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.

**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.

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

State Parks

Cape Hatteras State Park (now part of the National Seashore)
Cattail Beach State Park
Carvers Creek State Park
Chimney Rock State Park
Clawfoot Creek State Park (now Umstead State Park)
Crowders Mountain State Park
Cuffs of the Neuse State Park
Downtown Swamp State Park
Elk Knob State Park
End River State Park
Fort Macon State Park
Gooch Creek State Park
Groves State Park
Grandfather Mountain State Park
Hammonds Beach State Park
Harpios Rock State Park
Hawk River State Park
Jockey's Ridge State Park
Jones Lake State Park
Lake James State Park
Lake Norman State Park
Lake Waccamaw State Park
Lumber River State Park
Mayo River State Park
Medoc Mountain State Park
Merchants Millpond State Park
Morne Mountain State Park
Mount Mitchell State Park
New River State Park
Pettigrew State Park
Pilot Mountain State Park
Raven Rock State Park
Reedy Creek State Park (now William B. Umstead State Park)
Singleton Lake State Park
South Mountains State Park
Stone Mountain State Park
William B. Umstead State Park

State Trails

Fonta Flora Loop State Trail
French Broad River State Trail
Mountains-to-Sea Trail
Deep River Trail
Yadkin River 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
- Loa Island State Natural Area
- Masonboro Island State Natural Area
- Mount Jefferson State Natural Area
- Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area
- Pineola Bog State Natural Area
- Run Hill State Natural Area
- Sandy Run Savannahs 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
- Singletary Lake
- White Lake

Resources and Video Recordings:


- North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, documents and images from North Carolina Digital Collections.