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
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 (now part of the National Seashore)
Catalina Beach State Park
Cane Creek State Park
Chimney Rock State Park
Crabtree Creek State Park (now Umstead State Park)
Crowders 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
Gorges Creek State Park
Gorges State Park
Grandfather Mountain State Park
Hammocks Beach State Park
Hanging Rock State Park
Lake Norman 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
Means River State Park
Mount Mitchell State Park
New River State Park
Pettigrow State Park
Pilot Mountain State Park
Raven Rock State Park
Reddy Creek State Park (now William B. Umstead State Park)
Sinclair 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 State 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
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
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:


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