The STEWARD DIGEST

NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
www.ncparks.gov

April 2019

Bobs Creek State Natural Area. Photo courtesy of Foothills Conservancy of N.C.

State Takes Next Step To Protect Bob's Creek

The Division of Parks and Recreation in partnership with Foothills Conservancy of North Carolina completed the first land purchase for Bob's Creek State Natural Area on January 23. Following public input, planning and construction, the area in southeastern McDowell County will open for public hiking and other low-impact recreation uses. The division will own and manage the land, which contains a large expanse of forested lands dominated by acidic cove, oak-hickory and chestnut oak forests, and several rare plant species.

North Carolina's Clean Water Management Trust Fund (CWMTF) granted $2.4 million to help purchase the property due to the valuable headwaters protection it provides. The division also secured $1 million from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for the initial acquisition.

The acquisition was also supported through Open Space Institute's Resilient Landscapes Initiative, which seeks to build capacity of land trusts working to respond to climate change. OSI granted $240,348 to the acquisition in support of the property's climate resiliency and biodiversity. Conservation Trust for North Carolina also contributed $4,000 from its Mountain Revolving Loan Fund to support the initial acquisition.

Salmon Creek State Natural Area

Partners Celebrate Salmon Creek With Dedication, Transfer of Artifacts

Leaders from several partnering organizations joined the Coastal Land Trust and the Division of Parks and Recreation on March 15 to celebrate the establishment of the new Salmon Creek State Natural Area. Originally slated for development as a waterfront resort, Salmon Creek property was conserved thanks to a generous loan secured by the Coastal Land Trust.

The Division of Parks and Recreation will manage the site, preserving its significant natural, historical, archaeological, and cultural resources. The property hosts a variety of significant archaeological resources and is the subject of archaeological research by The First Colony Foundation. Native Algonkian artifacts have been found on the site, as well as English artifacts that date back to the sixteenth century.

Secretary of Natural and Cultural Resources Susi Hamilton spoke at the event, where she expressed her enthusiasm to begin planning for the property in Bertie County, a beautiful part of the state previously underserved by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources.

Visitor center progress at Pilot Mountain State Park

Connect N.C. Bond Projects Bloom in State Parks

In 2016, North Carolina voters approved the Connect N.C. Bond package including $75 million for our state parks system. Last year, new facilities and trails were completed at Fort Fisher, Cliffs of the Neuse, and Jordan Lake's Poplar Point Campground, to name a few. This year, some exciting projects have broken ground across the state:

- **Raven Rock State Park:** Campground
- **Pilot Mountain State Park:** Visitor Center
- **Goose Creek State Park:** Campground

Stay tuned to www.ncparks.gov for updates on these and other state park improvements.

Construction of the Raven Rock campground

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS
Naturally Wonderful

NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Roy Cooper
Governor

Susi H. Hamilton
Secretary, DNCR

New Superintendents Take Root Across The State

Stone Mountain: Jeff Jones

Jeff Jones was been named superintendent of Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes and Allegheny counties. Jones succeeds Bill Meyer, who recently retired after 31 years of service to the state parks system.

A native of Laurel Springs, Jeff made many visits to Stone Mountain during his childhood. He started work with the division as a seasonal employee at New River State Park. He brings17 years of experience as a park ranger at Merchants Millpond and Stone Mountain state parks.

Stone Mountain State Park was established in 1969 and now encompasses 14,210 acres. It recorded 419,202 visitors in 2018. Stone Mountain is also a National Natural Landmark.

Stone Mountain State Park Superintendent Jeff Jones

Carvers Creek: Colleen Bowers

Colleen Bowers has been named superintendent of Carvers Creek State Park in Cumberland County. She succeeds Jane Connelly, who recently retired after 20 years of service to the division.

A native of Lexington, N.C., Colleen graduated from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro. She joined the division in 2009 as a seasonal employee in environmental education at Haw River State Park. The next year, Colleen joined Carvers Creek State Park as a ranger and has served there ever since, including preparing the park for its grand opening. Her work in prescribed fire for environmental management at Carvers Creek earned an award from the division for her burn team.

Carvers Creek State Park opened to the public in 2013 and encompasses 4,347 acres. Centered on Long Valley Farm, the historic retreat of a Rockefeller family member, the park offers tours of historic buildings, hiking, and picnicking and fishing in the historic millpond, which is currently under repair following damage in Hurricane name.

Carvers Creek State Park Superintendent Colleen Bowers

UNC-TV Highlights State Parks Challenges From Poaching To Wildfire

UNC-TV recently aired three short films about important and timely issues in our state parks. The films were directed and produced by students of the UNC School of Media & Journalism. The first is about South Mountains State Park's recovery from a major 2016 wildfire, focusing on how wildfire affects the natural resources. The second dives in to Wake Forest University's research on using drones for wildlife management in parks. Finally, the third film covers ginseng poaching in the mountain region parks.

Each year, our division works with students in the UNC-Chapel Hill's environmental journalism course to provide ideas for production in our state parks. This serves a dual purpose: a complex learning experience for students, and free marketing and engagement for our state parks!

Enjoy:

Wildfire Recovery
https://video.unctv.org/video/fire-brings-new-life-to-south-mountains-state-park-ygkmbo/

Drones for Research
https://video.unctv.org/video/pilot-mountain-has-a-deer-problem-drones-can-help-ql5iip/

Ginseng Poaching
http://science.unctv.org/content/video/ginseng

UNC-TV Wildfire Recovery video

UNC-TV Drones for Research video

Cliffside Safety

Each year, the Division of Parks and Recreation works to improve communication about important safety issues for park visitors. In response to visitors observing behavior including rock throwing, roughhousing near cliffs and persons leaping over gaps, this year's focus is "cliffside safety." We will continue to promote and encourage better safety patterns around waterfalls, which we launched last year with a new webpage (ncparks.gov/waterfall-safety.) These safety campaigns are designed to be engaging, easily sharable on social media and to be responsive to web searches.

NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS
Naturally Wonderful

We're Social!

The Steward is a Newsletter of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. To learn how to subscribe and have news of the North Carolina State Parks sent directly to your email inbox, scan the QR code with a smartphone app, or visit www.ncparks.gov/newsroom.