

Exploring North Carolina: North Carolina State Parks, Trails, Lakes, Rivers & Natural Areas ^[1]

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North Carolina State Parks History Interactive Timeline in NCpedia. ^[2]

The North Carolina State Parks system was launched on March 3, 1915 when the General Assembly passed legislation appropriating funds to buy land for a park at Mount Mitchell. A year later, following the acquisition of 795 acres at the mountain's summit, Mount Mitchell became the state's first park and the first park in the southeastern United States. Today the North Carolina State Parks system covers 225,000 acres from the mountains to the sea.

- [Background Articles](#)
- [State Park Facts](#)
- [State Parks Superintendents/Directors State Parks](#)
- [State Trails](#)
- [State Recreation Areas](#)
- [State Natural Areas](#)
- [State Rivers](#)
- [State Lakes](#)
- [Resources and Video Recordings](#)

Background Articles

[History of the North Carolina State Parks System](#)^[3] (from the Division of Parks and Recreation)

[State Parks](#) ^[4] (from the *Encyclopedia of North Carolina*)

State Parks Facts

Park Type	# Park Units	Size
State Parks	35	156,900 acres
State Recreation Areas	4	13,256 acres
State Natural Areas	20	24,194 acres
State Lakes	7	29,135 acres
State Rivers	4	146 miles
State Trails	5	2,052 acres, 806 miles
Visitors to State Parks, 2015	17.3 million	

[Back to top](#)

State Parks Superintendents/Directors

Superintendent/Director	Years Served
Thomas W. Morse*	1935 – 1961
Thomas C. “Red” Ellis	1961 – 1974
Ronald D. Johnson	1974 – 1977
James S. Stevens, Jr.	1977 – 1984
William “Wes” Davis	1984 – 1989
Philip K. McKnelly	1989 – 2003
Lewis R. Ledford	2003 – 2014
Michael A. Murphy	2014 to present

*During the time Morse served in World War II, R.J. Pearce served in an Acting role.

[Back to top](#)

State Parks, Recreation Areas, Rivers, Lakes, Trails and Natural Areas (with links to NCpedia articles)

State Parks

[Cape Hatteras State Park](#)^[5] (now part of the National Seashore)
[Carolina Beach State Park](#)^[6]
[Carvers Creek State Park](#)^[7]
[Chimney Rock State Park](#)^[8]
[Crabtree Creek State Park](#)^[9] (now [Umstead State Park](#)^[10])
[Crowders Mountain State Park](#)^[11]
[Cliffs of the Neuse State Park](#)^[12]
[Dismal Swamp State Park](#)^[13]
[Elk Knob State Park](#)^[14]
[Eno River State Park](#)^[15]
[Fort Macon State Park](#)^[16]
[Goose Creek State Park](#)^[17]
[Gorges State Park](#)^[18]
[Grandfather Mountain State Park](#)^[19]
[Hammocks Beach State Park](#)^[20]
[Hanging Rock State Park](#)^[21]
[Haw River State Park](#)^[22]
[Jockey's Ridge State Park](#)^[23]
[Jones Lake State Park](#)^[24]
[Lake James State Park](#)^[25]
[Lake Norman State Park](#)^[26]
[Lake Waccamaw State Park](#)^[27]
[Lumber River State Park](#)^[28]
[Mayo River State Park](#)^[29]
[Medoc Mountain State Park](#)^[30]
[Merchants Millpond State Park](#)^[31]
[Morrow Mountain State Park](#)^[32]
[Mount Mitchell State Park](#)^[33]
[New River State Park](#)^[34]
[Pettigrew State Park](#)^[35]
[Pilot Mountain State Park](#)^[36]
[Raven Rock State Park](#)^[37]
[Reedy Creek State Park](#)^[38] (now [William B. Umstead State Park](#)^[10])
[Singletary Lake State Park](#)^[39]
[South Mountains State Park](#)^[40]
[Stone Mountain State Park](#)^[41]
[William B. Umstead State Park](#)^[10]

[Back to top](#)

State Trails

Fonta Flora Loop State Trail

[French Broad River State Trail](#) ^[42]

[Mountains-to-Sea State Trail](#) ^[43]

[Deep River State Trail](#) ^[44]

Yadkin River State Trail

State Recreation Areas

[Falls Lake State Recreation Area](#) ^[45]

[Jordan Lake State Recreation Area](#) ^[46]

[Kerr Lake State Recreation Area](#) ^[47]

[Fort Fisher State Recreation Area](#) ^[48]

[Back to top](#)

State Natural Areas

Baldhead Island State Natural Area

Bear Paw State Natural Area

Bullhead Mountain State Natural Area

Bushy Lake State Natural Area

Hemlock Bluffs State Natural AreaLower Haw River State Natural Area

Lea Island State Natural Area

Masonboro Island State Natural Area

[Mount Jefferson State Natural Area](#) ^[49]

Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area

Pineola Bog State Natural Area

Run Hill State Natural Area

Sandy Run Savannas State Natural Area

Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area

Theodore Roosevelt State Natural Area

[Weymouth Woods-Sandhills Nature Preserve](#) ^[50]

Yellow Mountain State Natural Area

[Back to top](#)

State Rivers

Linville River

New River

Horsepasture River

Lumber River

[Back to top](#)

State Lakes

Jones Lake

Lake Phelps

Lake Waccamaw

Salters Lake

Singletary Lake

White Lake

[Back to top](#)

Resources and Video Recordings:

Video Recording: Earnhart, Tom; UNC-TV. 2015. "Saving the Best: North Carolina State Parks at 100." <https://player.pbs.org/viralplayer/2365652565/> ^[51].

[North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. documents and images from North Carolina Digital Collections](#) ^[52].

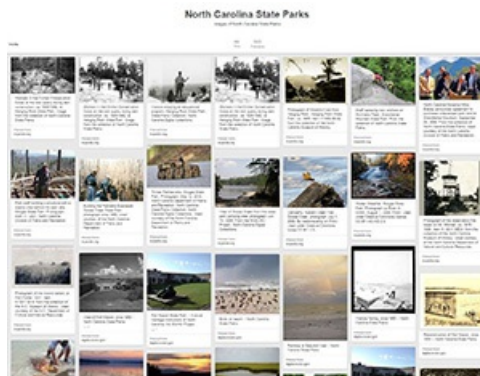
North Carolina State Parks Collection, North Carolina Digital Collections.^[53]

Images of North Carolina State Parks, Government & Heritage Library Pinterest. <https://www.pinterest.com/ncghl/north-carolina-state-parks/> ^[54]

North Carolina State Parks, texts on Internet Archive^[55]

North Carolina State Parks. North Carolina State Parks at the Crossroads. 1968. <https://archive.org/details/northcarolinasta68unse> ^[56] (accessed December 29, 2015).

North Carolina State Parks, texts and images in the Digital Public Library of America^[57]



Images of North Carolina's state parks, N.C. Government & Heritage Library State Parks Pinterest board.

^[54]

Back to top

Subjects:

Natural resources ^[58]

Parks ^[59]

Places ^[60]

Rivers ^[61]

Authors:

Agan, Kelly ^[62]

From:

Government & Heritage Library, State Library of North Carolina.^[63]

19 September 2015 | Agan, Kelly

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Links

[1] <https://ncpedia.org/exploring-north-carolina-north-0> [2] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-history-0> [3] <https://ncpedia.org/history-north-carolina-state-park-1> [4] <https://ncpedia.org/state-parks> [5] <https://ncpedia.org/cape-hatteras-state-park> [6] <https://ncpedia.org/carolina-beach-state-park> [7] <https://ncpedia.org/carvers-creek-state-park> [8] <https://ncpedia.org/chimney-rock-state-park> [9] <https://ncpedia.org/crabtree-creek-state-park> [10] <https://ncpedia.org/william-b-umstead-state-park> [11] <https://ncpedia.org/crowders-mountain-state-park> [12] <https://ncpedia.org/cliffs-neuse-state-park> [13] <https://ncpedia.org/dismal-swamp-state-park> [14] <https://ncpedia.org/elk-knob-state-park> [15] <https://ncpedia.org/eno-river-state-park> [16] <https://ncpedia.org/fort-macon-state-park> [17] <https://ncpedia.org/goose-creek-state-park> [18] <https://ncpedia.org/gorges-state-park> [19] <https://ncpedia.org/grandfather-mountain-state-park> [20] <https://ncpedia.org/hammocks-beach-state-park> [21] <https://ncpedia.org/hanging-rock-state-park> [22] <https://ncpedia.org/haw-river-state-park> [23] <https://ncpedia.org/jockeys-ridge-state-park> [24] <https://ncpedia.org/jones-lake-state-park> [25] <https://ncpedia.org/lake-james-state-park> [26] <https://ncpedia.org/lake-norman-state-park> [27] <https://ncpedia.org/lake-waccamaw-state-park> [28] <https://ncpedia.org/lumber-river-state-park> [29] <https://ncpedia.org/mayo-river-state-park> [30] <https://ncpedia.org/medoc-mountain-state-park> [31] <https://ncpedia.org/merchants-millpond-state-park> [32] <https://ncpedia.org/morrow-mountain-state-park> [33] <https://ncpedia.org/mount-mitchell-state-park> [34] <https://ncpedia.org/new-river-state-park> [35] <https://ncpedia.org/pettigrew-state-park> [36] <https://ncpedia.org/pilot-mountain-state-park> [37] <https://ncpedia.org/raven-rock-state-park> [38] <https://ncpedia.org/reedy-creek-state-park> [39] <https://ncpedia.org/singletary-lake-state-park> [40] <https://ncpedia.org/south-mountains-state-park> [41] <https://ncpedia.org/stone-mountain-state-park> [42] <https://ncpedia.org/french-broad-river-state-trail> [43] <https://ncpedia.org/north-carolina-mountains-sea-trail> [44] <https://ncpedia.org/deep-river-state-trail> [45] <https://ncpedia.org/falls-lake-state-recreation-area> [46] <https://ncpedia.org/jordan-lake-state-recreation-area> [47] <https://ncpedia.org/kerr-lake-state-recreation-area> [48] <https://ncpedia.org/fort-fisher-state-recreation-area> [49] <https://ncpedia.org/mount-jefferson-state-natural-area> [50] <https://ncpedia.org/weymouth-woods-sandhills-nature> [51] <https://player.pbs.org/viralplayer/2365652565/> [52] <https://digital.ncdcr.gov/> [53] https://digital.ncdcr.gov/documents?filter_24=North%20Carolina%20State%20Parks&applyState=true [54] <https://www.pinterest.com/foreverythingNC/north-carolina-state-parks/> [55] <https://archive.org/search.php?query=%28North+Carolina%29+AND+%28parks%29&page=2> [56] <https://archive.org/details/northcarolinasta68unse> [57] <https://dp.la/search?utf8=%E2%9C%93&subject%5B%5D=Parks--North+Carolina&q=%28north+carolina%29+AND+%28state+parks%29> [58] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/natural-resources> [59] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/parks> [60] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/places> [61] <https://ncpedia.org/category/subjects/rivers> [62] <https://ncpedia.org/category/authors/agan-kelly> [63] <https://ncpedia.org/category/entry-source/government>