



NC DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
www.ncparks.gov

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DNCR Deputy Secretary, Staci T. Meyer, DPR Director, Dwayne Patterson and members of CMC

MST Now Continuous from Clingmans Dome to Stone Mountain

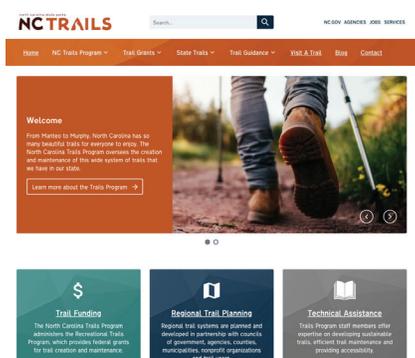
Leadership for national and state parks joined volunteers, local officials, and trail enthusiasts on Oct. 3 to celebrate the completion of an eight-mile connection on the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail (MST). The connection completes a 300 mile stretch of the trail connecting Clingman's Dome in Great Smoky Mountains National Park in Swain County to Stone Mountain State Park in Wilkes County. The MST became a state trail in 2000 and is the state's flagship trail.

Members of the Carolina Mountain Club contributed countless volunteer hours to complete the linchpin section near the Blue Ridge Parkway in Swain County. Construction of this portion of the MST included negotiating difficult terrain east of the Great Smoky Mountains, working around tunneled sections of the Blue Ridge Parkway, and traversing Qualla Boundary lands of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee.

New Trails Website Spotlights Our Pathways

The division of parks and recreation recently launched a new website to serve as a hub for the N.C. Trails Program. It offers quick and easy access to information on both state trails and trails within the state parks. The site also provides information for grant applicants seeking funding from the trails program.

The website, trails.nc.gov, will be updated regularly with trail development news, project updates, volunteer and funding opportunities and events. Visitors to the website can plan activities, learn about trail segment designation and explore expert tips on managing existing trail segments.



New trails website, www.trails.nc.gov

Hurricane Florence Causes Extensive Damage to Parks

The state parks system sustained an estimated \$2.1 million in damages due to Hurricane Florence. Damage due to Tropical Storm Matthew has not been calculated. Fort Macon, Lumber River, Morrow Mountain, Hammocks Beach and Goose Creek sustained the most extensive damage. The park system also suffered a \$532,000 loss of revenue during and after the storm. Park rangers, maintenance mechanics and other staff volunteered across the state to help clean up debris, provide security, and support rescue operations. FEMA grants and state support are being sought to complete clean-up and repairs.



Damage at Morrow Mountain State Park from Hurricane Florence

New Master Plan Shapes Exciting Future for Hanging Rock

A new master plan for Hanging Rock State Park incorporating Moore's Springs and Vade Mecum properties is now complete. It will serve as a guide and phasing plan for development of facilities, various recreational use areas and trails and conservation at the park.

Projects in the master plan include day use facilities at Vade Mecum as well as camping, mountain bike trails, equestrian trails and hiking at both Vade Mecum and Moore's Springs. The full plan can be accessed at ncparks.gov.

Master plans for Lumber River and Elk Knob state parks are slated for development in 2019.

New Land Acquisition Protects Iconic Property on Grandfather Mountain

Two years ago, the Blue Ridge Conservancy acquired some of the most significant land on Grandfather Mountain to secure the protection of the iconic mountain's ridgeline. In October, the conservancy transferred ownership of 212 acres to Grandfather Mountain State Park.

The property borders the state park and Julian Price Memorial Park, a unit of the National Park Service. It connects an isolated tract with the rest of the park and protects 1,600 linear feet of Watauga River headwaters. The property protects rare plants including the Trailing Wolfsbane, Roan Mountain Bluet and Heller's Blazing Star.

Funding for the acquisition, which enabled the conservancy to sell the land to the state, was provided by the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund and a generous donation from Fred and Alice Stanback.

Grandfather Mountain State Park was created in 2009 and is now 2,627 acres with 12 miles of hiking trails. It includes Calloway Peak, the highest point in the Blue Ridge mountain range.



Grandfather Mountain State Park



NC Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

Roy Cooper
 Governor

Susi H. Hamilton
 Secretary, DNCR

Initial Land Acquisition for Salmon Creek State Natural Area Complete

Salmon Creek, which empties into the Chowan River in Bertie County, is home to unique archaeological resources, rich cultural history, and truly pristine ecosystems. The division completed the initial land acquisition for the new Salmon Creek State Natural Area in November.

The acquisition of land on Salmon Creek was made possible by the N.C. Coastal Land Trust, the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, and the U.S. Airforce. The Parks and Recreation Authority also approved \$875,000 in funds from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for the purchase.

The property features cypress-gum and tidal swamps, freshwater tidal marshes, and several archaeological sites. Staff at nearby Merchants Millpond State Park in Gates County will manage the newly acquired natural area.



Salmon Creek State Natural Area

New Superintendent Takes Reins at Iconic Mount Mitchell

Kevin Bischof, a veteran park ranger, is the new superintendent for Mount Mitchell State Park in Yancey County. He succeeds Robert McGraw, who recently transferred to Gorges State Park to serve as superintendent. Bischof has worked as a ranger at Jordan Lake, Gorges, Lake James and Goose Creek, where he served as acting superintendent. He leads the division's honor guard and is a certified environmental educator.

Mount Mitchell State Park was established in 1916 and now encompasses 1,996 acres. It recorded 398,091 visitors in 2017.



Superintendent Kevin Bischof

Raven Rock Ranger Wins Top Science Education Award

Ranger David Brown was awarded one of the highest science education awards in North Carolina: The N.C. Science Teacher Association's Distinguished Service in Science Education Award in a non-school setting. In his years with the division, Brown has provided excellent interpretive and educational experiences for both students and teachers alike. In addition to visiting schools in the park's surrounding communities to bring the parks to the students, David has worked with hundreds of teachers and aspiring teachers to help them bring natural sciences to their classrooms.



Ranger David Brown

Big Canoes Launch at State Parks

Our state parks acquired two "big canoes" this summer to allow school classes to explore our parks by water. Funded by the Friends of State Parks, these canoes can hold 14 students each and have already traveled around the park system. After their maiden voyages at Morrow Mountain State Park, the canoes traveled to Merchants Millpond to host first through fourth-graders from Weldon Global Academy in Halifax County. The canoes will continue to be transported across the state for educational programming and to allow students and visitors to experience our parks from another viewpoint.



Big canoes at Merchants Millpond State Park

Staff updates

The division bid farewell to three of our beloved employees this winter. Jane Connelly, who served as superintendent at Carvers Creek State Park, has retired after a 30-year career with state parks. Bill Meyer, who served as superintendent of Stone Mountain State Park as he rounded out his 30-year state parks career, retired in early December. Finally, Assistant Director Don Reuter, a 31-year state employee with more than 18 years with state parks, will retire from state government in January and join the city of Sanford as their new parks administrator.



Jane Conolly



Bill Meyer



Don Reuter



Big canoes



We're Social!



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