



David Pearson

Notes From the President

Hello Friends

On October 30th, I had the opportunity to visit with the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Authority during their meeting which took place at Fort Macon State Park in Atlantic Beach, NC. Part of the meeting included a social on Friday evening to honor Dr. Jonathan Howes for his long career and contributions to the North Carolina State Parks System and The North Carolina Park and Recreation Trust Fund.

As I visited with several old friends and made many new ones, I could not help but think about how far we have come as a park system. Twenty some years ago, when I first became interested in our park system, we did not have an organized set of rules to operate by nor any consistent or organized funding. Then in 1987 the North Carolina State Parks Act was passed by the General Assembly. And in 1993 Governor Hunt appointed Dr. Howes as Secretary of Environment, Health and Natural Resources. As Secretary, Dr. Howes led an initiative for the passage of the North Carolina State Parks Bond Referendum. I remember my friend Dr. Philip McKnelly telling me in 1993 that 35 million was half of all the money ever spent on NC Parks since Mt. Mitchell was created in 1915. Wow! Then in 1995 Jonathan Howes along with Philip McKnelly campaigned the General Assembly and Governor Hunt for the passage of the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund.

Talk about making History! Last year the Park and Recreation Trust Fund distributed over 30 million dollars to not only State Parks, but to county and municipal parks as well. During the first 70 or so years our Park System funding was like the tide at Fort Macon... Seldom high, sometimes low and most of the time all washed up. Back then, State Parks were lucky just to stay afloat.

What a legacy Dr. Howes and his team left to North Carolina. For the first time since its inception, our State Park System had a source of funding. Not to mention how brilliant the plan is. Money raised from the transfer of real estate goes to support Parks and Recreation. Simply put, as the demand for parks and recreation grows, so does the funding.

As Secretary of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Recourses, Dr. Jonathan Howes strengthened

environmental education by obtaining \$31 million from the General Assembly to build a new Museum of Natural Sciences. And, he formally established the Office of Environmental Education and the state environmental education plan, which included the development of programs for the North Carolina Zoo and Aquariums.

Dr. Howes has made a difference in the life of every North Carolinian. And, it could not have been more apparent than at the dedication of Fort Macon's new 8.2 million dollar Coastal Environmental Education and Visitor Center on Saturday, October 31st. Fort Macon has the distinction of being North Carolina's first operational State Park and has over a million visitors annually. Education Centers like this are the direct result of Dr. Howes' efforts as Secretary of the Department of Environment, Health and Natural Resources and as Chairman of the Park and Recreation Trust Fund.

After serving over a decade on the Park and Recreation Trust Fund Dr. Howes' term ended last year and he will be surely missed. But as North Carolina's park visitors experience the expansion of their favorite park or another new park is born or yet another new Environmental Education / Visitor Center is opened his legacy will live on.

Thank you Dr. Howes

From David Pearson and All Friends of State Parks

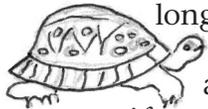


A New Trail at Merchants Millpond State Park

Contributed by Jane Hunt

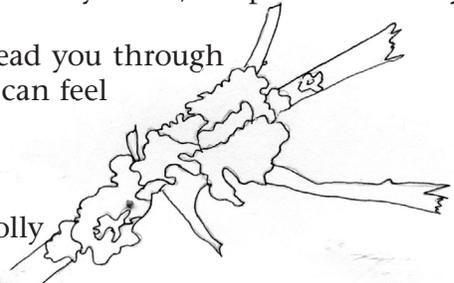


The new trail is a loop located below the dam. It circles the North side of Bennetts Creek, an easy two mile hike - if you don't get lost. When you don't know where you are, the path seems very long, especially if you are hot and thirsty.



Following the white dots and the arrows lead you through a pine and hardwood forest so dense in places you can feel as if you might be in the tropics.

The pond supports numerous turtles and frogs, and if you are very lucky you might encounter a cottonmouth or an alligator. I did see a very still box turtle and some wriggling woolly aphids on a beech branch. I ate a winter berry which had a nice minty flavor and I repeatedly brushed spider webs from my face



as I walked along.

As you near the creek you will be under Bald cypresses with their knees poking up all around and their branches filled with flowing Spanish moss. One of the quietest places in this "enchanted forest" is surrounded by swamp and the trail builders have thoughtfully located a convenient bench where you may sit and listen to the silence.

Its a lovely trail. Try it.

Three New Board Members

Jean Donnan - After many years in Virginia, I've returned to my native North Carolina and am proud to be associated with Friends of State Parks. My family started spending a week each summer at Hanging Rock when I was in early elementary school. Those were happy times that helped instill in me a love for the mountains, the outdoors, and our many natural resources. In my work life, I'm a clinical social worker, which can be very stressful at times. Hiking and enjoying the beauty of natural areas helps restore my soul.

I'm interested in wilderness and wildlife conservation as well as education. I appreciate the opportunity to serve on the board.

Dorothy Graham - I grew up in Lumberton, North Carolina, attended college at UNC-Greensboro, and have lived in Chapel Hill and Raleigh and since 1971 in Durham.

Friends of State Parks is an organization I have enjoyed being associated with, first in partnership with my husband John who was a long time board member and president of the board. My first outing with John was in 1973 -- a visit to Eno River State Park where he showed my three young children how with bright sun and a magnifying glass dry leaves can be ignited. His love of the out-of-doors, his nurturing demeanor and his gregarious nature captivated me, and his dedication to those he met who were associated with State Parks and with FSP leaves an indelible mark. I am pleased that I can now be a FSP board member. I hope as a board member I can continue John's work and support

other FSP members in carrying out the FSP mission. The Junior Ranger Program and other youth educational programs including the Mt. Jefferson poetry competition are of special interest to me.

Angie Swayne - I have been a patron of park systems for my entire life. By the age of 3, I was a regular customer and as a teenager I worked for 3 summers for the city parks and recreation department in Lumberton, NC. After earning my B. S. in Business Administration from Pembroke State University, I moved to Columbia, SC where I completed my M.B.A. at the University of South Carolina. I then stayed in SC for 26 years and was active in various local outdoor-oriented organizations there.

When I finally moved back to NC, I wanted to get involved in the protection of the natural resources of my home state. I have done trail work for the Mountains to the Sea Trail in Alamance County and I joined FSP last year. Working with FSP has been a rewarding experience for me and I look forward to serving on the board.

Excitement in Learning and Stewardship: The Junior Ranger Program

Contributed by Dorothy Graham

A visit to a state park can mean many things -- a solitary walk in the woods, a breathtaking view of waterfalls and changing leaves, a canoe excursion, the challenge of mountain hiking and rock climbing, or overnight camping. Whatever the experience, being outdoors brings with it exciting opportunities for education and stewardship.

To encourage North Carolina's young people to be outdoors and experience their natural world is the aim of many parents, educators, park rangers and other environmental enthusiasts. As a framework for attracting youth, channeling their curiosity and energy and recognizing their commitment to learning and stewardship, the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation, with support from North Carolina Friends of State Parks and Great Outdoor Provision Company offers the Junior Ranger program.

Currently ten North Carolina state parks offer a Junior Ranger Program for young people ages 6 to 12 with a goal of extending the program into all 32 parks. Participants attend park ranger programs, complete an activity booklet and engage in a meaningful stewardship project unique to that park. Stewardship projects are hands-on experiences ranging from a beach clean up to identifying safety hazards along a hiking trail. Park rangers plan activities based on the interests of the participants and unique features of the park

A last step in becoming a Junior Ranger is reciting the Junior Ranger Pledge.

*"I promise to do what I can to protect the air, water and land of North Carolina.
I will not litter and will do what I can to keep the park clean.
I will not harm or remove any plants or animals in the park.
Instead, I will try to learn about them
I will encourage my family and friends to help protect the park
and all our natural resources."*

To recognize successful completion, junior rangers receive a colorful patch depicting a special feature of that park. A person can become a junior ranger and receive a patch at every park that has a program. Young people who become Junior Rangers find it a fun way to explore parks with their family, scout troop or other youth groups while gaining an appreciation of North Carolina's cultural and natural heritage. Park rangers serve as role models and provide an early introduction to careers in natural resources.

State parks currently offering Junior Ranger programs are: Jordan Lake, Carolina Beach, Hammocks Beach, Goose Creek, Hanging Rock, Jockey's Ridge, Mount Mitchell, New River, Pettigrew and South Mountains State Parks



Ranger Sarah Bouknight administers the junior ranger pledge to three new junior rangers at Hammocks Beach State Park.

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Please send me:

- North Carolina State Parks Map Guide @ \$19.95 (\$15) + \$3 S&H = \$22.95 each
- Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina @ \$10.00 (\$8) + \$2 S&H = \$12.00 each
- Exploring the Geology of the Carolinas @ \$19.95 (\$15) + \$2.50 S&H = \$22.45 each
- North Carolina State Parks: A Niche Guide @ \$14.95 (\$12) + \$2 S&H = \$16.95 each
- Jawbone Trail Cookbook @ \$10 (\$7) + \$2.50 S&H = \$12.50 each

Note: FSP members prices in parenthesis

Name: _____
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Book Sale

North Carolina State Parks Map Guide is now in its second edition updated to include Grandfather Mountain and Crowders Mountain the new parks recently added to the system. We have a few copies of the first edition still available. These are offered at a 25% discount from the prices shown while they last.

And remember, both the Map Guide and *A Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina* make great Christmas gifts for lovers of the outdoors.

Subscription time?

Subscriptions for continuing members are due with the new year. Remember, if you send in your check before December 31st you can take a tax deduction on your 2009 return. Every little helps!

Next meeting

The next quarterly meeting of Friends of State Parks will be held at Fort Macon State Park on Saturday, January 30th at 10 am.