



David Pearson

## Notes From the President

A recent article addressing a meeting by the Council of State described the comments by certain members that this is a bad time to purchase lands for the logical expansion of our State Park system. Research consistently shows that conservation of nature landscapes has a positive benefit on the economy in the areas surrounding those significant natural resources. The economic impact of conservation is evident in the jobs created in the area and in visitor spending in the local community.

North Carolina has in the past wisely set up "Trust Funds" for the protection of natural areas; so when the time comes to purchase lands of significance, the state can step in and purchase those lands. While some may oppose moving forward on land purchases for public parks during these economic times, I believe it is the best time to proceed. With the economy as it is, the truly significant natural lands slated to become just another landscape dotted with residential and commercial development can now be protected. Certainly, failure to use these funds to capitalize on this opportunity now would be "irresponsible".

As passionate park supporters we need to rally for the preservation and expansion of State Parks and the wise use of trust fund monies. Our State Parks system needs our support! The people of North Carolina need to unite with one loud voice, one that can be heard from Jockeys Ridge on the Outer Banks to Grandfather Mountain and beyond in the western most parts of this beautiful state. We can do this by asking all the individual "Friends" groups of the various state parks to band together, united in our concern for the natural and historically significant lands which North Carolinian's are blessed with.

A vision of Friends of State Parks is to be that unified voice. We need to partner with the local Friend's groups at all existing State Parks. As President of Friends of State Parks, I encourage all park support groups to partner with us in our state-wide effort to support the protection of our precious natural resources. We need the assistance of all the well organized groups across the state and those who are just being established at our newer parks to join in this

great effort. We need to share critical information, needs and concerns, so together we can develop a strategy to support our entire park system. The loss of even one truly significant parcel of land can be something which can take years and usually a much higher cost, to overcome in the future.

Friends of State Parks is looking for opportunities and ways to share information, membership contacts and calls to action. But in the mean time, I encourage each of you... Call your legislators and inform them that you are passionate about the North Carolina State Park System, and now is the time to focus on preserving our natural resources so that future generations can enjoy the North Carolina we call home.

David Pearson  
President  
Friends of State Parks



# 2009 Friends of State Parks Projects

Contributed by Bob Sowa

Last year was a productive year for FSP helping the state parks, staff, and department in a time of budget cuts. FSP accomplishments include:

- Funding prizes for the winning students of the Mt. Jefferson Natural Area fourth annual Poetry Contest for local youth, winners selected from over 300 entries
- Continuing to use a grant to fund the Junior Ranger program and added booklets and badges for Carolina Beach, South Mountains, Pettigrew State Parks
- Funding park staff to attend the National Association for Interpretation meeting in Asheville - FSP donations and a Great Outdoor Provisioning grant helped five North Carolina State Park staff attend the NAI meeting in Asheville
- Revising our North Carolina State Parks Map Guide with over 30 new or updated maps and charts to help you locate parks with your favorite activity or accessible facilities
- Attending and supporting park festivals including Crowders Mountain Fall Festival, South Mountain State Park Festival, Haw River Open House, Lake Jordan Heritage Day, Elk Knob Community Day, and Eno Festival our biggest and best yet
- Supporting the successful campaign for protecting and purchasing Cove Swamp for Lake Waccamaw State Park
- Funding the printing and distribution costs for DEPR's annual report, an important tool for communicating the department's mission and accomplishments to the legislature and concerned citizens
- Working with the Haw River staff to gain approval of a \$5000 grant from REI for their educational programs to purchase equipment for canoeing, turtle tracking, bat monitoring, wilderness survival, and wetland discovery courses
- Supporting the taxidermy exhibits that are a favorite of visiting students, including a bear mount for Crowders Mountain, a bear cub for Elk Knob, and Bubba, a Great Blue Heron at Chimney Rock
- Funding a ranger to attend a critical course on Smoke Management Techniques to help protect the parks natural resources and the surrounding communities
- Instituting a Twitter feed for news about North Carolina State Parks
- Creating three park tours brochures to help guide one's way across North Carolina while visiting our state parks
- Creating a FSP fan page to help Facebook members to share their passions for state parks

Most of FSP funds come directly from your membership and donations and make these accomplishments possible. Thank you for your generous support of North Carolina's State Parks.

## Falls Lake section of the Mountains-to-the Sea Trail

NC State Parks recently dedicated 11 miles of trail built by volunteers as a section of the Mountains-to-the Sea Trail.

With the opening of the new section, local hikers have their first real opportunity for a two-night backpacking journey. Hikers can camp at the Rolling View State Recreation Area campground, travel 14 miles the next day to the Shinleaf State Recreation Area campground and then hike 20 miles to the Falls Dam. The newly-dedicated section goes from near Highway 50, along the Lake through the Rolling View Recreation Area to Little Lick Creek.

# A Visit to Fort Macon

Contributed by Jane Hunt

Situated on a tip of sand at the eastern end of Bogue Banks, surrounded by the Atlantic Ocean, Beaufort Inlet, and the Bogue Sound stands the pentagonal structure Fort Macon. Surprisingly, to me, it is the second most visited State Park in North Carolina, a statistic tallied before the huge new Visitors Center opened last fall.

The Fort was completed in 1834 to protect Beaufort Harbor, which had already been captured and ransacked by the Spanish in 1747 and the British during the Revolution. The pirate Blackbeard also cruised the area and certainly must have made people nervous.

Four men who played important roles in the history of the Fort. First, Robert E. Lee, then a captain in the U.S. Army Engineering Department who made modifications to the fort, giving better air circulation to the munitions and to the kitchen ovens where six fires could be kept going simultaneously. He also built a jetty which fought erosion of the beach.

Next was Col. Moses J. White, commander of the Fort during the Civil War. He initially refused to surrender to the “Northern aggressors” even though he was outnumbered 6-1. But when the Union’s newly developed rifle cannons or “parrot guns” began smashing through the walls he feared they would blow up the gunpowder magazine killing all the defenders and he raised the white flag of surrender. His story is told in one of the dioramas which are located in the casement rooms of the fort. An empty rocking chair rocks slowly before a fireplace as we learn of his hard times and eventual capture. He was only twenty seven years old.

During the Spanish American War, the fort was again put to use as quarters for the military. The 3rd North Carolina U.S.V. (volunteers) was commanded by Col. James H. Young, a Shaw University graduate, born to a slave woman, who before the war had been elected to the North Carolina legislature, founded the Blind School and been editor of *The Gazette*, the most popular black newspaper in the region. The men in his unit all were black, and it was the only one in the U.S. with a black commander. Although the men endured racism and violence from Whites, in or out of uniform, they drew

crowds to view their maneuvers. Local church groups would raise money for their congregations by selling tickets to people allowing them to enter Fort Macon and watch the maneuvers on the parade ground.

Lastly, Dr. Elliot Coues, an Army surgeon was stationed at the Fort in 1869-70. Coues seems not to have spent much time in surgery. He collected a great variety of wildlife specimens, some of which is still on display at the Smithsonian. He wrote *A Key to North American Birds* which did much to promote the study of ornithology in America. In late summer when the exhibit hall in the Visitors Center opens to the public Dr. Coues will be prominently featured.

Dr. Coues work outside the Fort reminds us of the other pleasures awaiting your visit to Fort Macon. It is a major flyway for birds, you could spot whales from the point, there is a nature walk, and certainly the beach, provided with lifeguard in the summertime, calls for a delicious dip.



Photo of Fort Macon from [civil-war-journeys.org](http://civil-war-journeys.org)

**Friends of State Parks**  
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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: \_\_\_\_\_ City & Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_

## Welcome to a New Friends Group

On February 11th a new group, Friends of Mayo River State Park, was formed and became a chapter of Friends of State Parks. The 24 attendees at the founding meeting elected a Board of Directors with Donald Gillespie as president.

For information about Friends of Mayo River State Park contact them at Post Office Box 393, Mayodan, NC 27027 or call secretary David Baker at (336) 613-4275

## Situation Vacant

Co-editor needed for Friends of State Parks quarterly newsletter — requirements:

- Some writing and editing abilities
- Modest computer skills - access to e-mail and Internet
- Capability of accurate proof-reading
- Willingness to give a few hours four times each year
- A wish to play a part in supporting parks

Send e-mail to: [alecw@ncfsp.org](mailto:alecw@ncfsp.org)

## Next meeting

The next quarterly meeting of the FSP board will be held at Raven Rock State Park on Saturday, April 24th. The meeting to commence at 11 am. All members are welcome.