

Notes From the President



John Graham

Wow! What a great year 2005 for Friends of State Parks and the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

• Newest Board Members: Morgan Richardson and Leon Carter, very active in new Membership Program and Liaison with current and former parks staff.

• First ever FSP display on Lobby Day (June 8, 2005) in NC Legislature, highlighting who FSP is and the importance of our parks staff to the people of our state and the urgency of "Pay Equity" for our Park Rangers.

• Alec and Alma Whittaker, becoming "first time" proud grandparents.

• Four progress filled board meetings at Ft. Macon, Umstead, The Gorges and Jones Lake State Parks, each special in its own right.

• Great times had by board members and friends manning our FSP booths at Eno River and Morrow Mountain Festivals.

• Retired West District Parks Supt. Walt Gravely becoming a member of FSP.

• Several significant contributions to our treasury made by individuals and a corporate entity.

• Tom Ellis, our most active 93-year-old member received the distinction and honor as our first "Ambassador of State Parks" during a ceremony at our Jones Lake State Park Board meeting.

• Our N.C. Parks System was in the "Final Four" in the Best in the Nation Park Systems as judged by the National Association of Parks and Recreation. Quite a tribute to the stewardship of our professional park staffs in each of our 34 parks and recreation areas!

• Director Lewis Ledford is making it happen: State Parks are on the "grow".

We are a system of 40 designated parks, recreation and natural areas; six of these have been named and are being acquired in less than a span of three years and are designated as under development as plans and construction take place. This is the response of our many partners in "protecting our natural diversity".

• Our professional parks staffs are in contact with over 200,000 school age youth and contribute greatly to their environmental and natural history education and serve as positive role models. These efforts make possible a better tomorrow for all the peoples and creatures on planet Earth and especially in North Carolina.

• To serve the current 13,000,000 annual visitors and to meet the needs and demands as we grow to 7th in the nation in population by 2020.

These are just some glimpses into what is happening in FSP and your state parks system.

All news is not as joyful: the passing of Jim Stevens ("Mr. Parks" to many) was certainly the low for those who worked with him and grew to admire his vision for our parks.

How can you the reader help us in our efforts to go beyond being in the "Top Four" and become the "Best in the Nation" in the year 2007?

• Renew your membership
- Students & Seniors \$10, Single memberships \$15 and Family \$20 - checks to Betty Martin, Treasurer, 820 Merrie Rd, Raleigh, NC 27606

• Recruit two new members.

• Volunteer to serve on an FSP committee; to serve on a local state park committee and report on activities in that park

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Presentation to Tom Ellis

In April, Friends of State Parks resolved to recognize the life-long service and extraordinary contributions of Tom Ellis to North Carolina State Parks by creating the award of "Ambassador of Parks." We were upstaged when Governor Mike Easley chose to honor Tom at that same time by appointing him to the Order of the Longleaf Pine.

It may have been a lesser ceremony, but no less deserved or heartfelt, when FSP President John Graham belatedly made the award at the October board meeting. Thank you Tom for all that you have done in the past and the contribution you continue to make.



Photo: Bob Sowa

Notes From the President Continued

to FSP district parks chair and become involved in that park's advisory committee.

- We need help with news articles on our parks, FSP projects in fund raising, marketing FSP, membership growth, especially with our outreach to high schools, community colleges and universities, a program being chaired by board member Morgan Richardson. Your parks need you and FSP can provide the conduit.

FSP has a history of service to our state parks beginning in 1978 and many luminaries have contributed much to our present day system.

Your present board of directors accepts the legacy of those before us and with your joining in our mission and accomplishments can better serve our state parks.

John E. Graham

Friends of...

Jockey's Ridge, Morrow Mountain, Mount Mitchell, Fort Fisher - and all the other "Friends" groups who support individual parks. Many of you are members of Friends of State Parks as individuals and several of the groups have associated themselves with FSP as the statewide organization lobbying for and supporting North Carolina's parks - but some are not.

Why should your group become an associate of Friends of State Parks? Because what affects any state park affects *your* park. When the legislature reduces the maintenance budget for parks, part of that cut comes from *your* park. Because when Friends of State Parks members lobby, they are lobbying for *your* park. Because when we ask our members to write to or e-mail their legislators we need to have as many concerned citizens as possible responding.

We will again be lobbying in the forthcoming session urging the Legislature to eliminate the pay inequity between State Park rangers and their equivalents in Wildlife and Forestry. We need your help!

We Appreciate...

Barbara Harvey, who volunteered for the tedious task of sticking new address labels over the old, discontinued address on several hundreds of our brochures. Thank you, Barbara.

ALCOA, who contributed \$500 to Friends of State Parks to be applied to improvements at Morrow Mountain State Park.

A Pearl in the String of Carolina Bays

Contributed by Alice Zawadzki

Jones Lake State Park, is the North Carolina park which, in the recent past, has seen the most change. On September 1st, the magnificent new Education Center where the board of Friends of State Parks held their Annual General Meeting and the fine new boathouse, built at a combined cost of \$2.4M, were dedicated.

Before the meeting, Ranger Sean McElhone gave an illustrated talk on the history of the park and the unique and mysterious 'bays,' the necklace of shallow lakes extending from New Jersey to North Carolina, of which Jones Lake is one.



Photo: Bob Sowa

From the air, Jones Lake State Park looks like a snow-covered landscape with an egg-shaped pond. The aerial view is puzzling for a site 40 miles east of Fayetteville NC until one realizes that one is looking at snow-white sand surrounding one of the mysterious Carolina Bays on the coastal plain of North Carolina. These shallow depressions filled with rainwater 8 to 12 feet deep are named for the sweet bay, loblolly bay, and red bay trees that surround them. Through the years many suggestions have been made to explain their origin.

The NCFSP Board met at the beautiful new visitors center the last Saturday in October 2005. The center has excellent displays including: the top five theories of origin for the Carolina Bays;

the four habitats that surround the lakes with explanations of how the bays are changing with time; the importance of controlled burns to maintain habitat and the endangered critters that call the park home; the economic story of the products of longleaf pine including turpentine, pitch, and lumber; the history of the park.

During the 1930s the federal government purchased submarginal farmlands in the area for \$4.51 per acre as part of the country's economic recovery from the depression. This program stimulated jobs and developed a recreation center at Jones Lake including a bathhouse, beach, and picnic grounds. In 1939 the property was turned over to the state and became the first state park for African-Americans. The tea-colored lake is a beautiful site and offers opportunities for nature-watching, swimming, sunbathing, boating, and fishing. Paddleboats and canoes may be rented from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

Jones Lake State Park is a pearl in the string of Carolina Bays and in the necklace of our treasured state parks. A visit to Jones Lake would be a grand way to spend a sunny winter day.

Park office: 910-588-4550 Email: jones.lake@ncmail.net

Web: <http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/visit/jone/home.html>

Jones Lake is located in Bladen County about 40 miles east of Fayetteville and four miles north of Elizabethtown on Highway 242.



Photo: Bob Sowa

Friends of State Parks
P.O. Box 37655, Raleigh, NC 27627

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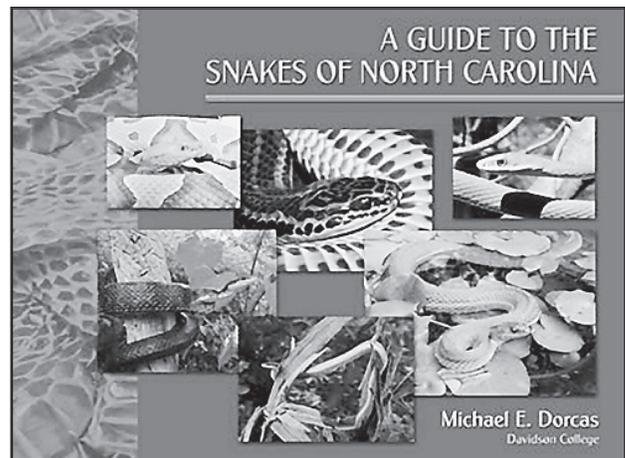
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It's beginning to look a lot like ...

... that time of year when we start thinking about gifts and a great gift for someone who enjoys the outdoors is a copy of *A Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina*. Available to members at the special price of \$9.95 + \$2 S&H, this beautifully illustrated and informative book will be enjoyed by anyone who is interested in the creatures of the wild and the profits go to help the parks we all take pleasure in sharing.

To get the special price just write "MEMBER" alongside your name on the order form and get it in the mail by December 10th to receive it in time for Christmas.



Mark Your Calendar

Plan now to attend our next meeting to be held at Jockey's Ridge State Park at 11 am on January 28th, 2006. The deserted beaches and sand dunes are a delight in January.