

Game Fishin'

From surf fishing on the beach to fly-fishing in the mountains, one thing is for sure — North Carolina is a great place to fish!

Fishing on the Outer Banks. Bill Russ, N.C. Tourism.



Jess Hawkins instructs a fishing class at Pine Knoll Shores. N.C. Aquariums.

Local Catch

At the 2007 N.C. Seafood Festival, the N.C. Aquariums debuted its new Local Catch Seafood Availability wallet cards. The cards were developed in partnership with Sea Grant and are based on a poster developed by Sea Grant, the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries and the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The four cards, one for each season, let consumers know what seafood is available as well as where and how seafood is harvested along North Carolina's coast. The "Quality Counts" section gives consumers tips on what to look for to make sure they are getting fresh seafood.

Joanne Harcke of the Aquarium at Fort Fisher had the idea of developing the cards. The original poster was often used by staff at the state's three aquariums when fielding questions from visitors curious about local seafood. "We wanted to create a positive message for what North Carolina has to offer," said Harcke. Everyone seems to agree that the cards were a great idea. "These are great consumer education tools that complement the state's 'Freshness from North Carolina Waters' campaign," said William Small of the NCDA&CS Seafood Marketing program. Dr. Louis Daniel, director of the state's Division of Marine Fisheries, added, "In addition to letting consumers know what and when local seafood is available, the charts serve as a springboard for educating the public about fisheries management."

License to Fish

In 2005, the N.C. General Assembly enacted a law requiring those who harvest finfish recreationally in state coastal waters to purchase a fishing license. According to the legislation, the funds collected from the purchase of the licenses will be used "to manage, protect, restore, develop, cultivate, conserve and enhance the marine resources of the State." Once this law was passed, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Division of Marine Fisheries immediately began the task of setting up a licensing system.

Beginning on Jan. 1, 2007, anyone over the age of 16 needed to have a license to fish in North Carolina's coastal waters. The Division of Marine Fisheries worked with the Wildlife Resources Commission to make the new coastal fishing license available with all other hunting and fishing licenses housed within the commission. Revenues collected from the licenses go into one of two funds. Money from the N.C. Marine Resources Fund has already been used to support several fisheries-related projects.

One of the projects funded through the new license receipts was the N.C. Coastal Recreational Angler's Guide. This 131-page, full-color, pocket-sized booklet provides information on DMF recreational fishing programs, license requirements, ethical angling practices, fish biology, habitat information and fishing tips. The guides are available free of charge.



Local Catch Seafood Wallet Cards.

Thar She Blows



Hurricane Isabel struck the northern outer banks of North Carolina in September 2003. NOAA.



Hurricane Isabel caused severe beach erosion and destroyed numerous homes in Kitty Hawk. N.C. Division of Environmental Health.

North Carolinians know a thing or two about hurricanes. No matter their particular focus, all of the divisions in the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have the same goal when a hurricane comes our way. All of the agencies work together to ensure the safety, health and recovery of everyone touched by the storm.



Hurricane Isabel, 2003

Hurricane Isabel made landfall on North Carolina's Outer Banks as a Category 2 storm on Sept. 18, 2003. Wind speed measured 105 miles per hour, and the storm surge washed out a portion of Hatteras Island, including the main water supply piping. Many North Carolinians were stranded or without power for days.

The Division of Environmental Health was at the ready. Prior to and immediately following the storm, division staff disseminated information on well disinfection, public water supply system status, food safety, septic systems, restaurant reopening, recreational water quality and shellfish water status, pest avoidance and aerial mosquito spraying.

Following the storm, a blanket boil advisory was issued by the division for any public water system that had flooded or lost pressure. The division made use of its new, Web-based Water System Status Report, which was implemented for the first time. It allowed regional staff to input data into an online tracking system. As water service was restored and sampling showed no contamination, staff could immediately clear systems that had initially been included in the blanket advisory. This provided a way to immediately notify the press and the public of any updates.

Drinking water wasn't the only concern after the storm. "Isabel was the first instance in the United States in which an outbreak of West Nile Virus was underway in a state when a hurricane hit," said Dr. Nolan Newton, chief of the Public Health Pest Management Section. "Neither state nor federal officials knew what to expect in terms of increased West Nile Virus activity from floodwater mosquitoes." Assessments made after the storm indicated that it was possible that floodwater mosquitoes could spark an increase in West Nile Virus. In response, the Public Health Pest Management Section initiated aerial spraying. This quick response prevented an increase in mosquito-borne illnesses.

Hurricane Isabel offered another first for the Division of Coastal Management. Following the storm, Secretary Bill Ross activated an emergency general permit offered by the division. The permit had been adopted three years previously by the Coastal Resources Commission as a way to speed up recovery and rebuilding after hurricanes. Property owners along sounds, rivers and creeks who needed to replace structures that were damaged by the storm could do so under this permit.

People weren't the only ones who needed help following Hurricane Isabel. Three wild horses from the Rachel Carson Estuarine Research Reserve in Beaufort were found on Shackleford Banks following the storm. "In the 20 years I've been here," said John Taggart, manager of the North Carolina Coastal Reserves at the time, "the only time I'm aware of horses going from one place to another was, we had a horse go across Taylor's Creek into Beaufort, and we've had horses that have gone to Radio Island, but those distances are only a few hundred yards. This time the distance was more than a mile. This was an extreme event because of the storm."

Staff from Rachel Carson and the National Park Service safely transported the horses back to the reserve. The three horses were darted with anesthetics, captured, lifted onto panels and taken by boat to Rachel Carson. They were placed in a pen and monitored during their recovery from the anesthetics. A state veterinarian examined the horses and found them to be healthy. The horses then rejoined the Rachel Carson herd.



The town of Buxton on Hatteras Island was largely under water following Hurricane Isabel. N.C. Division of Environmental Health.

Hurricanes Frances and Ivan, 2004

Hurricane Frances landed on Florida's east coast on Sept. 5, 2004. By Sept. 8, the storm had made it to North Carolina with winds still gusting between 40 and 60 miles per hour. Ten to 15 inches of rain fell in parts of the state. As North Carolinians were closely watching Frances approach, Hurricane Ivan had become the Atlantic's ninth named storm of the season. It made landfall as a Category 3 storm along the Gulf Coast of Alabama. From there it made its way north, delivering more wind and rain to the already battered western part of the state.

In the midst of the storms, Division of Water Quality staff in the Asheville Regional Office worked around flooded roads to help permittees at wastewater facilities and animal operations solve their problems and bring their treatment systems back into compliance. Staff also worked with other local, state and federal agencies to provide technical assistance and to assess potential water quality threats.

The combination of high winds, heavy rains and steep slopes during Frances and Ivan resulted in more than 400 landslides in the area. The Peeks Creek debris flow in Macon County killed five people and destroyed 15 homes. The Division of Land Resources' Geological Survey provided emergency technical assistance to local and state emergency management personnel. Geological Survey staff inspected landslide sites, participated in technical review committees to determine landslide causes and predict where they were likely to happen again, presented information to local government and interest groups and provided public safety information to the news media.

The Geological Survey wasn't the only group from the Division of Land Resources called on for assistance. Staff in the Dam Safety Program were also critical in the emergency response activities following the storms. Personnel from the Asheville and Winston-Salem regional offices made more than 150 emergency inspections of high-hazard-potential dams within a short period of time to determine if flood flows were endangering or had weakened the dams. Dam Safety staff provided on-site technical assistance for excavating emergency channels adjacent to three high-hazard-potential dams to relieve the overtopping spillways. These three dams would likely have otherwise failed, which would have caused severe damage downstream.

The Division of Forest Resources was involved in recovery efforts after Frances and Ivan as well. Requests were made for Forest Service Incident Management teams to support the emergency response and recovery efforts that were underway. More than 300 division personnel were involved with this request. In order to expedite the cleanup of debris that was left behind by the storms, the Division of Waste Management also aided communities. It provided local governments and citizens with technical assistance towards the cleanup and management of vegetative debris, demolition waste and household waste.

Division of Forest Resources personnel assist with loading water onto National Guard cargo aircraft for distribution. N.C. Division of Forest Resources.



Damaged piers and downed power lines on Bogue Banks following Hurricane Ophelia. Robert McCabe, Carteret County.

Hurricane Ophelia, 2005

The 2005 Atlantic Hurricane season is one that surely nobody will soon forget. With 27 named storms, it claims the title of most named storms ever recorded in a single hurricane season. It was the 2005 season that delivered hurricanes Katrina and Rita to the Gulf Coast. Oddly enough, the 2005 hurricane that severely impacted North Carolina never officially made landfall. Instead, on Sept. 14 and 15, the storm raked the southeastern North Carolina coast from Cape Fear to the Outer Banks, with the eye of the storm staying just offshore.

The Division of Environmental Health was, as always, ready to help wherever needed following the storm. Public Water Supply Section staff were in the field evaluating isolated areas and providing technical assistance. They also provided daily reports of public water supply systems that had issued advisories and updated reports as soon as the advisories had been lifted. The division's Shellfish Sanitation and Recreational Water Quality Section closed all shellfish waters statewide and issued swimming advisories for all coastal recreational waters. Water quality samples were collected and tested until results indicated that they had returned to normal. Division staff also worked with local health departments to help them meet emergency needs.



Photo courtesy of NC Dept. of Crime Control & Public Safety

Is It Hot In Here?



Global climate change poses obstacles unlike any we have seen before. It will take the work of many people in many organizations to address the issue. There are innovative examples of actions being taken in our state right now.

A Climate Action Plan

Scientific measurements have documented a substantial increase in CO₂ levels in the atmosphere since the mid-1800s. There has been a growing scientific consensus that increasing emissions of greenhouse gases, such as CO₂, to the atmosphere are increasing the temperature and variability of the earth's climate. Recognizing the profound implications that global warming and climate variation could have on the economy, environment and quality of life in North Carolina, the Department of Environment and Natural Resources established the Climate Action Plan Advisory Group in 2006. The purpose of this group, managed by the Division of Air Quality, was to make recommendations for specific actions to help reduce or cope with climate change in the state. These recommendations would include measures for reducing greenhouse gas emissions and sequestering or removing such gases from the atmosphere, as well as analyses of their likely economic costs and benefits.

The Climate Action Plan Advisory Group was made up of more than 40 members representing a broad range of backgrounds and interests including industry, environmental groups, government agencies, academic institutions, agriculture, forestry, coastal interests, real estate, tourism and other businesses. The group closely coordinated its work with the Legislative Commission on Global Climate Change. The General Assembly established the commission in 2005, and it was focusing on broader issues related to climate change, such as whether North Carolina should set a cap or goal for reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Working as part of the CAPAG were five technical work groups. These were comprised of CAPAG members as well as experts in the specific field of the work group. Work groups were formed in the areas of: Energy Supply; Residential, Commercial, Industrial; Transportation and Land Use; Agriculture, Forestry and Waste Management; and Cross-Cutting Issues. In 2008, the CAPAG's official final report was completed, offering 56 recommended mitigation options. The mitigation options are distributed across the five work group fields, and an expected greenhouse gas reduction value has been attributed to each. In addition, the net economic value of each was indicated. This economic analysis indicated significant cost savings for the state's economy overall if the mitigation options are adopted.

The Climate Registry

In 2007, North Carolina became one of 30 members of The Climate Registry. The Registry is aimed at measuring, tracking and verifying emissions of greenhouse gases that contribute to global climate change. "Getting accurate data on greenhouse gas emissions is a vital step towards addressing the potential impacts of climate change in North Carolina," said Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Bill Ross. "The registry provides a way for states to share resources and synchronize our programs."

The Division of Air Quality has been encouraging air emissions sources to participate in The Climate Registry. Companies, institutions and government agencies that volunteer to join agree to calculate and report their greenhouse gas emissions. DAQ Deputy Director Brock Nicholson said, "Sources that participate in The Climate Registry will help us obtain accurate data on greenhouse gases while preparing for future issues dealing with climate change." The registry is seen as a key part of efforts to cope with climate change, and it is hoped that it will encourage market-based approaches toward dealing with global warming.





Local Ties

Many of the department's agencies serve statewide roles, but that doesn't mean that they are not connected and committed to the communities in which they are located. Many community members are committed to agencies as well.



The restored Pisgah Covered Bridge. N.C. Zoo photo.

The Pisgah Covered Bridge

The N.C. Zoological Park in Asheboro may have animals from all over the world and take part in projects across the globe, but it is closely linked to and supportive of its local community. This was evidenced in the summer of 2003 when floods washed away the nearby Randolph County landmark, the Pisgah Covered Bridge. Zoo Director Dr. David Jones pledged the zoo's efforts toward rebuilding the structure.

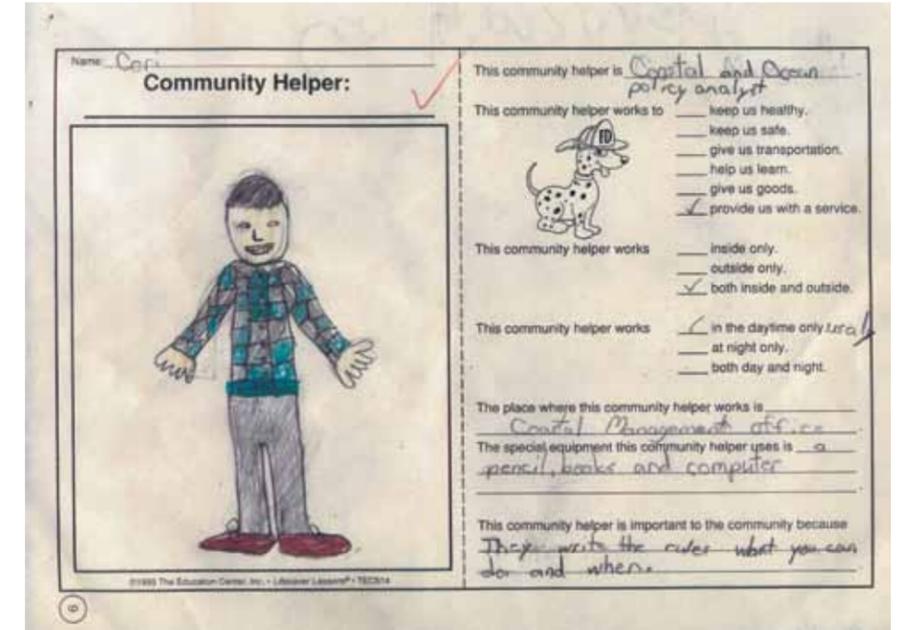
The Pisgah Covered Bridge was one of only two surviving covered bridges in the state. It was originally built in 1911, spanning a branch of the Little River. Zoo employees salvaged as much of the original 51-foot wooden structure as possible after it was washed away. In less than a year, \$80,000 had been raised. In May 2004, the restored bridge was reopened.

A Community Helper

Mike Lopazanski has a picture on his office door that was drawn by his daughter, Cori. It was a school assignment to draw a picture of a community helper. Most kids probably drew firemen or policemen or nurses, but Cori decided to draw her dad in his role as an ocean and coastal policy analyst for the Division of Coastal Management.

Not everyone may agree with this designation as a community helper, but Mike definitely does. He sees his role as helping coastal communities protect their valuable and irreplaceable environmental resources, while at the same time addressing economic development concerns.

In describing how he ended up in the Division of Coastal Management, Mike said, "I just fell in love with the North Carolina coast, and then I found out about this agency called Coastal Management that would actually pay me to help protect it. It was my ideal job, to make a living protecting this amazing place." Mike believes that working for the Division of Coastal Management is the best way to affect coastal policy and help try to find the delicate balance between economic development and resource development. A community helper indeed!



Cori's drawing of her dad as a community helper.

Community Conservation

Until recently, very little help was available for owners of small land parcels for controlling erosion and runoff on their properties. In 2006, the Division of Soil and Water Conservation began administering the Community Conservation Assistance Program to provide educational, technical and financial assistance to these landowners. Landowners apply to the program through and receive help from their local Soil and Water Conservation District for projects such as backyard rain gardens, cisterns and more.

One CCAP project that began in 2007 was the result of a contract between the North Carolina Coastal Federation and the Onslow County Soil & Water Conservation District. The project was located on Jones Island, at the mouth of the White Oak River. Through the project, volunteers including high school students, staff from Hammocks Beach State Park and concerned citizens planted more than 5,000 marsh plants to stabilize the shoreline and create coastal marsh habitat.

"The Community Conservation Assistance Program has allowed us to expand our coastal habitat and water quality restoration efforts through shoreline protection and installation of stormwater runoff controls such as cisterns and stormwater wetlands. Thanks to the CCAP, North Carolina is one step closer to achieving its goal of improving water quality by reducing polluted stormwater runoff polluting our waterways."

Dr. Lexia Weaver, Coastal Restoration Specialist – North Carolina Coastal Federation

Volunteers do work at Hammocks Beach State Park. N.C. Division of Soil and Water Conservation.



Adkin Branch

In 1999, the rains of Hurricane Floyd turned more than 200 properties along Adkin Branch into a virtual wasteland. A tributary of the Neuse River in Kinston, Adkin Branch has been the focus of the Ecosystem Enhancement Program for more than five years. In partnership with the city of Kinston and landowners along the creek, the EEP has been planning to re-engineer Adkin Branch to improve water quality and aquatic habitat and reduce flooding.

The major endeavor will include reshaping the eroding stream banks of the creek. Vertical bulkheads will be removed, and the banks will be reshaped into a sloped form. Vegetation will also be planted along the stream. Reshaping the banks and planting these buffers will help make future flooding less severe. "When there is a rain event and the water starts to rise," explained Kristie Corson, an environmental specialist with EEP, "it has an area to flood naturally."

Corson sees the restoration of the creek going well beyond water quality and flood capacity. She sees the stream becoming an outdoor classroom for neighboring schools. She has reached out to local teachers and hopes to work with them through a program called Project WET, or Water Education for Teachers. Project WET is a hands-on, environmental education program that provides teachers with field-tested lesson plans and training focused on water quality.

"Our project in Kinston has the potential to help residents there learn and understand more about the importance of preserving our natural resources in an urban setting," said Corson. "And when you get right down to it, that's what all of our projects should be about."



EEP will begin work on the restoration of degraded Adkin Branch in Kinston in 2009. Ecosystem Enhancement Program.

A Boy and His Aquarium

Seven-year-old Jackson Alexander came to the N.C. Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores the day before it shut down for its 2.5-year-long renovation. The Kinston resident was one of the aquarium's biggest fans, visiting often with his grandmother who lived on Emerald Isle. The rising second-grader and budding entrepreneur had a plan to help do some fundraising. Jackson created his own aquarium at his grandmother's house, creating five marine habitats in small aquariums and populating them with plastic animals. He then charged \$2 for friends and neighbors to visit 'Alexander's Aquarium at the Beach House.' "I thought if I helped raise money, maybe the aquarium would open sooner," he explained.

In fall 2005, Jackson stopped by the aquarium's temporary location to deliver his contribution - \$70 worth of coins! Aquarium Director Jay Barnes came out to meet him and thank him for his generous donation. Jackson got a behind-the-scenes tour of the husbandry holding area, and was promised a behind-the-scenes tour of the renovated facility just as soon as it opened.

Jackson was invited to help cut the ribbon on the new facility at the opening ceremony on May 19, 2006. He made it all look easy, chatting with Department of Environment and Natural Resources Secretary Bill Ross and cutting the ribbon alongside Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue. Then he made a beeline for the entrance, and was the first visitor through the door.

Jackson Alexander cuts the ribbon of the renovated Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores in 2006 with Director Jay Barnes, Roy Park Jr., donor, Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue and Pine Knoll Shores Mayor Joan Lamson. Bob Roush, N.C. Aquariums.



Jackson Alexander walks with DENR Secretary Bill Ross, Lt. Gov. Beverly Perdue and former N.C. Aquariums Society Chairman David Womack. Bob Roush, N.C. Aquariums. 2006



Every Drop Counts

In the past eight years North Carolina has seen some of the worst drought on record. The agencies of the Department of Environment and Natural Resources have worked hard to conserve our precious water resources and educate people about what they can do to save water.



Falls Lake during the 2007 drought. N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission

Water Advisory

The Drought Monitoring Council was an interagency collaboration that was created in 1992. During the 2002 drought, the council did an exemplary job of monitoring and coordinating drought response. In recognition of its leadership and performance, the General Assembly gave the group a statutory base in 2003, at which time the name was also changed to the Drought Management Advisory Council to reflect the broader role which it was to play. The Department of Environment and Natural Resources' Division of Water Resources leads the council.

The Drought Management Advisory Council issued its first drought advisory under new statutory authority in October 2005. This advisory, and the many that have followed, provided local governments and other water users reliable information on which to base their management decisions. The Division of Water Resources maintains the Web site for the council, where detailed drought assessment and water use information can be found. When determining the issuance of a drought advisory, the council takes into account stream flows, groundwater levels, the amount of water stored in reservoirs, weather forecasts and time of year. It tailors advisories to local conditions, which is extremely helpful to local governments making water-use decisions.

Saving for a Rainy Day

Thanks to a grant from the Albemarle Pamlico National Estuary Program, the N.C. Aquarium on Roanoke Island is saving a lot of water! Since 2005, the aquarium has been using four 2,500-gallon rainwater collection cisterns. On rainy days, water used to pour off of the roof of the aquarium's main building. A lot of water can pour off of a roof that is more than 7,300 square feet! The grant allowed the aquarium to have cisterns designed and constructed that would collect and store this water.

The cistern water is used to fill exhibit tanks in the aquarium's Coastal Freshwater Gallery, irrigate plants inside the conservatory, irrigate outdoor gardens, fill the sculpture pond and help with outdoor cleaning and maintenance. Educational signs were also constructed and placed at the tanks to teach aquarium visitors about the project.

The initiative was a partnership effort from the beginning. The aquarium's staff worked with Cooperative Extension as well as stormwater experts from the Biological and Agricultural Engineering Department at North Carolina State University's College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. The aquarium relied on the expertise of these agencies, and now these agencies can use the site as a demonstration project for workshops and show others how they can save water, too.



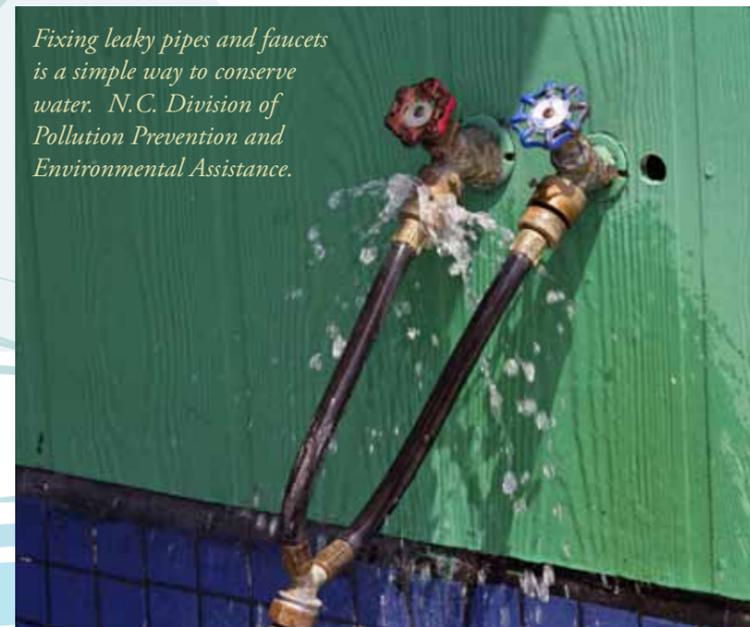
Cisterns at the N.C. Aquarium on Roanoke Island. N.C. Aquariums.

Water-Saving Tools

During the major drought that struck North Carolina in 2007, the Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance stepped up to the plate to help everyone. Division staff developed a Web site that provided information to citizens, water systems, state agencies and business and industry. This Web site became the basis for SaveWaterNC.org, a joint effort between the Department of Environment and Natural Resources, the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety and the Governor's Office.

Thanks to DPPEA, no matter who you are, you can easily learn about ways that you can save water. For citizens, the division developed a brochure entitled 10 Simple Ways to Save Water. It gives helpful, simple and inexpensive suggestions such as checking for and repairing leaks in the home, refitting plumbing and using appliances wisely. It also lets people know where they can go for more detailed information on what they need. A similar brochure was created for business and industry. It lets businesses know where they can find industry-specific water conservation documents developed by the division. In addition, division staff worked throughout the state holding meetings, presentations and workshops for the public, government agencies and businesses. DPPEA quickly provided North Carolinians with the information they needed during a time of crisis.

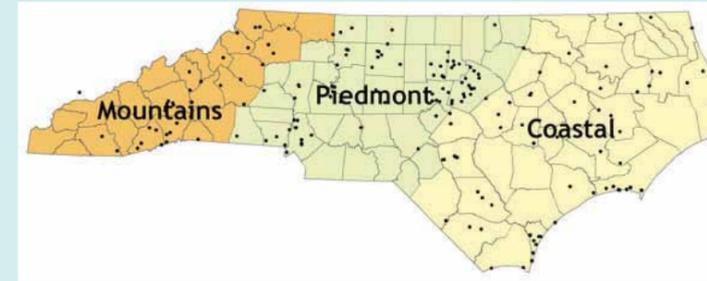
Fixing leaky pipes and faucets is a simple way to conserve water. N.C. Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance.



Places to Go, Things to Do

Seminars, workshops, fairs,
outdoor excursions...the
list of places to visit and
activities offered by the
Department of Environment
and Natural Resources goes
on and on!

Merchants Millpond State Park. Bill Russ, N.C. Tourism.



*A map of North Carolina's environmental education centers.
N.C. Office of Environmental Education.*

Environmental Education Centers

Did you know that in 2008 there were 185 environmental education centers across the state of North Carolina? In the last eight years, the list of centers has grown, and the N.C. Office of Environmental Education continues to help promote and identify these centers.

An environmental education center is any facility that provides quality environmental education for the public, including outdoor experiences, exhibits and programs. They include state park visitor centers, the N.C. Zoological Park, the three state Aquariums, the Museum of Natural Sciences and our state's educational state forests. Environmental education

centers can also be county or city parks and nature centers, private entities or university-supported centers.

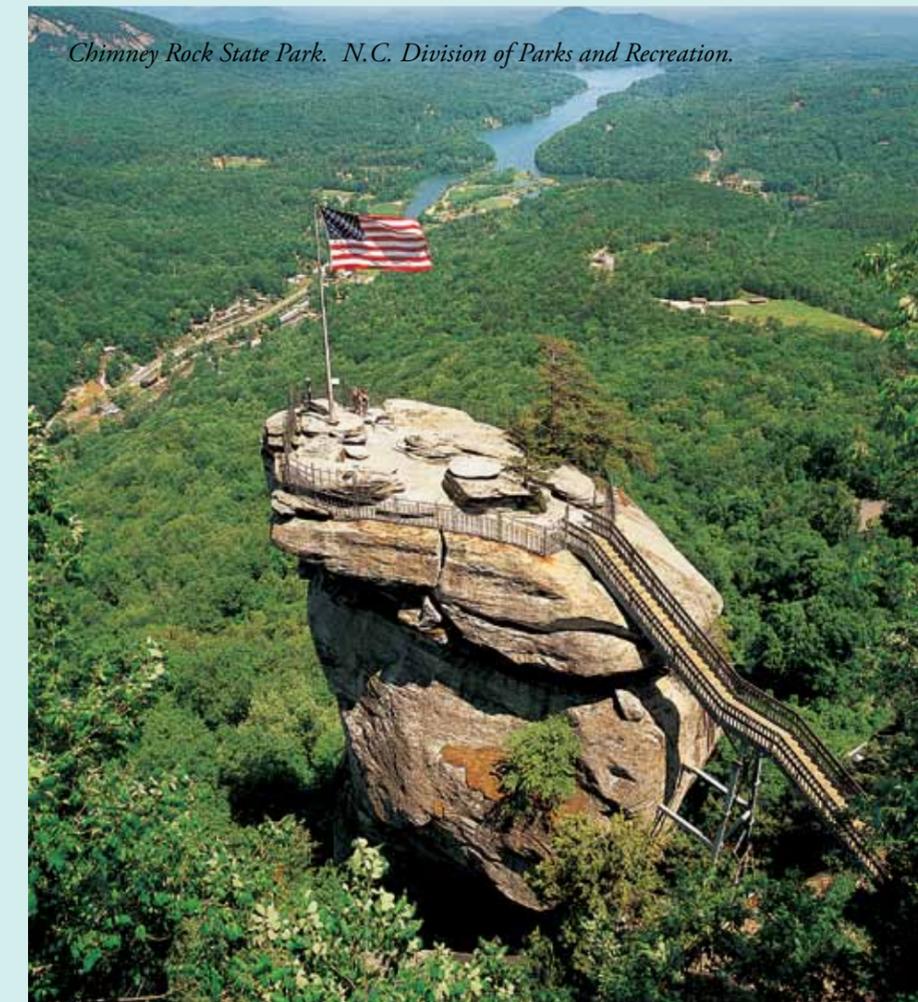
The Office of Environmental Education promotes these centers in a variety of ways on its Web site. Visitors to the site will find a complete listing of all of the centers, a map showing where each center is located in the state, as well as a center search feature. The office also highlights centers that are incorporating art, health and green building through programs, exhibits and facilities. These centers are highlighted and designated as ArtsEE, HealthEE and GrEEen centers, respectively. In 2008, the office updated a print guide to the state's environmental education centers that will soon be printed and distributed. With so many environmental education centers in North Carolina, there is always a new place to learn and explore!

Chimney Rock – A Crown Jewel

The state parks system was in the process of developing a new park in the Hickory Nut Gorge, which offers stunning scenery as well as high-quality natural resources, when the Morse family proposed the idea of adding Chimney Rock, which it owned at the time. The 1,000-acre tourist destination with a 100-year history was a linchpin in a span of properties being acquired for the new state park. It offered some of the gorge's most spectacular views as well as opportunities to broaden the protection of fragile natural resources. It also provided ready-made visitor amenities surrounding the 315-foot-tall rock spire.

The 2007 acquisition involved a partnership that grew to include the state parks system, the state's conservation trust funds, several land conservancies, the General Assembly, Gov. Mike Easley and the local communities in the gorge. The project of the Division of Parks and Recreation has grown to more than 4,000 acres, and a master plan is being readied that will ensure a world-class state park.

"The acquisition of Chimney Rock adds one of the most visible images of our North Carolina landscape to our state parks system, alongside Mount Mitchell, Jockey's Ridge, Pilot Mountain and other crown jewels," said Gov. Mike Easley when making the announcement of the purchase. Chimney Rock is a nationally known landmark and an icon in the North Carolina landscape. Its acquisition was both a testament to partnership and the result of a thoughtful conservation plan.



Chimney Rock State Park. N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation.

Discover the World Outside

An increasing amount of research shows that spending time outdoors has many benefits to both the mental and physical health of adults and children. The Office of Environmental Education has been sharing this information and making spending time outside easier for people in North Carolina.

The Discover the World Outside postcards, created in 2007, relate the many physical and mental benefits of spending time outdoors. Some of these cards were targeted towards parents and highlight the specific benefits for children. Others were aimed at reaching the young adult population in our state. All of the postcards share recent research findings and direct people to the statewide environmental education calendar, a great resource to help people discover the world outside wherever they live!

The environmental education calendar features events, workshops and classes happening across the state. All environmental education organizations and centers can post their events to the calendar, so it's truly the one place for all of North Carolina's environmental education happenings. Users can also search for upcoming events by keyword or location. It makes it easy to find out what is going on in any area across the state to help plan your next outdoor adventure!

One of the Office of Environmental Education's Discover the World Outside postcards.

Wouldn't it be nice if fighting childhood obesity was as simple as stepping outside?

Turns out it is

An increasing amount of research shows that spending time outdoors has many positive impacts on a child's physical and mental health and development.

Kids who spend more time outside tend to:

- Be more physically active and therefore have lower levels of obesity
- Score higher on standardized tests
- Have fewer symptoms of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder
- Experience less stress than other children their age

We all want these things for children!

Encourage your kids to discover the world outside!



Science Café

Curious about hurricanes? Well, why don't you discuss them over a cold beverage with the director of the State Climate Office? Want to know more about the bird flu? Ask questions of an immunology specialist over a cup of coffee. That's the idea behind the Science Café, a joint project of the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences and the Research Triangle Park Chapter of Sigma Xi.

The Science Café began in 2006 and has been very popular. The aim of the project is to promote public engagement with science and make science more accessible. Each month, leaders in the fields of science and technology discuss the latest issues or newest findings at a coffee shop, bar or restaurant in the Raleigh area. Anyone is welcome to join in the conversation. Past topics have included alternative fuels, dinosaurs, beekeeping and dog behavior.

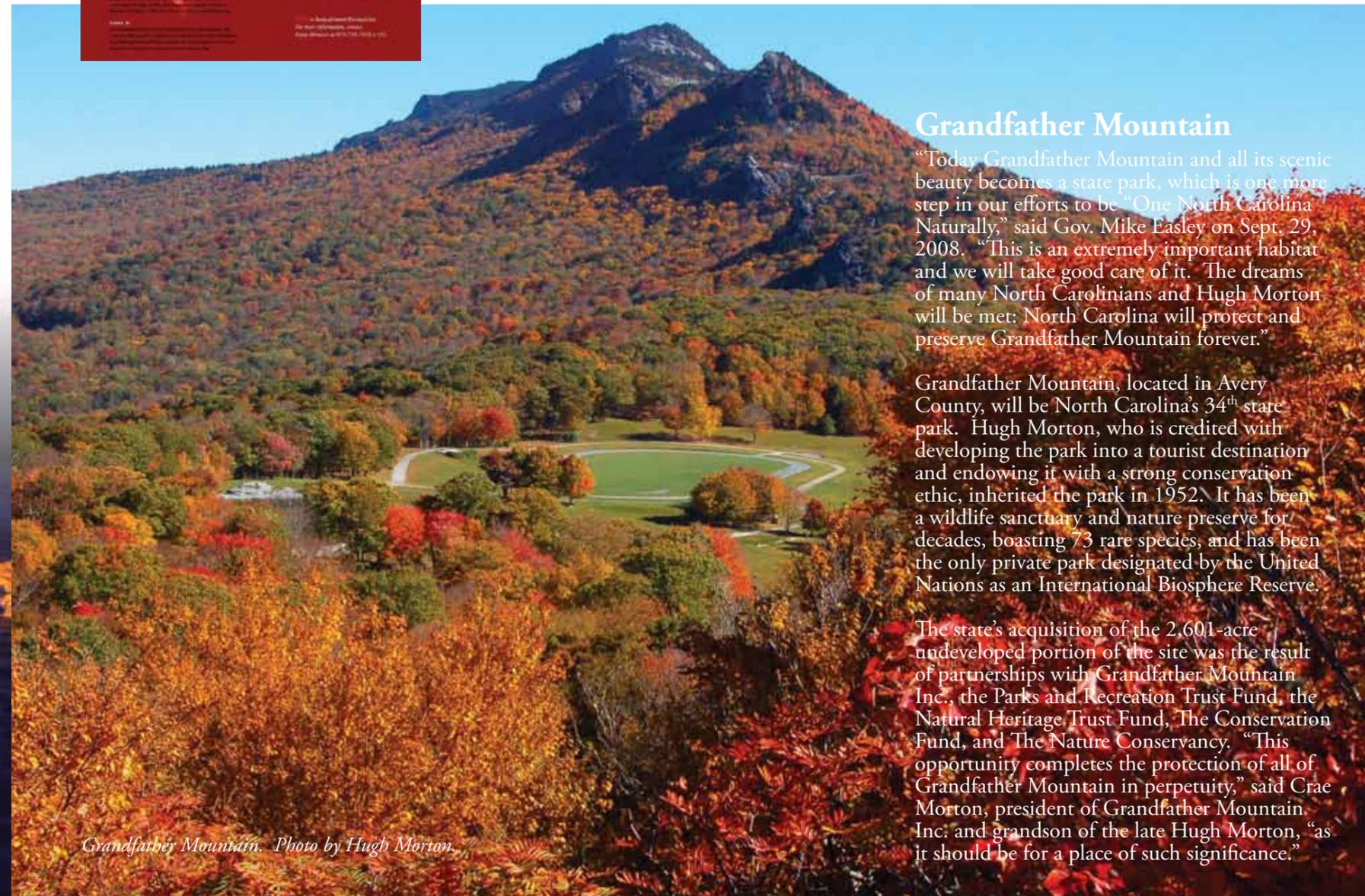
Poster promoting the Science Café. Poster design by Jeff Williford, N.C. Museum of Natural Sciences.



I'd Like to Make a Reservation

In 2007, North Carolina's state parks system had a record 13.4 million visitors! To help rangers and other park staff manage this growing level of visitation, the parks system is developing a full-service, Internet- and call center-based reservations system. The system will track reservations for nearly 3,000 campsites, 106 picnic shelters, nine community buildings and other conference rooms and auditoriums. "We're confident this will be a state-of-the-art system that will not only help our visitors get more enjoyment from the state parks, but help the parks and their rangers manage ever-growing visitation," said Lewis Ledford, director of the state parks system.

Beach camping at Hammocks Beach State Park. Bill Russ, N.C. Tourism.



Grandfather Mountain

"Today Grandfather Mountain and all its scenic beauty becomes a state park, which is one more step in our efforts to be "One North Carolina Naturally," said Gov. Mike Easley on Sept. 29, 2008. "This is an extremely important habitat and we will take good care of it. The dreams of many North Carolinians and Hugh Morton will be met: North Carolina will protect and preserve Grandfather Mountain forever."

Grandfather Mountain, located in Avery County, will be North Carolina's 34th state park. Hugh Morton, who is credited with developing the park into a tourist destination and endowing it with a strong conservation ethic, inherited the park in 1952. It has been a wildlife sanctuary and nature preserve for decades, boasting 73 rare species, and has been the only private park designated by the United Nations as an International Biosphere Reserve.

The state's acquisition of the 2,601-acre undeveloped portion of the site was the result of partnerships with Grandfather Mountain Inc., the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the Natural Heritage Trust Fund, The Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy. "This opportunity completes the protection of all of Grandfather Mountain in perpetuity," said Crae Morton, president of Grandfather Mountain, Inc. and grandson of the late Hugh Morton, "as it should be for a place of such significance."

Grandfather Mountain. Photo by Hugh Morton.