

## — North Carolina State Parks System —

With summer approaching and travel plans in librarians' and patrons' minds, "Wired to the World" visits the North Carolina State Parks World Wide Web site. To reach this site, point your favorite web browser to: <http://ils.unc.edu/parkproject/ncparks.html>. When you connect to this site you will receive the welcome page from the *North Carolina State Parks System Hyper Media Information Service*. On the welcome page are three Parks System links and two North Carolina travel-related non-Park URLs.

The *Parks System* links are divided into three broad categories: State Park and Recreation Areas, the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program, and the Volunteer Program. The State Park and Recreation Area has links to: 1) a Calendar of Events for NC State Parks, and 2) a geographically based list of NC State Parks. The Calendar of Events is further subdivided by month, and lists such hot events as: Birdwatching 101 (the weekly two-mile walk at the Eno River State Park); Wildflower Hike at Jones Lake State Park; the Owl Prowl (also at Eno River); the Dolphin Watch at Hammocks Beach State Park; the Mother's Day Hike at Pilot Mountain State Park ("Bring your Mother and come celebrate Mother's Day as we treat her to a leisurely hike around Sassafras Trail"); the Turtle Talk at Fort Macon State Park; Plants that Bite Back at Carolina Beach State Park; and the Musket Firing Demonstrations at Fort Macon State Park. Events listed seemed to be exclusively in eastern parks for the month I checked. I am not able to tell if this is normal and the western parks don't offer any events, or if the online calendar had not been updated for the whole state for the month of May when this was written.

The links to specific state parks (for example Mount Mitchell State Park) provide the following information about park facilities: Camping Sites; Education Programs; Food, Drinks and Museum Shops; Trails, Picnicking Facilities; Playgrounds; Cabin Rentals; Water Activities; Rules and Regulations; and an e-mail address for more information. The Trails listings give the number of trails, length, activity level (from easy to strenuous), and any special trails such as ones for Bikes and Bridles (for horses, ponies, and I suppose mules if that appeals to you!). Picnic information gives the number of areas, facilities (grills, tables, rest rooms, drinking water availability) and shelter capacity (along with reservation and cost information — often shelters must be reserved in advance and a small use fee paid). Camping information is divided into: Group, Backpack, Youth, Canoe, RV, Tent/

Trailer, and Primitive. Rates for camping and useful information for the site (such as "Campers should be alert to higher water conditions that could cause flooding to the area") are provided on the web page listing. Hopefully, this data will be updated on a frequent basis. The Water Activities section provides listings on opportunities for swimming, fishing, boating (and boat rental), and canoeing. Educational programs are listed by type: Natural History Programs, Cultural Programs, and Environmental Programs (such as the Environmental Educational Learning Experience — Jomeokee Geology program offered at the Pilot Mountain State Park). The Food, Drink and Shop section provides information on refreshment stand concessions and the hour of Museum Shop operation.

The second area on the *North Carolina State Parks* web system is the North Carolina Natural Heritage Program page. The North Carolina Natural Heritage Program "inventories, catalogues and facilitates the protection of the rarest and the most outstanding elements of the natural diversity of our state." Major database inventories that the program has completed are: the Albemarle-Pamlico Estuarine Study, the Highlands Ranger District of the Nantahala National Forest and the Appalachian Trail Corridor, the Swift Creek project, and the Department of Defense Installation Inventory. This database contains over 14,500 records of Natural Heritage sites in North Carolina alone. The Natural Heritage Program section of the web page gives an overview of the National Heritage Program (NHP), detail of the inventory process, a list of information services available, and a registry of natural areas and dedicated state nature preserves. Through this web page you can also search the North Carolina NHP anonymous FTP archive. This is a clickable archive that contains the following: List of Endangered Plant Species and Plant Species of Concern; List of Endangered Animal Species and Animal Species of Concern and List Format and Definition for Endangered Animals List; and List of Endangered Communities and Communities of Concern. These lists seem to date from July 1995. Again, hopefully, annual updates will be provided. This part of the *State Parks* web site also has links to nineteen other state Natural Heritage and two Canadian Provincial Conservation Data Centre web sites.

The third section of the *North Carolina State Parks System* web page covers the State Parks Volunteer Program. This section contains an overview and history of the Volunteer Program, which dates back to the early

1930s. Current operation is under State Executive Order 48 of April 1980 that established policies governing the use of volunteers in state agencies. This section is illustrated with photographs of volunteers in action in North Carolina state parks. The section ends with a list of job descriptions for volunteers who are currently needed, such as Campground Host, Astronomy Interpreter, Bird Specialist, Small Engine Mechanic, Photo/Graphic Assistant, Clerk Typist, Trails Crew Leader, and Grounds Worker.

The *Parks* web site concludes with links to two other North Carolina-related travel interest sites: *North Carolina Discoveries* — A Traveler's Journal and the *North Carolina Encyclopedia*. *North Carolina Discoveries* is a web archive version of the summer 1994 travels of Julie Ann Powers and Roger Winstead that appeared in the print and online versions of the *Raleigh News and Observer*. Here you click on specific travel stories, such as the article about the town of Oriental entitled: "Cheap Burgers in Paradise" (June 2, 1994 N&O). These are really neat travel visits — check them out. *The North Carolina Encyclopedia* is an online resource of information designed by the Division of State Library about the "people, government, history and resources of North Carolina." This site will be visited in a future "Wired to the World" column.

The *North Carolina State Parks System* web site is a model of how useful information on state agencies can be stored electronically and made available to the world via the Internet. It provides useful, timely and well-illustrated material. Library patrons will find this site very informative and easy to use.

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