

Notes From the President



John Graham

Close your eyes and imagine that you are in a bald cypress dugout canoe in

a huge natural lake; abundant with marine life, majestic trees line the shores, wild life, both plant and animal, thrive in the pocosin bordering the lake. A truly bountiful hunting and fishing ground.

You and your comrades are Algonkian Native Americans and the year is 2394 B.C. Your canoes are filled with the catch as fish traps and baskets are retrieved and emptied. Bald cypress, tupelo, poplar, and sweet gum trees grow to towering heights of 140 feet or more. Hollows in these giants are havens for avian and animal life.

Where is this marvel of nature, where artifacts 11,000 years old are unearthed and shells of 30 canoes have been drawn from the pristine waters? The oldest to date is 4,400 years old. Two of these canoes are currently on display for all to view and relive history. This treasure is located just off US 64 near the historic town of Creswell in Washington County—a place where you can enter at no charge and be awed by an ecosystem at work, preserving millennia of history and life for us. This place is your Pettigrew State Park, the largest park in our 40-park system of the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation.

Since the addition of 3,000 acres

along the banks of the Scuppernong River, Pettigrew State park now totals almost 21,000 acres. It encompasses the 16,600- acre Lake Phelps, second largest natural lake in North Carolina.

Quench your thirst for more about these magical waters and bountiful land; visit the park and the historic places that adjoin the park; listen to the silence of the wings of the Tundra Swan or their unique voices as they settle on Lake Phelps. Plan your visit after visiting the web site at www.ncparks.net/pett.html. Become a friend of state parks through www.ncfsp.org

I seized the opportunity to visit Pettigrew State Park after our January 28th meeting of your board of directors at Jockey's Ridge State Park. At Jockey's Ridge we were welcomed by Supt. George Barnes and Ranger John Fullwood. George has a thirty-year history of being a good steward of your state parks and has been superintendent at Jockey's Ridge SP for 24 years. George and his staff are supported by an outstanding volunteer group known as "Friends of Jockey's Ridge." Their support of Jockey's Ridge State Park and the NC Division of Parks and Recreation is of legendary proportions. We were graced by two of their members attending the FSP board meeting. Their contributions to this meeting were most valuable and a bond of mutual support was established. We look forward to this bond becoming a plus for all of our state parks.

Your board adopted a business and marketing plan advanced by Bob Sowa, FSP communications chair, with board member Alice Zawadzki contributing. A more definitive outline of this plan will be forthcoming after our April board meeting. Effective February 1, 2006, Bob Sowa is a member of your board of directors and will serve as liaison between FSP and newly named Chief of Administrative Services Don Reuter of the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation. Bob will continue to use his communications skills to enhance the FSP website in addition to formulating plans and activities to implement our business and marketing portfolio.

Director Morgan Richardson is expanding our "outreach" (Continued on page 2)



Subscriptions

This quarter's newsletter comes in an envelope and includes your renewal envelope. Last year we received a lot of empty envelopes that became separated from the newsletter in the USPS' sorting machines.

Several members sent in their renewals in December to take advantage of the tax deduction. We thank them and, if you are one of them, ask you to ignore the enclosure - unless of course, ...

In the Fall newsletter for 2006, we plan to put in a reminder for those of you who like to get two tax deductible subscriptions into one year.

Volunteers needed

Most libraries have a rack in which they permit non-profit organizations to display brochures and newsletters. If you would like to receive a few to place in your neighborhood library, environmentally helpful store or other appropriate location, go to the FSP web page and send a message asking or e-mail FSP@rasman.com. We particularly need volunteers to keep the displays up-to-date at Great Outdoor Provisioning stores in Charlotte, Greensboro, Winston-Salem, Wilmington and Chapel Hill.

We appreciate...

Robert Jones and his extraordinary effort to deliver the new print run of *A Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina* to the recent Jockey's Ridge meeting. Robert, whose car broke down on the way to the meeting, showed up in a tow truck with his car hanging behind. Neither snow nor rain nor mechanical failure ...

Thanks, Robert.

Notes From the President Continued

program for FSP membership into the high school and college areas. We are excited about the dovetailing of our business/marketing plan and the outreach program for membership.

We also endorsed the goals of "Land for Tomorrow" in its effort to bring to fruition the many proposals for conservation of the natural resources of our state.

To provide the expected "stewardship" of our state parks, natural areas, wildlife preserves, forest lands and state rivers, we must remember that it is the "human" element that serves this need and "pay equity" among the ranks of our professional guardians is an absolute and that the 15 year pay disparity between others and our park rangers is a monumental shame.

See you at Brown Summit, Haw River State Park on April 29, 2006!

John E. Graham
President

What is this?

**No prize for guessing - but you
wouldn't anyway**

Answer on back page.



Photo by Bob Sowa

Bulldozer Encounter

Contributed by Alice Zawadzki

Carolista and her 1973 Bulldozer Encounter: A Giant Medano is saved and Jockey's Ridge State Park is created.

The Friends of State Parks had their quarterly meeting at Jockey's Ridge State Park January 28, 2006. On driving into the visitors' center parking lot I noticed the street name, Carolista Drive; I thought it was an unusual name with perhaps an interesting story. On reading the brochure, I learned that in 1973, Carolista Baum stood in the path of a bulldozer to prevent the destruction that would be caused by a housing development at the base of Jockey's Ridge. The "Save Our Sand Dune" campaign accelerated and the "People to Preserve Jockey's Ridge" was organized. In 1975, the NC General Assembly appropriated funds to protect this medano – a huge hill of shifting sand that lacks vegetation. Thank you Carolista and special thanks to the staff and Friends of Jockey's Ridge for hosting us!

For some of us, our day began with a breathtaking blood red sword across the ocean horizon waking us from our slumber. "Enjoy at least one sunrise a year" took on new meaning as the sky transformed into broad bands of red and orange. For about 5 minutes a wide band of intense mint green capped the palette and the morning star itself glistened in sparkling green; the sight was spectacular. A single pelican flew northward paralleling the wave fronts. Then a group of six pelicans followed. Thank you Rachel Carson. Near the horizon several fishing boats appeared from the south. With time the radiant "fingers of God" began to appear; at first there was only one wide ray of vertical light. Then several rays appeared heralding the intense, blinding appearance of the first arc of the sun. This would be a glorious day to celebrate the Beauty of the Earth and appreciate the efforts of the hundreds of people through the years who make the personal investments to protect and steward one of God's masterpieces.

From our meeting, which included words from the Park staff and representatives from Friends of Jockey's Ridge, I came away with increased awareness of two realities.

The first is that we are blessed with the talents of a very dedicated staff in our state parks; we must work harder toward thanking them monetarily for all that they do. Each ranger is a law-enforcement officer, a first responder in emergencies, an environmental educator, a skilled craftsperson, an invasive alien expert, a public relations staff person, and lots more. Recently entrance level salaries increased from \$19 thousand to \$22 thousand for rangers who have a minimum of four years of college education. Salaries are still woefully underfunded. One very talented ranger recently left state parks to make three times her salary working for the SBI. A few years ago the maintenance staff of two at Jockey's Ridge was cut to one person. The Park has about a million visitors each year. One person cuts the grass, does repairs, cleans the facilities, and does the chores that keep the park going. This is another example of the silent abuse of our state employees. We must do more to improve state funding for State Parks and their staffs.

The second realization is that we have many dedicated volunteers in support groups for many of our State Parks. Each group is working very hard to help their local State Park. We must do a better job collaborating in our advocacy. We have State Parks across the entire state. We must do a better job educating our legislators regarding the necessary actions needed to protect the land and people assets of our great State Parks. We must be responsible citizens who work for and elect government officials who share our values.

Alice Zawadzki

FSP Board member, president of NC Native Plant Society
Secretary of Conservation Council of North Carolina

State Parks Lose a Friend

State Sen. Hamilton C. Horton Jr. died of cancer at his home in Winston-Salem on January 31st. He was 74. Senator Horton, a Republican, served nine terms in the General Assembly - one term in the House from 1969 to 1970, and two in the Senate from 1971 to 1974, when he resigned to mount an unsuccessful run for Congress, and six terms after he returned to the Senate in 1995.

Those of us who support conservation and North Carolina State Parks have lost a champion. In the mid-1970s, Senator Horton led the campaign to defend New River from a power company's plan to dam it for a generating plant. He served as a trustee of the Natural Heritage Trust Fund and was a strong supporter of the Clean Water Management and the Parks & Recreation Trust Funds.

'Ham' Horton's courtesy, steadfastness and integrity were admired by all who knew him, including his political opponents. We extend our deepest sympathy to his beloved wife, Evelyn, and his daughter, Rosalie.



This picture of the Jockey's Ridge dunes is by Bob Sowa. See this and Bob's other pictures in the color they deserve at: <http://www.rasman.com/fsp/Meet2006Jan.html>

The picture on P.2 is a fulgarite, glass formed from silicon sand by a lightning strike. A fulgarite is formed when lightning discharges between a cloud and the ground. The temperature from electrical resistance in the ground can get so high, that the sand melts in the ground, which later hardens into fragile tubes. Fulgarites found in Jockey's Ridge have exceeded 6ft at which point digging became too dangerous. The longest known fulgarite was found in Florida. It consisted of three branches totaling 38 feet.

Mail to : Betty Martin, 820 Merrie Rd. Raleigh NC. 27606

Please send me: _____ copies of A Guide to the Snakes of North Carolina @ \$14.95 + \$2 S+H

_____ Videos: Faces of Change: the ~~SOLED~~ **SOLED** ~~OUT~~ of the Blue Wall @ 24.95

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