

North Dakota
Parks and
Recreation

2011-2012 Report

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department

Director's Comments

The past two years have challenged the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department unlike any other in the department's 50 year history.

In 2011 nearly every park in the state system was affected by flooding. Campgrounds were closed at Fort Abraham Lincoln and Cross Ranch state parks. Grahams Island State Park access was hit and miss, as Devils Lake waves crashed down on Island Road leaving behind debris that were best removed with a snowplow. The highways leading to Little Missouri State Park crumbled under the saturation they endured and campers were often forced to drive in roadside ditches during highway reconstruction. Sully Creek State Park closed as it was inundated as the Little Missouri River left its banks.

Recovery started as soon as possible. Thousands of hours of work and millions of dollars were spent to restore the parks and their campgrounds. The Island Road was raised at a cost of about \$15 million; Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park welcomed back campers in the spring; bluegrass music filled the air at Cross Ranch State Park; horse trailers made their way to Little Missouri State Park on rebuilt roads and the park celebrated its 40th anniversary.

While too much moisture was a problem in 2011, too little precipitation took its toll in 2012 as drought conditions resulted in fire bans and all the parks were on high alert. NDPRD employees did their part to put out wildfires and keep communities safe.

All during the flooding and recovery visitors kept coming to the state parks and NDPRD staff made sure they had a good time. In 2011 the system exceeded a million visitors for a third consecutive year and 2012 saw record numbers of campers and again exceeded a million visitors. While parks systems around the United States faltered and in some cases even failed, North Dakota State Parks thrived. Recreation Division programs educate young OHV and snowmobile riders all over North Dakota and continue to provide grants for development of recreational areas.

In 2015 the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department celebrates its 50th anniversary and plans are to mark the celebration in a variety of ways including legacy projects and special events. The NDPRD will use the anniversary as a means to tell its success story to the public and at the same time plan for a bright future.



NDPRD Director Mark Zimmerman

Icelandic State Park has turned the Cavalier Region into one of the premier vacation destinations in North Dakota during the summer months.

While operating at capacity almost every weekend, it brings literally thousands of visitors to our area which translates into a huge economic impact for all of us. From Main Street to medical, food to fuel, Cavalier services are being used by the many campers, which is a very welcome boost to our community. It's proximity to our local golf course, Heritage Center and Pembina County Historical Museum has also proven to be almost a perfect fit. The outstanding reputation of the park has only enhanced the pride Cavalier has in our city and I must say that it has truly been a pleasure working with all the park personnel on may of the activities scheduled throughout the year.

Mayor Ken Briese
City of Cavalier, ND

Graham's Island State Park plays a significant role in the economic impact of Devils Lake and the Lake Region.

Families and anglers come to enjoy the lake as well as what the City of Devils Lake has to offer for family adventure. As one of the top fishing destinations in the US, you can head out in the morning or evening and catch your limit of walleye, northern pike and white bass. Then enjoy the rest of the day tootling around the lake waterskiing and tubing, enjoy Sullys Hill National Game Preserve, walk through the historic museums or do some shopping in our quaint downtown area.

We've seen a significant rise in campers from Canada, Minnesota and Wisconsin, to name a few. With the road project complete we should see a significant rise in use next summer. With a beautiful setting, state-of-the-art fish cleaning station and large boat ramp, it is a premier campground in North Dakota.

Suzie Kenner
Executive Director
Devils Lake CVB

North Dakota State Parks



BEAVER LAKE

Beaver Lake State Park maintains its position of providing a unique getaway with a relaxed atmosphere and quality camping accommodations in the south central portion of the state.

The park is the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's (NDPRD) second oldest, celebrating its 80th anniversary in 2012. A number of improvements have been made to the park over the past two years with the creation of a new administrative/visitor center, addition of a third camping cabin, a new archway at the entrance to the Park Dedication Memorial area, repairs to the Memorial which now holds a time capsule to be opened in another 50 years.

Over 100 visitors participated in the anniversary celebration and provided input on what the NDPRD should do to improve the park, including restoration of the caretaker's cabin.

CROSS RANCH

Missouri River flooding in 2011 closed Cross Ranch State Park's campground due to access issues, but most of the infrastructure remained intact and the camping facilities reopened by Labor Day.

The park is a favorite among those looking for recreation in the winter and began providing cross country ski and snowshoe rentals in 2011. But a mild, dry winter slowed activity. CRSP

provides year round camping facilities including the Art Link and Colter cabins and three yurts.

Because of flooding, the 21st year of the Missouri Bluegrass Festival was cancelled in 2011, but it was renewed again in 2012 along with several other concerts promoted by a local bluegrass band, Cottonwood. The musical events were largely successful and several will return on an annual basis.

Flooding cleanup continued through 2012 as several damaged trees had to be removed and campsites were put back in order. Over 300 new trees were planted and improvements were made to buildings and other facilities.

FORT ABRAHAM LINCOLN

North Dakota's oldest state park,



Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park (FALSP), is in the midst of its most active periods and the future looks bright for the 104 year old park.

Missouri flooding took its toll on FALSP in 2011, closing the campground for nearly the entire year and destroying much of campground's infrastructure, killing over 100 mature trees and leaving a deep coverage of silt. Recovery began immediately

after the water receded and despite the enormity of the damage the park reopened in the spring of 2012.

In an effort to spur greater visitation a number of new events were attempted in 2012 including: themed monthly hikes, helicopter excursions, foot races, mountain biking adventures and other events. Each added to the park's popularity, but the reopening of the campground was the greatest incentive in bringing visitors back to FALSP in near record numbers.

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is currently developing a new strategic plan for FALSP and several new features are being considered along with: expanded camping facilities, a visitor transportation system, new lodging accommodations, visitor center, future land acquisitions and expanded programming. Completion of the strategic plan is expected by the spring of 2013.

FORT RANSOM

Hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding are becoming Fort Ransom State Park's most popular activities as visitors take advantage of the park's extensive nearly 15-mile trail system. FRSP remains a favorite among history buffs researching early settlement life in North Dakota. The twice-a-year Fort Ransom Sodbuster weekends draw thousands of visitors.

Horse use is up considerably leading to expansion of the Riverside Horse Corral with 18 new metal pens. The NDPRD instituted a new annual horse pass and FRSP sold 100 of them the first year.

Flooding was also a problem for the park in 2011 as the Sheyenne River threatened the visitor center and kept FRSP from setting up canoe/kayak operations. These operations are very popular during the summer months as visitors spend hours on the Sheyenne River.

The interpretive program was expanded in 2012 with Saturday afternoon programs called "Country Farm Life." Homesteading skills were put on display at the Sunne Demonstration Farm and tours were given.

North Dakota State Parks



FORT STEVENSON

Fort Stevenson State Park holds the distinction of being the state park system's most popular venue leading in visitation, camping nights and revenues. The addition of the new deep water Garrison Bay Marina is bringing new dollars into the operation.

NDPRD continues to make improvements to both marinas – Garrison Bay and deTrobriand Bay – and added electrical service to the Garrison Bay marina in 2012. The park held 24 special events during the last biennium which further increases FSSP's popularity. Cycling Around North Dakota in Sakakawea Country (CANDISC) celebrated its 20th anniversary in 2012 and the Governor's Cup Fishing Tournament turned 38 years old.

Projects in 2013 will include: tree plantings, painting of the Guard House Visitor Center and installation of a new water reservoir system.

The park maintains close ties to the community of Garrison with each entity providing support which benefits each. FSSP is becoming a major access point of Lake Sakakawea and Garrison is very active in promoting the lake and servicing area sportsmen.

The continued rise of Devils Lake left Grahams Island nearly inaccessible at times during 2011 forcing the state to raise the Island Road at a cost of \$15 million. Work was completed in August of 2012 assuring access to Grahams Island for years to come.

The inundation of the road and eventual road work to raise it did impact visitation and camping at GISP. After seeing visitation fall to less than half of normal, it did recover to about 75,000 visitors in 2012, about 75 percent of a normal season. Operations have returned to about normal, the park's four sleeping cabins saw full occupancy this past year.

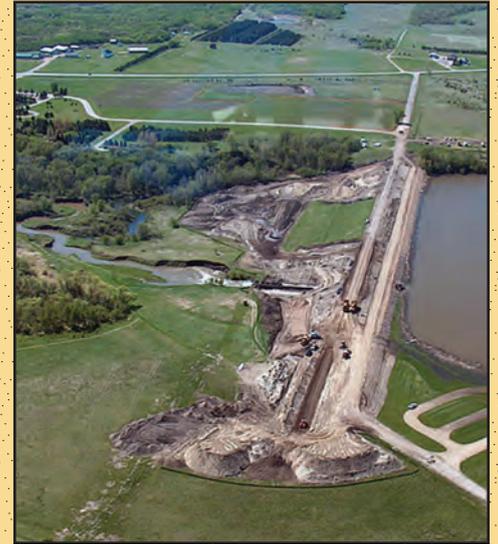
Construction is underway on an additional 48-unit modern campground at GISP and should be complete by the summer of 2013. Other projects completed included asphaltting of the boat ramp area; several vault toilets were resided; an interpreter's office built, two FEMA park homes were secured for seasonal housing; 50 tables constructed for the new campground; and a 10-acre prairie restoration. Final plans are being prepared to plant 13,000 trees and shrubs at the park, a mitigation project through the Enbridge Energy Corporation.

Future projects involve a new amphitheater, visitor/office facility, additional sleeping cabins, an enhanced trail system and various cyclic repairs.

ICELANDIC

Construction continues on Renwick Dam and park traffic will be detoured throughout the upcoming year. But camping nights and park revenues remain consistent despite the project dividing the park in half.

The 2011 camping season was the fifth record year for camping and the 2012 season is just 1 percent behind that pace. The past two years are showing an overall 16 percent increase in camping numbers. Nearly 60 percent of the park's visitors are Canadians with 35 percent North Dakotans and the remainder from



other states.

ISP has strong ties to the local communities and volunteers from those communities account for nearly 4,000 hours of work every year. The North Eastern North Dakota Heritage Association is a strong supporter of the park. In 2012 the NENDH finished the final construction on the research library at the park's Pioneer Heritage Center and have designated over \$40,000 for future exhibits.

LAKE METIGOSHE

Lake Metigoshe State Park celebrated its 75th anniversary in 2012 and it was one of the most successful years in the park's history. The park exceeded visitation numbers for over the past 20 years with nearly 140,000 visitors expected by year's end.

Construction on the expanded trail system was completed and LMSP now has just over 18 miles of multi-activity trails. The trails connect cabins, other trail areas and have opened new areas to explore and offer great diversity to a number of users throughout the year.

The park's top challenges continue to be maintaining infrastructure and maintaining a dependable and motivated staff being able to maintain the high level of service visitors to the parks have come to expect.

North Dakota State Parks



LAKE SAKAKAWEA

Despite flooding of the Missouri River in 2011 Lake Sakakawea State Park saw record numbers of visitors. There was some flooding of the park, but the majority of campsites were unaffected.

The huge increase of population in the Bakken oil fields also impacted the number of people looking for recreation opportunities. Campsites and lake access were in high demand. There was also an increase in the issues requiring law enforcement. The lake became a big draw for fishermen and recreational boaters as access to the Missouri below the dam to Bismarck was closed due to the unprecedented flooding.

Due to a lack of housing in the area, keeping track of transient workers attempting to live in the park was a continual problem for park staff.

LEWIS AND CLARK

In correlation with the oil activity taking place in western North Dakota, visitation and camping numbers have skyrocketed at Lewis and Clark State Park, showing nearly a 400 percent increase over the past two years. The park has been hard pressed to keep up

with the surge in demand and is looking to add a FTE this biennium.

Projects completed this past biennium include the addition of 40 new boat slips, electrical upgrades for 12 campsites and the roads were chip sealed. The boat slip rentals have been at 100 percent, even though Lake Sakakawea has dropped seven feet, threatening the viability of the marina.

The explosion of the area's population has increased prosperity regionally and statewide, but is also reflected in criminal activity and the park manager has an increased law enforcement role. The park also faces challenges in negating the impacts of oil operations which are being developed just outside the park's boundaries.

LITTLE MISSOURI

While flooding didn't directly impact Little Missouri State Park in 2011, saturated soils became unstable and a lot of sloughing affected park trails and access to the park. Poor trail conditions and road construction affected visitation.

A lot of trail work took place in 2011 to repair damage and was completed in 2012. All the trails were



either repaired or rerouted and are now open to the public. Little Missouri State Park marked its 40th anniversary in 2011 and it was featured on the NDPRD annual vehicle pass. A celebration of the anniversary was held late in the summer.

A much needed park improvement was completed in 2012, with the construction of a pay shower facility.

SULLY CREEK

Sully Creek State Park also succumbed to the flooding of 2011 as the Little Missouri River jumped from its banks and inundated the park, closing it for nearly a month during the spring. In 2012 Sully Creek was caught up in drought conditions and in the midst of several wildfires, though none did any damage.

Oil field activity is reflected in the parks visitation and camping numbers which have dramatically risen. The park, which was just an afterthought for many campers because of its nearness to the national park, is now as busy as it's ever been on a continuous basis. Reservations for horse sites were taken for the first time in 2012 and staff workload has increased tremendously as oil workers attempt to set up long term residence in the camping area, which is limited to 14 days a month.

More staff are needed for the park, but because of the economic climate in the area it's difficult to recruit workers.

TURTLE RIVER

Of North Dakota's 13 state parks, Turtle River was the least affected by the floods of 2011 and it was reflected by strong visitation and camping numbers during the past biennium.

A stream bank stabilization project was completed in 2012 along with replacement of the Agassiz vault toilet with new accommodations. Both projects were almost immediately vandalized, but have been repaired.

The park debuted a new program to go along with its Campground Host program, called "Work Campers." A full-service campsite is provided in exchange for 20 hours of labor. The program has been successful and could be expanded to further hours due to the interest.

TRSP did extend a sidewalk and created a handicap parking area to better accommodate two handicap accessible units of the Woodland Cabins. This allows those using the cabins to park much closer and improved wheelchair access. Air conditioning and dehumidifiers were installed in 12 Woodland Cabins to battle moisture and mold problems.

Planners manage to mix oil and water

The Planning Division continues to work in “oil country” on issues with oil development affecting state parks. Little Missouri and Lewis and Clark state parks are the most impacted from visual/noise impacts. Increased visitation and facility use at other western parks, while good for business, takes its toll on park facilities and infrastructure. Division staff provide support for park staff in the area of repairs and have shifted large project priorities to these parks most heavily impacted.

Extensive work was done with FEMA and the state’s Division of Emergency Services in completing 2011 disaster recovery projects. There were major recovery work projects at the Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park campground, and Little Missouri State Park trail system. There was less damage at Fort Ransom State Park along with debris removal from flood prevention work at Fort Stevenson State Park.

At the Fort Lincoln State Park campground, planning developed a flood mitigation approach to two heavily damage sectors of the campground; the electrical service and camping cabins. Future flood issues with these two developments should be significantly reduced. A development master plan is being updated at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. The existing master plan was developed in 1978 and is outdated. The updated plan will incorporate contemporary uses, demographic changes, and recently acquired lands.

Division staff are doing preliminary assessments of U.S. Army Corp of Engineer properties on Lake Sakakawea and Oahe. This is done in response to a COE request that NDRPD consider managing certain recreation sites on these reservoirs. Due to lack of budget funding the COE feels it no longer can continue to effectively operate the recreation sites.

An additional project manager was provided Planning by the agency moving a FTE position from another division within the Department. Vaughn Rhodes was hired to fill the position in February of 2012. Vaughn is a ND registered architect. We look forward to his professional expertise assisting with projects in the division.

Carpenter Jerry Grasl rebuilt 32 windows for the reconstruct-

ed military barracks at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. Significant maintenance repairs continue to plague these buildings. The FALSP Cavalry square granary was completely repainted by contract this past summer. Numerous siding and trim boards needed replacement prior to painting. Approximately \$25,000 was spent on this project.

The Planning Division has completed 7 of the 9 biennium large capital project budgets at this time. Close out invoices are all that remain. The biennium capital budget was \$4.2 million – the Division is satisfied with the progress on these projects.

Planning Division staff set project priority lists, budget allowances for the Major Improvement, and Capital Improvement budget prep for the 2013 – 15 biennium budget request. The

division priorities continue to focus on maintaining the public investment already in place and improving facilities for our visitors.

Several “FEMA Trailers” were purchased by the agency to replace old FEMA trailers. Planning Division staff have been designing and installing upgraded electric, water and sewer for 10 of these units.

RTP (Recreational Trails Program) trail projects were completed at Turtle River, Lake Metigoshe and the Pembina Gorge. Division staff completed the preliminary scoping, layout/design. Private contractors built the trails. Trail kiosk and intersection signing are ready for spring installation.

Jason Johnston continues to refine the agency TMA data base program. The program is a valuable tool for the department physical assets, insurance, emergency equipment etc. Some hesitation remains with field staff in operation of the system and input of data. Jason also completed a WHIP stream bank stabilization project at TRSP.

Preliminary design plans are being set in motion for 2013-15 biennium projects.



The NDRPD is developing a new master plan for Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.

Planning for the future

The Recreation Division completed the 2013-2017 Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan (SCORP). The plan measures outdoor recreation supply and demand along with setting regional funding priorities for the next five years. The SCORP is a guide form managing and developing the state's non-consumptive outdoor recreation base.

Outdoor recreation plays a significant role in the quality of life of North Dakotans. Outdoor recreation improved the health and well-being of the state's citizens promotes the conservation of the land, and contributes to the state's economy as one of the primary drivers of tourism, North Dakota's third largest industry.

Key findings of the SCORP:

- North Dakota households and outdoor recreation providers were surveyed in 2012 to determine the demand for and supply of non-consumptive outdoor recreation in the state. More than one out of every two North Dakota households (55 percent) feel outdoor recreation is very important and 93 percent feel it is important.
- Providers of outdoor recreation facilities in North Dakota include government agencies at the local, state, and federal levels, as well as nonprofit organizations. Overall, 57 percent of outdoor recreation providers report demand for facilities and activities exceeds supply for their users.
- Unmet funding needs reported by ND Outdoor recreation providers are in excess of \$104,000,000 over the next five years.

Statewide priorities based upon the surveys of North Dakota households and outdoor recreation providers were divided into three groups - primary, secondary and tertiary. Primary priorities included non-motorized trails, campgrounds and playgrounds/picnic areas/open space parks. Secondary priorities involved water-related areas pools/beaches/water access along with sports courts and fields. Tertiary priorities were winter sports facilities and motorized trails.

While surveys show interest in outdoor recreation is high among North Dakotas, resources for development, renovation, and maintenance is finite, making it critical to prioritize needs. Funding along with active partnerships are essential to meeting these needs.

The SCORP implementation plan relies heavily on enhancing outdoor recreation across the state through educating and engaging North Dakotans to ensure diverse outdoor recreation opportunities are available to citizens and visitors.

The Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan will be made available online in January at the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department website www.parkrec.nd.gov.



Community Assistance

The Recreation Division offers various grants to communities to aid in outdoor recreation facility and trail development.

- Recreational Trail Program Grants - granted out 1.1 million dollars for 11 trail projects.
- Land and Water Conservation Fund Grants - granting out \$330,000 for approximately 6 outdoor recreation facilities.
- Coordination of the ND Scenic Byways Program's 10 different byways and backways, which cover over 440 miles of the most scenic areas in the state.
- The first ever ND Trail Conference was offered in 2012 bringing together over 60 trail and recreation stakeholders and providers to learn and discuss the future of recreational trails in ND.

Motorized Recreation

- The Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area (PGSRA) Grand Opening was held June 30th, 2012. The PGSRA is home to the state's first major OHV recreation area and includes over 20 miles of trail nestled in the scenic Pembina Gorge just minutes from Walhalla, ND. Development of trail facilities will continue for the next several years in an effort to establish the PGSRA as a regional OHV destination.
- The Recreation Division, in partnership with Snowmobile North Dakota, continues to offer snowmobile trail opportunities for ND residents and visitors. The Snowmobile Trail system comprises over 2800 miles of trail and utilizes 100's of volunteers and a fleet of 14 Tucker Sno-cats to groom and establish the trails each season.
- New strategic plans for both the OHV and Snowmobile Programs were completed this year and will guide program management over the next five years.

Safety Outreach

- Over 360 children, age 12 and up, were certified at snowmobile and OHV safety courses.
- OHV and snowmobile outreach efforts reached over 2500 people at safety fairs, presentations and conferences.

Guiding conservation efforts

In 2012, the NDPRD Natural Resource Program (NRP) continued to provide the best available information to guide conservation actions, promote sound stewardship practices and foster awareness of natural resources.

The NRP worked with park staff in the

planning and implementation of conservation projects. Program staff conducted inventories and assessment to evaluate vegetation resources.

Noxious weed control program continues to be one of the best in the state with detailed inventory, high tech mapping and biological technician's treating 95 percent of all weed infestations in the park system. NRP continued to develop databases and geographic information systems for state parks and statewide species of concern and significant ecological communities. NRP continued the promotion of knowledge, enjoyment and stewardship of North Dakota State Park's natural resources through a variety of education and outreach activities.



Natural resource planning

- Develop and update of prescribe burn plans as requested.
- Develop Talkington site summary report.
- Participate on FALSP master planning committee.
- Developed tree planting plan for GISP, FALSP and CRSP.

Inventory, monitoring, mapping, assessments

- Vegetation inventory and assessment on Natural Areas and potential nature preserves.
- Prairie restoration monitoring on all restorations for 23 years post planting (FSSP, LSSP, FALSP, DLSP and CRSP)
- Surveyed Western prairie fringed orchids in the Sheyenne National Grasslands.

Conservation projects and technical assistance

- Noxious weed control – chemical, mechanical and biological
- Restored CRSP flood impacted areas to native grasses.
- Develop tree and shrub planting designs and plans for FALSP, CRSP and GISP.

Spatial and tabular data maintenance

- GIS mapping of Talkington Nature Preserve.
- Completed over 30 Natural Heritage data requests and over 250 formal environmental reviews.
- Noxious weed spray maps.
- NatureServe Natural Heritage Data transfer.
- Updated trails maps for CRSP, LMoSP and LMSP.
- Plant Species of Conservation Priority

Addendum to ND Wildlife

Action Plan including species profiles and distribution modeling maps products.

Information and education outreach

- FALSP Master Planning – interpretation and education programs
- FALSP and LCSP self-guided trail enhancements and brochures
- FALSP and LCSP interpretive panels
- Natural Areas Registry Brochure
- Kids page for Discover
- Nature News on NDPRD website
- Earth Day festival
- State Fair education programs
- Becoming an Outdoors Woman Workshop at LMSP

Financial

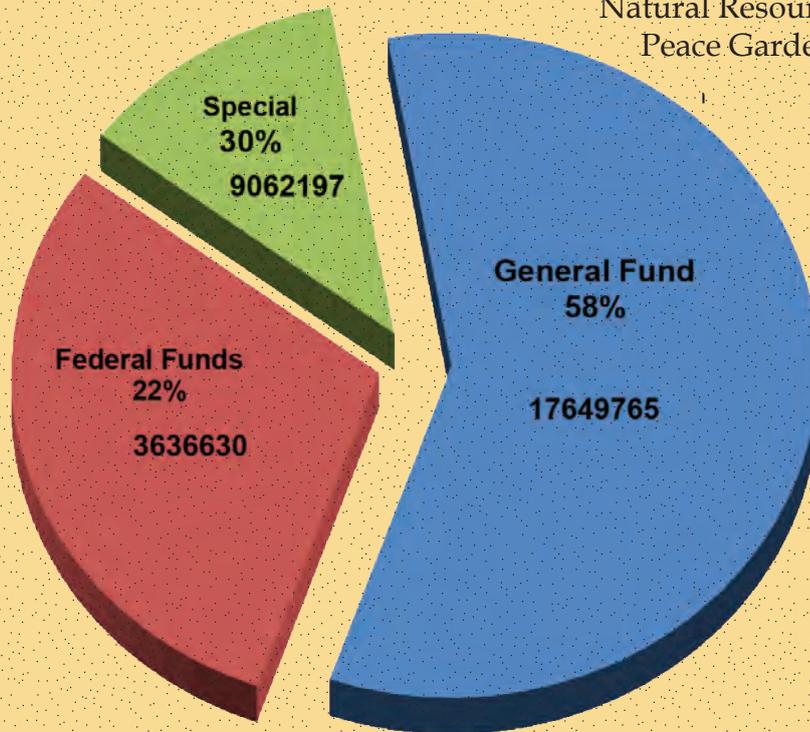
Funding Sources 2011-2013

Special Funds

Snowmobile \$780,240
 Off-Highway Vehicle \$425,000
 Gift Fund \$189,961
 Annual Pass Fees \$596,430
 Daily Pass fees \$448,100
 Camping Fees \$2,782,036
 Cabin Fees \$357,850
 Marina Fees \$332,850
 Mineral Lease One Time \$3,150,000

General Funds

Administration \$2,167,660
 Recreation \$334,931
 Natural Resources \$14,135,771
 Peace Garden \$1,040,699



Federal Programs

Scenic Byways \$196,055
 LWCF \$2,654,533
 RTP \$3,686,042
 Misc. \$170,000
 G&F \$80,000

Budget 2011-2013

Recreation

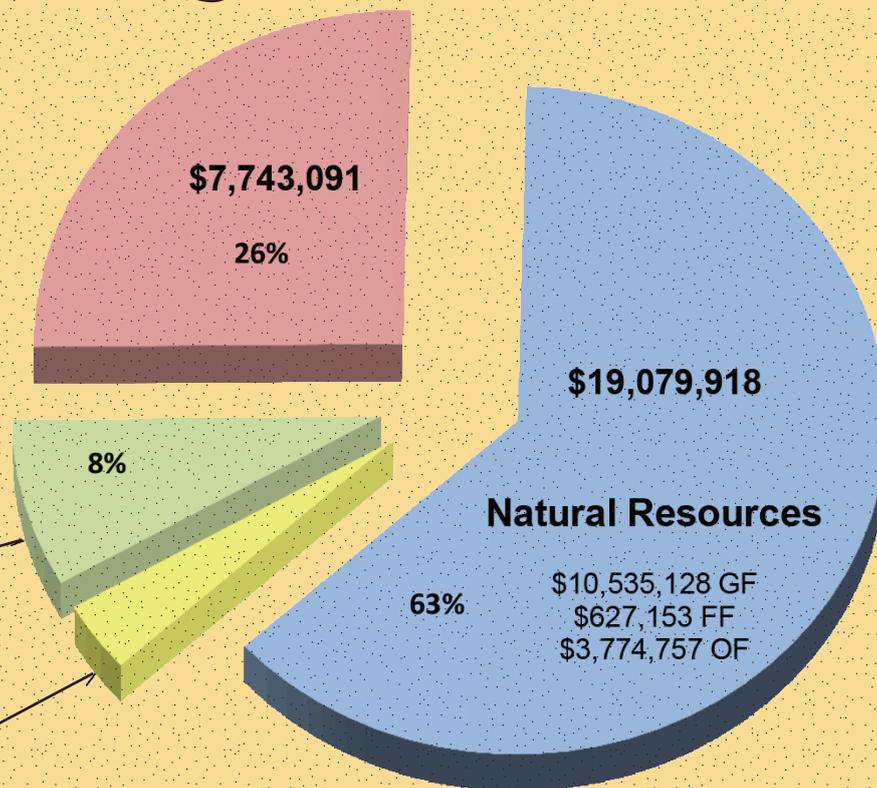
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Administration

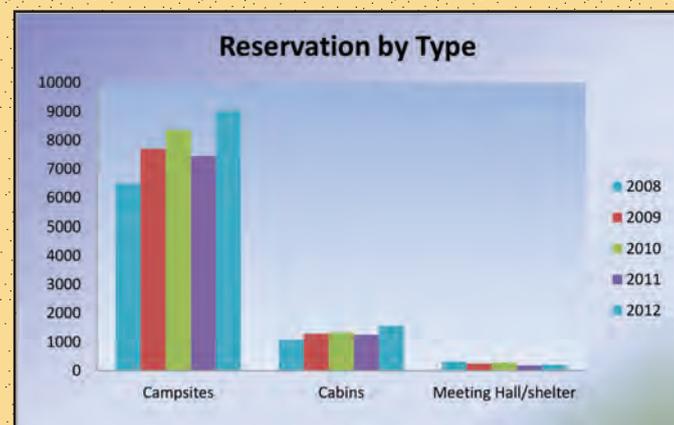
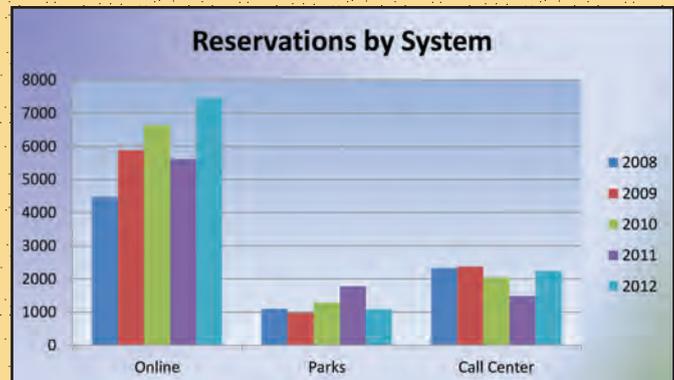
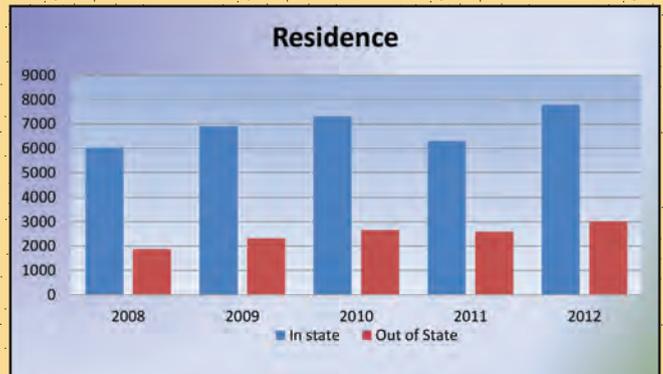
\$2,167,660 FG
 \$317,225 OF
\$2,484,885

Peace Garden

All GF 3%
\$1,040,699



Reservations



Reservations continue to grow

Campsite and Cabin reservations for the 2012 season reached an all-time high of 10,637 bookings and generated over 27,000 overnight stays in North Dakota state parks. All parks have seen increases in reservations over the past 5 years; however those in western ND have jumped 23 percent to 29 percent.

Seventy-nine percent of reservations were booked using the online system, a trend that has been rising steadily since the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department first offered this option in 2008. Other campsite and cabin reservations are made through a telephone reservation center.

Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park's future

A master plan for Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park is being developed by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department. YHR Partners Architecture Planning is under contract by NDPRD to coordinate the effort which includes a NDPRD internal committee, citizen's advisory committee and public meetings. This is the first in a series of master plans the NDPRD is considering for its parks.

The citizens' group, represented by local leaders and related state agencies, met twice with the NDPRD internal committee to discuss the strategic plan and determine what should be considered along with the top priorities. Expansion of camping was considered by many to be the top priority and a proposal for developing a new campground south of the Commissary had the greatest appeal.

Members of the citizen's group also pointed out that the parks

attractions – the campground, On-A-Slant Indian Village, Cavalry Square, the Blockhouses, Stables and museum – were spread across the park and providing visitors with transportation from location to location is desirable.

Park administrative offices are in a building tucked behind the museum and often difficult to find. Building a new visitor center/administrative building near the park's entrance would make it more easily accessible and improve security.

These projects and others will be detailed at a public meeting scheduled for Jan. 9, 2013 at Mandan's new middle school. The public will be asked to weigh in on what they feel about the proposed projects and provide any other input on development of FALSP.

Keeping the public informed and preparing for the NDPRD's 50th anniversary

Communications is an important component of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department as it informs the public of what is available through the department using a variety of methods.

During the course of a year the Public Information Officer (PIO) will distribute between 60 and 70 press releases regarding NDPRD events, programs and activities. These are sent via email to North Dakota's media including newspapers, radio and television. Along with the press releases for activities and events the PIO creates materials such as posters and flyers to help market these events. The PIO also handles media requests for interviews and information.

The department publishes a variety of materials. In 2011 and 2012 the NDPRD distributed a number of new brochures including:

- State Parks Guide
- Beaver Lake brochure
- Turtle River brochure
- Fort Stevenson brochure
- Cross Ranch brochure
- Fort Ransom trail guide
- Cross Ranch trail guide
- Fort Stevenson trail guide
- Guide to parks allowing horseback riding
- Pembina Gorge OHV trail guide

Each year the department participates in Sports Shows which precede the camping season. These include shows in Bismarck, Minot, Fargo, Williston and Grand Forks. In 2012 the NDPRD held an outdoor exhibit at the North Dakota State Fair and will return in 2012. This year the department is again holding "Parks Day at the Capitol" which it first held in 2010.

Twice a year the department issues its newsletter, Discover, which is distributed through the state parks and by mail to park annual vehicle pass holders. Approximately 32,000 Discover's are sent out in the course of a year. Every other year the department puts out a comprehensive report in conjunction with the state's legislative session to provide lawmakers with information about NDPRD.

In the past five years NDPRD has taken a more active part in use of social media which is detailed in the information technology article also on this page. The NDPRD website, www.parkrec.nd.gov, is a good source of information for the public and is also the doorway to the secure online management system which allows the public to make reservations at state parks.

Marketing of the department prior to its 50th anniversary in 2015 is now being planned with several projects being considered.

IT continues to make strides in the social media arena

With the increasing importance of electronic communications the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is attempting to keep connected with its staff and customers through the various tools afforded.

The NDPRD is spread over 13 parks statewide with headquarters in Bismarck. There are approximately 100 computers active within this system using a variety of software packages beyond the normal office productivity tools including the online management system, GIS/GPS tools, a cyclic maintenance tracking program, Biotics, etc. The NDPRD maintains a department website, an intranet site and social media sites including Facebook, Flickr and YouTube.

The network connectivity needs of park staff have increased exponentially the last few years with the addition of the online reservation system, cyclic maintenance tracking system, PeopleSoft, etc. The NDPRD is looking at being able to offer the public WiFi access in the parks in the future. This year NDPRD was able to (via stimulus money from the federal government) add Ethernet connections to three of our most connectivity challenged parks, Lake Metigoshe, Fort Abraham Lincoln and Turtle River. Plans are to provide limited public WiFi access in these parks in 2013. The department will also develop a plan to offer public WiFi access in other parks.

The NDPRD website, www.parkrec.nd.gov, had 230,000 visits in 2012. Of those, 210,000 were from the United States, 18,758 were from Canada and the rest from all over the world. The number of visitors to the NDPRD website using smartphones and tablets are growing. The department does have a mobile version of the website available, but plans are to make it more mobile friendly in the future.

With the social medias becoming an important method of communications the NDPRD has had some success in using FaceBook, Flickr and YouTube to raise awareness about the state parks, events, activities and available programs. The State Park FaceBook page has nearly 1,100 people and organizations that have "Liked" the page.

The department continues to develop its Flickr page. This page has many photos that park staff have taken in the parks of scenery, wildlife, events and activities. Staff use the site to find photos for presentations, etc. It is available to the public which can use the pictures on a limited basis and it allows people to see what NDPRD has to offer. (Photos may not be used for advertising outside of North Dakota State government or without the permission of the NDPRD. The public can use images for purposes such as school reports and desktop backgrounds.)

The NDPRD YouTube site has a few Public Service Announcement videos and a handful of videos taken by staff in the parks. This site is a work in progress. Eventually the NDPRD wants to post videos from events, wildlife sightings, programs and activities.

State Park Statistics

Beaver Lake State Park

Acres - 283
Visitation
 2011 - 18,769
 2012 - 17,853
Camping
 2011 - 1,311
 2012 - 1,285
Cabins
 2011 - 184
 2012 - 206
In-State
 2011 - 95.5%
 2012 - 95.2%

Cross Ranch State Park

Acres - 589 (300 leased)
Visitation
 2011 - 51,099
 2012 - 49,866
Camping
 2011 - 526
 2012 - 1,322
Cabins/Yurts
 2011 - 172
 2012 - 280
In-State
 2011 - 74%
 2012 - 83.6%

Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park

Acres- 1,006.13
Visitation
 2011 - 100,467
 2012 - 153,328
Camping
 2011 - 487
 2012 - 5,910
Cabins/Tipis
 2011 - 7
 2012 - 177
In-State
 2011 - 35.3%
 2012 - 68%
Horses
 2011 - 0
 2012 - 110

Fort Ransom State Park

Acres - 946.7
Visitation
 2011 - 37,084
 2012 - 36,184
Camping
 2011 - 1,870
 2012 - 2,131
In-State
 2011 - 73.7%
 2012 - 77.4%
Horses
 2011 - 543
 2012 - 994

Fort Stevenson State Park

Acres- 549

Visitation
 2011 - 137,536
 2012 - 152,177
Camping
 2011 - 8,726
 2012 - 8,810
Cabins
 2011 - 500
 2012 - 464
In-State
 2011 - 90.2%
 2012 - 91.1%

Grahams Island State Park

Acres - 1,122
Visitation
 2011 - 53,173
 2012 - 72,750
Camping
 2011 - 4,338
 2012 - 8,365
Cabins
 2011 - 394
 2012 - 542
In-State
 2011 - 56.7%
 2012 - 59.8%

Icelandic State Park

Acres - 912.26
Visitation
 2011 - 29,604
 2012 - 29,528
Camping
 2011 - 9,292
 2012 - 8,900
Cabins
 2011 - 236
 2012 - 217
In-State
 2011 - 34.8%
 2012 - 35.2%

Lake Metigoshe State Park

Acres - 1,585.7
Visitation
 2011 - 133,391
 2012 - 141,457
Camping
 2011 - 1,131
 2012 - 6,025
Cabins/Yurts
 2011 - 478
 2012 - 610
In-State
 2011 - 80.3%
 2012 - 72.5%

Lake Sakakwea State Park

Acres - 1,284 (COE lease)
Visitation
 2011 - 114,631
 2012 - 119,688
Camping
 2011 - 8,784

2012 - 9,434
Cabins
 2011 - 160
 2012 - 168
In-State
 2011 - 91.1%
 2012 - 85.4%

Lewis and Clark State Park

Acres - 490 (COE lease)
Visitation
 2011 - 86,266
 2012 - 105,820
Camping
 2011 - 7,197
 2012 - 8,412
Cabins
 2011 - 243
 2012 - 249
In-State
 2011 - 57.8%
 2012 - 68.5%

Little Missouri State Park

Acres - 4,592 (3,687 lease)
Visitation
 2011 - 13,665
 2012 - 19,866
Camping
 2011 - 1,191
 2012 - 1,381
In-State
 2011 - 68.2%
 2012 - 69% %

Horses
 2011 - 1,662
 2012 - 2,231

Sully Creek State Park

Acres - 80
Visitation
 2011 - 65,283
 2012 - 67,776
Camping
 2011 - 1,470
 2012 - 1,333
In-State
 2011 - 37.6%
 2012 - 39.8%
Horses
 2011 - 968
 2012 - 1,016

Turtle River State Park

Acres - 783
Visitation
 2011 - 76,284
 2012 - 78,497
Camping
 2011 - 3,833
 2012 - 4,041
Cabins
 2011 - 452
 2012 - 463
In-State
 2011 - 48.3%
 2012 - 54.8%