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 Trails
- State Recreation Areas
- State Natural Areas
- State Rivers
- State Lakes
- Resources and Video Recordings

### State Parks Facts

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Park Type</th>
<th># Park Units</th>
<th>Size</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State Parks</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>156,900 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Recreation Areas</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13,256 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Natural Areas</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24,194 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Lakes</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>29,135 acres</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Rivers</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>146 miles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State Trails</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2,052 acres, 806 miles</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Visitors to State Parks, 2015: 17.3 million
Superintendent/Director | Years Served
------------------------|----------------------
Thomas W. Morse* | 1935 – 1961
Thomas C. "Red" Ellis | 1961 – 1974
James S. Stevens, Jr. | 1977 – 1984
William "West" Davis | 1984 – 1989
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.

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

State Parks

- Cape Hatteras State Park
- Carolina Beach State Park
- Carvers Creek State Park
- Chimney Rock State Park
- Crabtree Creek State Park
- Croaders Mountain State Park
- Cliffs of the Neuse State Park
- Dismal Swamp State Park
- Elk Knob State Park
- Eno River State Park
- Fort Macon State Park
- Goose Creek State Park
- Grandfather Mountain State Park
- Hammocks Beach State Park
- Hanging Rock State Park
- Haw River State Park
- Jones’s Ridge State Park
- Lake James State Park
- Lake Norman State Park
- Lake Waccamaw State Park
- Lumbee River State Park
- Mayo River State Park
- Medoc Mountain State Park
- Merchants Millpond State Park
- Morrow Mountain State Park
- Mount Mitchell State Park
- New River State Park
- Pettigrow State Park
- Pilot Mountain State Park
- Raven Rock State Park
- Reedy Creek State Park
- Singletery Lake State Park
- South Mountains State Park
- Stone Mountain State Park
- William B. Umstead State Park

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State Trails

- Fonta Flora Loop State Trail
- French Broad River State Trail
- Mountains-to-Sea Trail
- Deep River State Trail
- Yadkin River State Trail

State Recreation Areas
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 Area
- Lower Haw River State Natural Area
- Lea Island State Natural Area
- Masonboro Island State Natural Area
- Mount Jefferson State Natural Area
- Oconeechee 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
- Yellow Mountain State Natural Area

State Rivers

- Linville River
- New River
- Horsepasture River
- Lumber River

State Lakes

- Jones Lake
- Lake Phelps
- Lake Waccamaw
- Salters Lake
- Singleton Lake
- White Lake

Resources and Video Recordings:

- Video Recording: Earnhart, Tom; UNC-TV. 2015. "Saving the Best: North Carolina State Parks at 100." [Video link]
- North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation. 2015. "Here in This Place: A Celebration of North Carolina's State Parks." [Website link]
- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, documents and images from North Carolina Digital Collections.
North Carolina State Parks, texts on Internet Archive


North Carolina State Parks, texts and images in the Digital Public Library of America