

North Carolina Friends of State Parks Youth in Parks -- Environmental Education (YIP-EE) Project

Rationale:

There is growing concern that many young people are not getting outside and are growing up “nature deficient.” Schools are finding it increasingly difficult to take students on nature outings and many families lack the resources to do this on their own.

Our State Parks offer many environmental education opportunities for children and adults. An obstacle the parks face is having enough staff to accommodate all the individuals and groups who might want to participate in their programs.

In an effort to get underserved kids outside without creating an unrealistic demand on state park naturalists’ capabilities, Friends of State Parks has designed the Youth in Parks - Environmental Education (YIP-EE) project, envisioned as a partnership between a state park, the park’s friends group and a public school. Where feasible, an additional level of support would come from environmental educators or those seeking environmental education certification to volunteer as assistant group leaders.

Project Goal:

- To foster in young people a love and understanding of nature and an appreciation of their role as stewards of the environment.

Project Objectives:

- To support schools in providing young people an opportunity to get outside the classroom into a state park for environmental education and exploration
- To support state parks in their efforts to provide environmental education to elementary and middle school students
- To support individuals seeking environmental education certification opportunities to fulfill teaching requirements
- To support parks friends groups in exercising a leadership role within their environmental education community in partnership with NC Friends of State Parks.

Key Partners:

- State park superintendent and park naturalists
- Elementary or middle school teachers
- The park’s friends group
- Environmental Education volunteers
- North Carolina Friends of State Parks

Funding: NC Friends of State Parks (FSP) is providing a limited number of \$400 grants each school year to offset the cost of transportation to the park and for healthy snacks. FSP will also provide planning and implementation guidelines based on an FSP-sponsored field trip to Eno River State Park in April 2012. For more information or to apply for a grant, you may contact Friends of State Parks, Attn: YIP-EE Committee, PO Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627 or email YIP-EE@ncfsp.org.