

# SYSTEMWIDE PLAN FOR NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS

## CHAPTER TWO STATE OF THE SYSTEM

Updated for FY 2011-2012

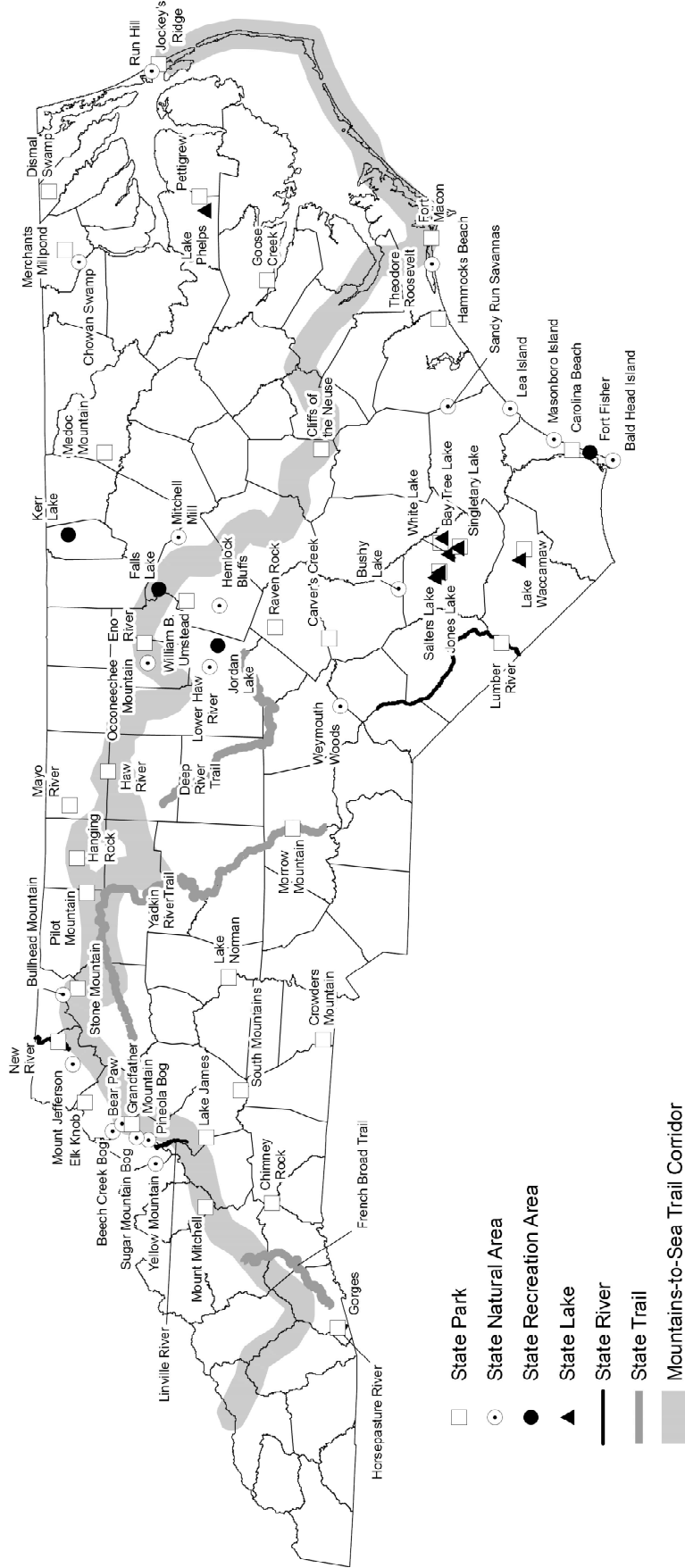
### SYSTEM UNITS

As of July 1, 2012, the North Carolina State Parks System consists of 74 units, 41 of which are operated for the visiting public with on-site staff and regular gate hours. The remaining units are managed in one of the following ways: as part of an operated park, as a satellite unit, or through cooperative and partnership agreements. For example, Lake Phelps State Lake is managed as part of Pettigrew State Park. Run Hill State Natural Area is a satellite of Jockeys Ridge State Park. Hemlock Bluffs State Natural Area is leased to the Town of Cary in a cooperative agreement, and the Mountains-to-Sea State Trail is an example of a protection partnership with other agencies and organizations.

**Table 2.1. Size of the State Parks System**

<b>SIZE OF THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS SYSTEM As of July 2011</b>			
<b>Unit Type</b>	<b>Units</b>	<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Length(Miles)</b>
State Parks	35	151,775	
State Recreation Areas	4	12,240	
State Natural Areas	20	22,254	
State Lakes	7	29,135	
State Rivers	4	0	146
State Trails	4	1,965	727
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>217,368</b>	<b>873</b>
Land Area		188,233	
Water Area (State Lakes)		29,135	
Easements		803	
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>217,368</b>	

# North Carolina State Parks System



Aug 2012

**Table 2.2. The 74 State Parks System Units with Acreages as of July 1, 2012**

<b>STATE PARKS (land area only)</b>		<b>Size (acres)</b>	<b>STATE RECREATION AREAS (land area only)</b>		<b>Size (acres)</b>
Bay Tree		609	Falls Lake		5,035
Carolina Beach		420	Fort Fisher		287
Carvers Creek		4,332	Jordan Lake		3,916
Chimney Rock		5,942	Kerr Lake		3,002
Cliffs Of The Neuse		892	<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12,240</b>
Crowders Mountain		5,126	<b>STATE NATURAL AREAS (land area only)</b>		
Dismal Swamp		14,432		<b>Size (acres)</b>	
Elk Knob		3,473	Baldhead Island		1,260
Eno River		4,197	Bear Paw		351
Fort Macon		424	Beech Creek Bog		120
Goose Creek		1,672	Bullhead Mountain		365
Gorges		7,708	Bushy Lake		6,343
Grandfather Mountain		2,456	Chowan Swamp		6,066
Hammocks Beach		1,155	Hemlock Bluffs		97
Hanging Rock		7,049	Lea Island		25
Haw River		1,374	Lower Haw River		1,022
Jockeys Ridge		426	Masonboro Island		106
Jones Lake		1,669	Mitchell Mill		93
Lake James		3,515	Mount Jefferson		803
Lake Norman		1,917	Occoneechee Mtn.		162
Lake Waccamaw		2,159	Pineola Bog		91
Lumber River		9,268	Run Hill		123
Mayo River		1,961	Sandy Run Savannas		2,538
Medoc Mountain		3,892	Sugar Mountain Bog		
Merchants Millpond		3,447	Theodore Roosevelt		
Morrow Mountain		4,496	Weymouth Woods		
Mount Mitchell		1,996	Yellow Mountain		1
New River		2,707	<b>Total</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>22</b>
Pettigrew		5,568	<b>STATE LAKES (water area only)</b>		
Pilot Mountain		3,651		<b>Size (acres)</b>	
Raven Rock		4,694	Bay Tree		1
Singletary Lake		649	Jones		1
South Mountains		18,491	Phelps		16
Stone Mountain		14,210	Waccamaw		8
William B. Umstead		5,599	Salters		1
<b>Total</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>151,775</b>	Singletary		1
			White		1
			<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>STATE RIVERS</b>			<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Length (miles)</b>	
			Horsepasture	0	4.5
			Linville	0	13.0
			Lumber	0	102.0
			New	0	26.5
	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>146.0</b>
<b>STATE TRAILS</b>			<b>Size (Acres)</b>	<b>Length (miles)</b>	
			Deep River	1,274	0
			French Broad River	0	67
			Mountains To Sea	691	530
			Yadkin River	0	130
	<b>4</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>1,965</b>	<b>727</b>

Figure 2.1. Map of the North Carolina State Parks System

## TYPES OF UNITS

The State Parks Act of 1987 lists six types of units included in the North Carolina State Parks System: State Parks, State Natural Areas, State Recreation Areas, State Trails, State Rivers, and State Lakes.

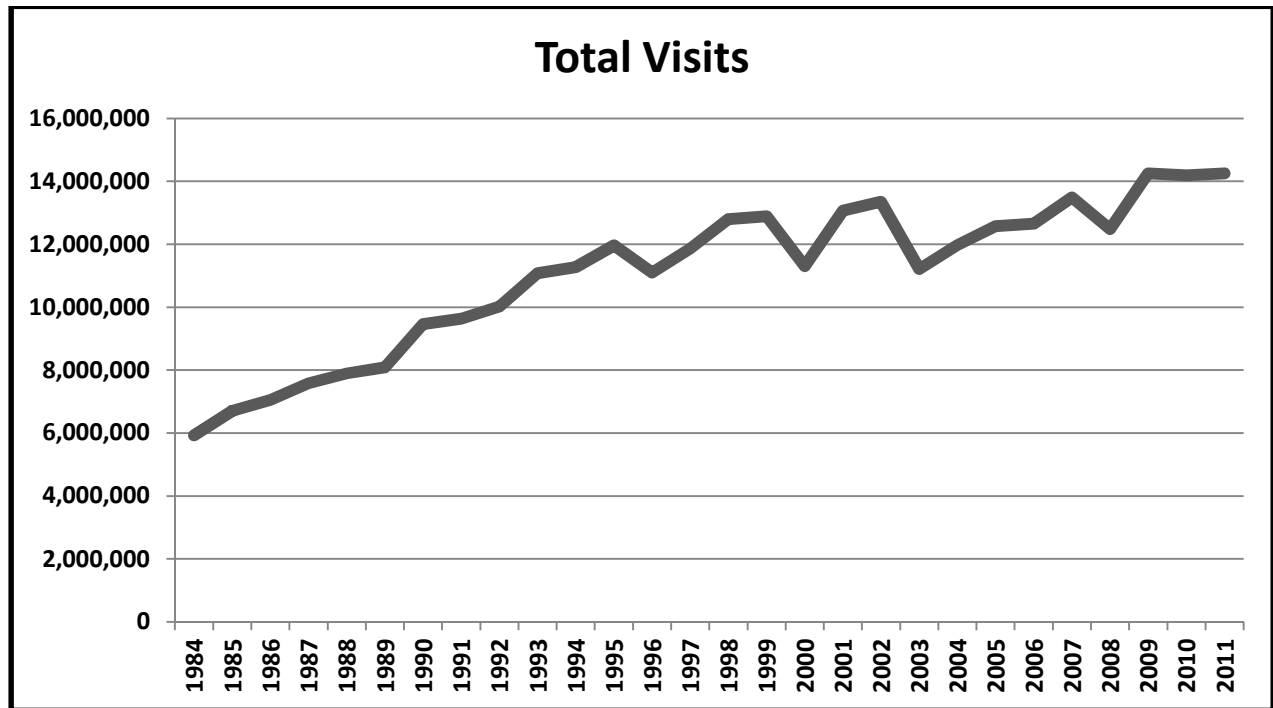
- **State Park** - North Carolina's first State Park was established at Mount Mitchell in 1916 to protect the summit of the highest mountain in the eastern U.S. There are currently 35 State Parks in the system. Generally, State Parks are expected to possess both significant natural resource values and significant recreational values. State Parks are expected to accommodate the development of facilities, but may vary in the extent of development depending upon what can be provided without damage to the scenic or natural features. Facilities are planned and constructed to keep disturbance of natural resources to a minimum and to leave a large portion of each park undisturbed and free from improvements and structures, except for trails.
- **State Natural Area** - State Natural Areas were established as a separate type of system unit in 1963 with the adoption of separate principles for management. The first State Natural Area was created that same year. There are currently 20 State Natural Areas. The purpose of State Natural Areas is focused on preserving and protecting areas of scientific, aesthetic, or ecological value. Facilities are limited to those needed for interpretation, protection, and minimum maintenance. Generally, recreational and public use facilities such as camping, swimming, picnicking and the like are not provided in State Natural Areas.
- **State Recreation Area** - State Recreation Areas are sites where the primary purpose is outdoor recreation, rather than preservation. More intensive development of facilities is provided than in State Parks. Protection and enjoyment of the natural resources are still important, and the sites are expected to contain scenic and attractive natural features. Development is planned and constructed to keep a "reasonable amount" of each area undisturbed and free from improvements and structures. The first State Recreation Area was added to the system in 1971, and principles to guide the development and operation of State Recreation Areas were adopted in 1974. There are currently four State Recreation Areas.
- **State Trail** - The North Carolina Trails System Act was passed in 1973 to help provide for the state's outdoor recreation needs and to promote public access to natural and scenic areas. The act prescribed methods for establishing a statewide system of scenic trails, recreation trails, and connecting or side trails. The Trails System includes "State Trails", which are designated and managed as units of the state parks system, and "designated trails", which are regional connector trails managed by other governmental agencies or organizations. At present there are four State Trails.
- **State River** - The Natural and Scenic Rivers System was created by the 1971 General Assembly to preserve and protect certain free flowing rivers, their water quality and their adjacent lands for the benefit of present and future generations. The Natural and Scenic Rivers Act established criteria and methods for inclusion of components to the system. Components of the Natural and Scenic Rivers System are State Rivers, and are also units of the state parks system. Currently there are four State Rivers.

- State Lake** - Chapter 165 of the Laws of 1929 specified that “all lakes now belonging to the State having an area of 50 acres or more” should be “administered as provided for other recreational areas now owned by the State.” This allowed the then-Department of Conservation and Development to assume management authority for seven Coastal Plain lakes that became units of the state parks system known as State Lakes. Most of these are administratively included as part of an adjoining State Park, but one of the lakes (White Lake) has no public ownership on its shoreline.

## VISITATION

Total visitor attendance for 2011 was 14,255,859, which was a new all-time record. Visitation fluctuates from year to year based on weather conditions, facility closures, and the state of the economy, but the trend over time is for increasing visitation (Figure (2.2)).

Park units with the highest attendance have been the state recreation areas located on reservoirs (Kerr Lake State Recreation Area, Jordan Lake State Recreation Area, and Falls Lake State Recreation Area) as well as coastal parks and recreation areas located in popular vacation destinations (Jockey’s Ridge State Park, Fort Macon State Park and Fort Fisher State Recreation Area). These six park units accounted for over 6 million visits or nearly half of the total state parks system attendance (Table 2. 3).



**Figure 2.2. State Parks System Visitation 1975-2011**

**Table 2.3. State Park Visitation by Park Unit 2011**

<b>North Carolina State Parks System Unit</b>	<b>Total Visits 2011</b>
Carolina Beach State Park	549,342
Carvers Creek State Park	10
Chimney Rock State Park	167,532
Cliffs of the Neuse State Park	166,674
Crowders Mountain State Park	359,970
Dismal Swamp State Park	78,067
Elk Knob State Natural Area	34,022
Eno River State Park	413,694
Falls Lake State Recreation Area	863,023
Fort Fisher State Recreation Area	809,698
Fort Macon State Park	1,295,170
Goose Creek State Park	251,503
Gorges State Park	92,060
Grandfather Mountain State Park	49,820
Hammocks Beach State Park	81,181
Haw River State Park	23,696
Hanging Rock State Park	516,507
Jones Lake State Park	55,067
Jordan Lake State Recreation Area	872,967
Jockey's Ridge State Park	1,323,364
Kerr Lake State Recreation Area	1,240,776
Lake James State Park	569,319
Lake Norman State Park	504,429
Lake Waccamaw State Park	86,068
Lumber River State Park	63,740
Mayo River State Park	36,227
Merchants Millpond State Park	263,567
Medoc Mountain State Park	82,236
Mount Jefferson State Natural Area	105,520
Mount Mitchell State Park	302,797
Morrow Mountain State Park	449,439
New River State Park	213,788
Occoneechee Mountain State Natural Area	73,280
Pettigrew State Park	67,610
Pilot Mountain State Park	441,904
Raven Rock State Park	152,665
Singletary Lake State Park	22,696
South Mountains State Park	196,272
Stone Mountain State Park	440,612
Weymouth Woods State Natural Area	58,367
William B. Umstead State Park	881,180
<b>System Total</b>	<b>14,255,859</b>

## VISITOR FACILITIES

In July 2012, the state parks system contained more than 1,300 roofed buildings. This figure does not include bridges, walkways, pavement, trails, or other structures.

**Table 2.4. Summary of Visitor Facilities in the North Carolina State Parks System**

<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>FACILITY</b>	<b>TOTAL</b>
Amphitheater	16	Information Station	3
Auditorium	15	Interpretive Building	7
Bathhouse	20	Laboratory	1
Boat Dock	44	Lodge	3
Boat Ramp	37	Meeting Room	14
Boathouse	5	Museum	2
Cabin - Group	119	Museum/Exhibit Hall	22
Cabin - Improved	16	Park Office	19
Campsite - Electric Hookups	511	Picnic Area	63
Campsite - Equestrian	15	Picnic Shelter	121
Campsite - No Hookups	1311	Pier	6
Campsite - Water & Electric	755	Play Area	4
Canoe Launch Point	23	Play Area w/Equipment	25
Canoe Rental Building	2	Pool	2
Classroom	20	Primitive Campsite - Drive To	26
Community Building	9	Primitive Campsite - Hike In	68
Concession	12	Primitive Campsite - Paddle To	36
Dining Hall	7	Primitive Campsite - Walk In	139
Disc Golf Hole	10	Restaurant	3
Disc Golf Tee	8	Shelter	1
District Office	2	Showerhouse	67
Entrance Station	24	Sun Shelter	6
Environmental Ed. Center	4	Swimming Area - Freshwater	19
Fishing Pier	21	Swimming Area - Ocean or Sound	5
Gazebo	3	Toilet Building	123
Group Campsite - Drive To	59	Toilet Building - Flush	15
Group Campsite - Hike In	6	Toilet Building - Non-Flush	53
Group Campsite - Walk In	20	Visitor Center	26
Historic Building	61	Water Tank	6

## FUTURE NEEDS

Park master plans and general management plans have identified future needs for land acquisition and facility development in each park. Table 2.5 shows new construction and renovation needs and Table 2.6 shows identified land acquisition needs for each park.

**Table 2.5. Construction and Repair Needs at Existing Parks**

<b>State Park Facility Construction Needs October 2012</b>			
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>New Construction</b>	<b>Repair &amp; Renovation</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Baytree Lake	\$2,028,698	\$0	\$2,028,698
Carolina Beach	\$1,701,610	\$1,456,083	\$3,157,694
Carvers Creek	\$30,375,730	\$4,778,120	\$35,153,851
Chimney Rock	\$35,333,294	\$1,099,885	\$36,433,179
Cliffs Of The Neuse	\$1,645,308	\$2,245,696	\$3,891,004
Crowder's Mountain	\$2,094,208	\$4,986,901	\$7,081,110
Dismal Swamp	\$2,886,270	\$2,886,270	\$4,207,003
Eno River	\$10,126,306	\$1,982,108	\$12,108,415
Falls Lake	\$8,746,816	\$5,681,432	\$14,428,249
Fort Fisher	\$606,599	\$0	\$606,599
Fort Macon	\$2,165,168	\$1,119,663	\$3,284,832
Goose Creek	\$7,447,636	\$0	\$7,447,636
Gorges	\$7,331,746	\$0	\$7,331,746
Hammocks Beach	\$2,584,369	\$1,832,809	\$4,417,178
Hanging Rock	\$5,310,105	\$222,753	\$5,532,859
Haw River	\$25,983,975	\$100,304	\$26,084,279
Jockey's Ridge	\$1,083,572	\$1,002,034	\$2,085,606
Jones Lake	\$1,023,226	\$1,389,360	\$2,412,587
Jordan Lake	\$206,789	\$17,808,314	\$18,015,103
Kerr Lake	\$36,350,388	\$857,734	\$37,208,123
Lake James	\$20,971,549	\$314,816	\$21,286,365
Lake Norman	\$6,620,783	\$5,681,995	\$12,302,779
Lake Waccamaw	\$7,691,291	\$0	\$7,691,291
Lumber River	\$18,864,640	\$0	\$18,864,640
Medoc Mountain	\$17,250,925	\$0	\$17,250,925
Merchants Mill Pond	\$662,411	\$1,995,684	\$2,658,096
Mitchell's Mill	\$247,853	\$0	\$247,853
Morrow Mountain	\$10,045,388	\$3,245,633	\$13,291,021
Mount Mitchell	\$0	\$4,474,387	\$4,474,387
Mount Jefferson	\$2,464,817	\$0	\$2,464,817
New River	\$3,438,861	\$0	\$3,438,861
Occoneechee Mountain	\$1,592,322	\$0	\$1,592,322
Pettigrew	\$14,435,425	\$553,394	\$14,988,819
Pilot Mountain	\$19,454,183	\$4,061,775	\$23,515,959
Raven Rock	\$3,824,201	\$2,037,111	\$5,861,313



<b>State Park Facility Construction Needs October 2012</b>			
<b>Park Name</b>	<b>New Construction</b>	<b>Repair &amp; Renovation</b>	<b>Total Cost</b>
Singletary Lake	\$2,291,484	\$0	\$2,291,484
South Mountain	\$55,483,714	\$0	\$55,483,714
Stone Mountain	\$3,393,121	\$5,827,134	\$9,220,256
Weymouth Woods	\$1,519,807	\$1,096,517	\$2,616,324
William B. Umstead	\$1,010,888	\$24,499,789	\$25,510,678
<b>GRAND TOTAL:</b>	<b>\$377,087,538</b>	<b>\$103,237,701</b>	<b>\$480,325,239</b>

**Table 2.6. State Parks System Land Acquisition Needs**

<b>NORTH CAROLINA STATE PARKS SYSTEM LAND ACQUISITION NEEDS as of July 1, 2012</b>					
<b>UNIT</b>	<b>PLANNED ACRES</b>	<b>CURRENT ACRES</b>	<b>PENDING ACRES</b>	<b>REMAINING NEEDS ACRES EST. COST</b>	
Baldhead Island	1,280	1,260	0	20	\$0
Bay Tree Lake	2,856	2,027	0	829	\$1,250,000
Bear Paw	500	351	0	149	\$2,000,000
Beech Creek Bog	250	120	0	130	\$3,250,000
Bullhead Mountain	550	365	0	185	\$3,700,000
Bushy Lake	7,367	6,343	0	1,024	\$2,600,000
Carolina Beach	485	420	0	65	\$5,000,000
Carvers Creek	8,600	4,332	0	4,268	\$21,000,000
Chimney Rock	8,716	5,942	135	2,639	\$22,000,000
Chowan Swamp	6,066	6,066	0	0	\$0
Cliffs of the Neuse	3,499	892	0	2,607	\$2,300,000
Crowders Mountain	6,714	5,126	0	1,588	\$5,900,000
Deep River	4,000	1,274	0	2,726	\$5,000,000
Dismal Swamp	14,953	14,432	0	521	\$500,000
Elk Knob	6,000	3,473	8	2,519	\$11,000,000
Eno River	6,426	4,197	1	2,228	\$23,000,000
Falls Lake	5,035	5,035	0	0	\$0
Fort Fisher	287	287	0	0	\$0
Fort Macon	473	424	0	49	\$1,000,000
Goose Creek	1,991	1,672	0	319	\$750,000
Gorges	9,641	7,708	0	1,933	\$5,000,000
Grandfather Mountain	3,000	2,456	156	388	\$3,300,000
Hammocks Beach	1,497	1,155	0	342	\$5,000,000
Hanging Rock	9,983	7,049	0	2,934	\$10,000,000
Haw River	7,220	1,374	0	5,846	\$20,000,000
Hemlock Bluffs	97	97	0	0	\$0
Jockey's Ridge	428	426	0	1	\$700,000
Jones Lake	2,238	2,208	0	30	\$80,000

UNIT	PLANNED ACRES	CURRENT ACRES	PENDING ACRES	REMAINING NEEDS	
				ACRES	EST. COST
Jordan Lake	3,916	3,916	0	0	\$0
Kerr Lake	3,203	3,002	0	201	\$2,500,000
Lake James	3,975	3,515	5	455	\$4,000,000
Lake Norman	1,995	1,917	0	78	\$1,500,000
Lake Waccamaw	14,025	11,097	0	2,928	\$6,000,000
Lea Island	200	25	0	175	\$1,000,000
Lumber River	12,959	9,268	1,510	2,181	\$15,200,000
Lower Haw River	3,000	1,022	0	1,978	\$20,000,000
Masonboro Island	106	106	0	0	\$0
Mayo River	4,500	1,961	290	2,249	\$8,500,000
Medoc Mountain	4,351	3,892	0	459	\$2,000,000
Merchants Millpond	4,940	3,447	0	1,493	\$3,750,000
Mitchell Mill	149	93	0	56	\$450,000
Morrow Mountain	6,586	4,496	0	2,090	\$3,500,000
Mountains-to-Sea	3,000	691	0	2,309	\$30,000,000
Mount Jefferson	1,800	803	217	780	\$10,000,000
Mount Mitchell	2,819	1,996	0	823	\$18,000,000
New River	6,982	2,707	0	4,275	\$25,000,000
Occoneechee Mountain	231	162	0	69	\$1,500,000
Pettigrew	26,206	22,368	63	3,775	\$7,000,000
Pilot Mountain	5,503	3,651	0	1,852	\$8,000,000
Pineloa Bog	200	91	0	109	\$1,500,000
Raven Rock	5,467	4,694	0	773	\$7,000,000
Run Hill	123	123	0	0	\$0
Sandy Run Savannas	6,000	2,538	520	2,942	\$9,000,000
Singletary Lake	1,221	1,221	0	0	\$0
South Mountains	20,861	18,491	0	2,370	\$12,400,000
Sugar Mountain Bog	200	102	0	98	\$1,350,000
Stone Mountain	16,867	14,210	0	2,657	\$2,660,000
Theodore Roosevelt	265	265	0	0	\$0
Weymouth Woods	1,583	900	15	668	\$3,500,000
White Lake	1,068	1,068	0	0	\$0
William B. Umstead	6,200	5,599	0	601	\$11,000,000
Yellow Mountain	4,000	1,421	872	1,707	\$9,000,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>294,653</b>	<b>217,369</b>	<b>3,792</b>	<b>73,491</b>	<b>\$379,640,000</b>