs and expanded viewing platforms, construction of the new Skyline Trail that reaches from Exclamation Point to Hickory Nut Falls, and refurbishment of the attraction’s elevator including replacing its motor via helicopter.

Fortunately, on the day of the landslide, the attraction portion of the park was closed due to heavy rains and wind, and the parking lot where the landslide occurred was clear of visitors. The landslide came just before peak leaf season for the gorge, putting a damper on enjoyment of the season from the attraction portion of the park. The parking area has been stabilized, but parking will remain limited until final repairs are complete.



Landslide damage to Chimney Rock parking lot

Artists Transform Felled Red Oak at Umstead State Park

In our parks, we sometimes see trees that have fallen due to age, wind, rain, or disease. It is rather sad to see a large tree that was clearly very old meet the end of its life unceremoniously on the forest floor. When Umstead State Park Ranger Jessica Phillips found a large Red Oak down along the Graylyn multiuse trail, she was inspired to see something more come of this beautiful tree. Working with fellow rangers and supporters of the park, a special project began to come together.

Along with the support of Friends of William B. Umstead State Park, the Umstead Coalition, and private donations, the park commissioned chainsaw carvers Jerry Reid and Randy Boni from Smoky Mountain Art in Gatlinburg, Tenn. to have the red oak turned into a lasting work of art. The pair spent a week in November using chainsaws to shape the tree into a wildlife-themed sculpture. Visitors will be able to enjoy the sculpture on their hikes, rides, and runs along the Graylyn Multiuse Trail for years to come.



Jerry Reid carves a rabbit hole at Umstead State Park



New in Your Parks

Bike trails at Raven Rock

Raven Rock State Park in Harnett County opened a new mountain bike trail in September. The Mountain Laurel Loop Trail is 6.6 miles of natural surface trails through a hardwood and pine forest and is open to both bikers and hikers. The new trail head is located at 750 Moccasin Branch Road in Lillington. The trail was designed with a greater width to accommodate hand cycles, and employs sustainable alignment to avoid erosion. It was constructed by YRU Contracting of Cambridge, Idaho with the help of park staff and volunteers. The \$151,362 project was funded by a Recreational Trail Program grant.

Cabins at Cliffs of the Neuse

Cliffs of the Neuse State Park welcomed visitors to three new cabins in its family campground this fall. Modeled after successful cabin campsites that opened at Carolina Beach State Park earlier this year, the new sites offer two-room cabins with heat and air conditioning inside and a picnic area outside. Conestoga Cabins manufactured the cabins.



Mountain Laurel Loop Trail at Raven Rock State Park

Funnel Cakes, Tilt-a-Whirl, and ... State Parks?

North Carolina State Parks had a great exhibit at the State Fair this year with a prime location near the WRAL tent. Staff greeted visitors with a gathering area around a “campfire” with tree stump stools, an interactive virtual bike tour of Lake James State Park mountain bike trails, and messy activities for kids. State Parks shared the exhibit space with North Carolina Historic Sites, allowing visitors to learn more about a variety of opportunities offered by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources across the state.



New cabin campsite at Cliffs of the Neuse State Park


Campfire Safety: From Boring Beetles to Rogue Pine Needles

Our state parks have special rules for campfires to protect our visitors, wildlife, and natural resources. Camp fires must be kept in designated areas and tended at all times. Wildfires can cause millions of dollars of damage, injury, and even death. Part of being a good steward is practicing fire safety!



Parks across the country are working to reduce the spread of the Emerald Ashe Borer beetle and other destructive insects. These insects can’t move far on their own, but they can travel hundreds of miles in a day in a bundle of firewood. Visitors can avoid introducing harmful insects into their parks by buying local firewood at or near their destination. Many of our parks sell firewood on site. Visitors should buy only what they need for their visit and burn all their firewood by the end of their stay.



State Parks exhibit at the N.C. State Fair



We're Social!



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