

DISCOVER



NORTH DAKOTA PARKS AND RECREATION NEWS

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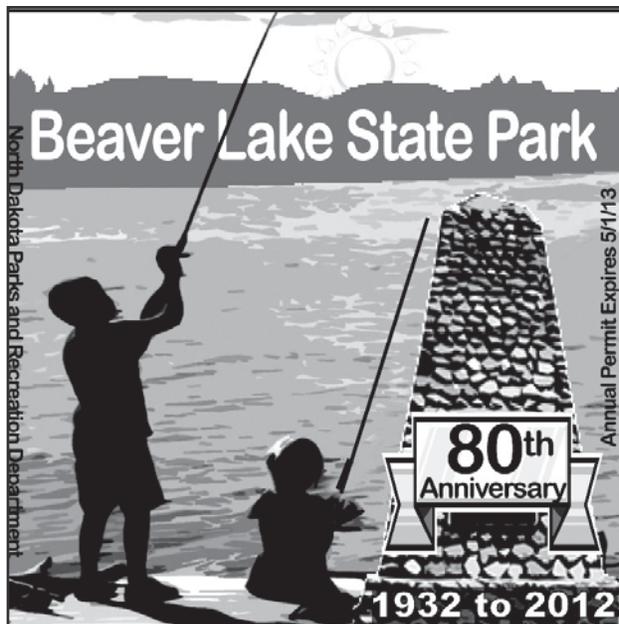
FALL/WINTER 2011

Beaver Lake State Park marks 80 years in 2012 Featured on annual pass

Beaver Lake State Park celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2012 and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is marking the occasion by recognizing the park on the Annual Vehicle Pass.

The park is North Dakota's second oldest with only Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park, established in 1907, being older. While the park was formerly dedicated in 1932, its origins date back to 1929 when local residents took up the task of developing the beautiful area for rest and relaxation. On July 19, 1929, an informal meeting was held in Shepard's pavilion, located south of the present park site, to form an organization to develop the park. The park was dedicated on July 24, 1932 in honor of early settlers of Logan, McIntosh and Emmons counties.

Speaking at the dedication was William Langer, the nonpartisan nominee for Governor, who would go on to become one of the state's most recognizable and influential elected officials. Langer told the crowd he wasn't sure why he had been



chosen to give the keynote, but on further reflection admitted he expected to be the next governor and it was a wise park board that understood if he indeed was elected he could be helpful in developing the park. Between 2,000 and 3,000 people were reported to have attended the ceremonies.

It is particularly important to note the local residents were developing the recreational area during a

time when the United States was experiencing one of its darkest periods. The "Great Depression" was in full swing and North Dakota was in the midst of a catastrophic drought which produced the infamous "Dirty-30s" term.

In 1952, on the 20th celebration of the park's opening, Russell Reid, Superintendent of the State Historical Society (which governed the parks) wrote in

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NDPRD surveys visitors

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is conducting a survey throughout the park system over the next year in an effort to determine the economic contribution of its parks. The results of the survey will help the NDPRD in its decision making process as it allocates resources in years to come.

The survey is being done in cooperation with the North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association. Several city park organizations are doing similar surveys related to their communities.

Input from visitors is important in estimating how much money is generated by the state parks, not only through park fees, but in the surrounding communities. Responses will be used to estimate the average spending of park visitors in and around the state park. It will also give the NDPRD the economic activity generated by activities, events, attractions and facilities associated with the park.

Data collection is being taken during a 12-month period during 2011-2012 with the final results expected by December 2012. No information identifying respondents is being collected and all responses are confidential. Researchers at North Dakota State University will analyze the collected data and estimate the economic contribution of state parks.

For those interested in the study findings, contact either the NDPRD at 701-328-5357, email parkrec@nd.gov

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News from the director

Discover North Dakota's winter wonderland

Greetings to Friends of North Dakota Parks and Recreation,

As you read articles in this edition of Discover I hope you are also gearing up for another winter season of activities across the state parks and snowmobile trails of North Dakota. Whether it is ice fishing on Lake Sakakawea, Beaver Lake, Devils Lake, Lake Metigoshe, confluence of the Heart and Missouri Rivers at Fort Abraham Lincoln or cross country skiing or snowshoeing at almost all the parks, there is a state park near you for some winter time fun. Snowmobiling officially opens on December 1st on the snowmobile trails of North Dakota, so get out and enjoy.

I am happy to announce the addition of two yurts to the winter season accommodations available at two state parks—Lake Metigoshe State Park and Cross Ranch State Park. Maybe you are wondering, just what is a yurt? I can best describe these accommodations as a modern adaptation of the shelter used by Central Asiatic nomadic tribes for hundreds of years. These circular structures consist of a durable fabric cover, tension band and a wood frame that includes a lattice wall, rafters, skylight, and a framed door. One guest described the yurt as follows—There aren't many places where you can sleep this comfortably



**NDPRD
director
Mark
Zimmerman**

and still see the stars.”

One of the new yurts is on the shore of School Section Lake at Lake Metigoshe State Park—complete with bunk beds, table and chairs, electricity and propane stove. The other yurt is in the backcountry at Cross Ranch State Park. The yurt at Cross Ranch is for the adventurous type—access is by hiking, cross country skiing or snowshoeing the 4 miles to the yurt. Rustic setting with bunks, table and chairs, and a wood burning stove. Promises to be a great winter camping experience. These two new accommodations and other cabins and yurts can be reserved by going on line at www.parkrec.nd.gov.

The summer of 2011 is behind us. Camping at several of the state parks was not possible because of flooded campgrounds or roads, but I am happy to report that many of you chose to try a new state park or return to one you have not visited for a few years. Even though visitation and camper night statistics were down, I heard and read of many memorable experiences at parks all across the state. That's what it is all about—getting out and enjoying with family and friends the special places in the great outdoors of North Dakota!

Best wishes for a safe and fun time in our winter wonderland!

Despite setbacks, visitation remains strong in 2011

State park visitation saw a remarkable recovery following a spring fraught with inclement weather and flooding that kept people out of the parks and indoors. An extended autumn helped overcome the shortfall, and while visitation was below the million mark, exceeded both in 2009 and 2010, it remained respectable.

Through the third quarter of 2011, North Dakota's state parks had served 925,282 guests, 6.7 percent behind 2010 which had 991,697 visitors during the same period of time. Most of the deficit came during the months of May and June when the state experienced some of the worst flooding in its history. During those months daily counts were down over 13 percent.

But Mother Nature responded with great conditions in July through October and visitation nearly equaled or surpassed visitation last year, particularly in the latter half. Director Mark Zimmerman was proud of how staff coped with the adversity the parks faced early in the year, continuing to provide quality customer service as they responded to disaster conditions.

In late May, flooding of the Missouri River forced the closure of the Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park campground and closed the campground and trails at Cross Ranch State Park. Sully Creek State Park, in southwest North Dakota, was inundated by flooding of the Little Missouri River and closed until water receded and clean up took place. Fort Ransom State Park also experienced some flooding with the rise of the Sheyenne River. While Cross Ranch reopened the first week in September, Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park is in the midst of a major clean up with hopes of having the campground open in the spring of 2012. Visitation to Fort Abraham Lincoln was down 34 percent while Cross Ranch saw a 47 percent loss.

High water content of the winter snows combined with heavy spring rains impacted nearly every state park, but was particularly devastating to Grahams Island State Park on Devils Lake and Little Missouri State Park north of Killdeer in western North Dakota.

The rising Devils Lake made access to Grahams Island State Park difficult at best. On windy days water would rush over the road leaving debris in its wake and making travel treacherous until a plow was used to clear the way. With no guarantee visitors could get to or leave the park on a given day the reservation system was closed and camping was

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A year unlike any other 2011 flooding impacts state parks

The floods of 2011 had a tremendous impact on the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department affecting the greater share of the state park system closing parks, campgrounds, trails and access routes.

The only park that did close, though only for a brief period of time, was Sully Creek State Park near Medora in southwestern North Dakota. The Little Missouri River flowed uncontrollably from its banks in May leaving most of the park underwater. Park staff did manage to protect the park's cabin and shower facilities and after cleanup the park reopened near the end of June.

For the second time in three years, the Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park campground, located near the confluence of the Missouri and Heart rivers was inundated. But unlike 2009, the water didn't retreat until late in the season and clean up didn't begin until September when the Missouri finally settled back into its banks. Through the third quarter of 2011 visitation to FALSP was down over 30 percent. The two camping cabins were destroyed and major clean ups of the restrooms and amphitheaters was needed. There is an uncertainty when the campground will reopen because of the potential



Debris left on Island Road by Devils Lake wave action made access to Grahams Island State Park difficult.

threat of further inundation next spring. The electrical system serving the campers will have to be replaced with work scheduled for early next spring.

The Missouri's unprecedented rise also impacted Cross Ranch State Park. The camping cabins were sandbagged and the new yurts were taken down when the Missouri began to rise. Access to the campground was cut off by the waters and since nearly all the trails run near or along the river, they also had to be closed. The River's People Visitors Center did remain open through the summer, but visitation was down nearly 50 percent through the third quarter. The park fully reopened on Labor Day and nearly



Sully Creek State Park was completely covered by Little Missouri flood waters.

300 people showed up for a concert put on by the local blue grass group Cottonwood.

Perhaps hardest hit by flood waters was Grahams Island State Park on Devils Lake. While the park itself stayed dry for the most part, it was the Island Road access that kept visitors

away – visitation was down nearly 50 percent. On windy days water was driven over the road leaving debris and making travel treacherous. The park used a snowplow to move the debris from the Island Road and on some days it would be out several times

for the cleanup effort. With the uncertainty of access, campground reservations were only taken at the park. It's important to note that the Island Road wasn't the only transportation route under construction. Most of the highways leading into and out of the city of Devils Lake are being raised because of the rising lake waters. Muddy roads and long waits for pilot cars brought traffic to a crawl on roads bordering Devils Lake.

Construction to raise the road to a safe level did not begin until October and is unlikely to be completed until next spring. The park's boat ramp was successfully raised in the fall.

Little Missouri State Park indirectly suf-

fered from heavy spring snow and rain. Highway 22, which brings visitors from north and south of the park was extensively damaged by shifting grounds saturated with moisture. North Highway 22 was closed most of the year and the south route from Killdeer was under construction most of the summer and fall

with motorists having to take detours into the adjacent ditches to avoid road work and heavy machinery.

Fort Ransom State Park, south of Valley



The campground at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park was under several feet of water for most of the summer.

City in the Sheyenne River Valley, did see some minor flooding, but staff were able to protect those buildings nearest the river and the camping season was largely unaffected.

The impact of Missouri River flooding had little effect on the NDPRD's three parks on Lake Sakakawea – Lake Sakakawea, Fort Stevenson and Lewis and Clark state parks – but precautions were taken to ensure uninterrupted service at the parks.

2011 NDRPD awards

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department awards committee had its hands full in choosing its annual award winners with a number of quality nominees to choose from.

The Cal Renner Award of Excellence, the department's top honor, is named after the late Cal Renner who served as the NDRPD's carpenter from 1987 to 1996. His commitment to excellence year in and year out, combined with his ability to work with a variety of individuals, employees and volunteers, set an outstanding example for excellence.

Individuals, groups or businesses considered for the award

demonstrate a long-term commitment to the vision, mission and goals of the NDRPD and state of North Dakota; as well as their involvement in their local community.

Merit and Special Merit awards are based on performance considered to be "above and beyond" their position's standards, task performance, peer review or written expectations.

Merit Awards are given to current departmental employees, temporary or classified. Special Merit Awards are intended for volunteers, friends groups, individual members of friends group or other agency employees.

Cal Renner Award of Excellence

Assistant Field Manager Karen Assel

The 2011 Cal Renner "Award of Excellence" goes to Karen Assel, North Dakota Parks and Recreation's Assistant Field Manager.

Assel epitomizes why the Cal Renner award was created, she has long been a mover and shaker in the department, always willing to do whatever necessary to ensure the NDRPD put its best foot forward in any endeavor she was associated. Well known for her leadership and organizational skills, Karen has been and is a driving force behind some of the NDRPD's most successful programs and services.

Jesse Hanson, NDRPD Planning/Natural Resources Division Manager, nominated Karen for the award. Hanson is the 2008 recipient of the Renner Award and a long-time co-worker of Assel. Assel first joined the NDRPD in 1983 as an intern and shortly after became a full-time employee.

"Karen demonstrated her leadership and organizational skills early in her employment with the department and was promoted to the manager of the agency community grants program," Hanson recalls. "She provided leadership as one of the two managers of the popular Hershey's Track and Field program during the mid-1980s."

"When Governor George Sinner approached the department with the idea of developing a "State Amateur Games," Karen was named as the first Program Director for the 'Prairie Rose State Games.' Under Karen's leadership, the early games were a huge success with typical participation in the 5,000 to 7,000 people," Hanson



Karen Assel

says. Karen dedicated endless hours to coordinate host city logistics, volunteer coordination, venue selection, marketing and press activities and ensured close out procedures were completed to make the next year's games as productive as possible."

In the early 1990s, Assel transferred from agency community recreation related duties to become the assistant to the state park field manager. She began working with state park staff, issues and operations. Assel

has been instrumental in developing the campsite reservation program. It began with a call center reservation system and under her leadership is transitioning to an on-line reservation program.

Other significant duties Assel administers include: Development of the camp host program; leadership role in policy development; coordination of the state fleet vehicle program; key team member of the base budget committee; coordination of agency "Incident Command" training; logistical organization for agency staff in response to disasters; development of consistent park concession, lease contracts, and state housing contracts.

Assel's contribution to parks and recreation as a professional are reflected in the following awards she has received: Bismarck Convention and Visitor Bureau Merit Award for administration of the first Prairie Rose State games; NDRPD Merit Award for the community grants program; North Dakota Young Career Woman award; North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association Award of Excellence; Prairie Rose State Games Award of Excellence.

"Karen is well respected within the agency and across the spectrum of people and organizations she is involved with outside of the agency," Hanson says. "Her dedication to the NDRPD, and the goals and philosophies of the agency is reflected in her approach to work. Karen is well deserving of the Cal Renner Award of Excellence."

Going “above and beyond” in 2011

This year’s Merit Awards go to three deserving staff members of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department who went above and beyond their assigned duties ensuring that not only benefited the organization’s patrons but also its employees.

Lara Anderson joined NDPRD in September of 2008, taking charge of the agency’s Information Technology. In the past year Anderson created a new website for the department making it much more informative and user friendly than the previous site.

The department’s online presence is becoming very important and it attempts to keep pace with the ever changing world of electronic communications. She has also taken an active role in promoting the NDPRD through the new Social Media on sites such as Facebook and Flickr.

The website, if developed by a private organization, could have cost NDPRD tens of thousands of dollars. Not only did she create the website, but Anderson maintains and updates the site. Through her efforts with Facebook the NDPRD has about 700 followers and Flickr provides the department and the public a place to post favorite pictures of the park system. Social media is “the” way to communicate now and Ander-



Anderson



Staples



Haagenon

son keeps the NDPRD relevant.

In developing the website, Anderson was careful to collect input from several sources within the NDPRD making sure the site was representative of the department. There were many meetings to collect this input and information even before the countless hours of website design took place. What came out of the process is a website that is professional, informative, good looking, interactive and user friendly.

Grahams Island State Park faced its share of flood related problems in 2011 as its only access road was constantly under attack by the rising waters of Devils Lake. The park had to change the way it did business, by keeping the road open and providing its

own reservation system since there were no guarantees that people could get to or leave the park on a specific day.

Two GISP employees were instrumental to keeping the park open to the public, maintenance supervisor Douglas Staples and administrative assistant Theresa Haagenon.

“This past summer a three-mile portion of the Island Road leading to Grahams Island State Park was within a few inches of being flooded. The commitment to keep the road useable resulted in the park taking on the responsibility of removing debris from the road during and following wind events,” says park manager Henry Duray. “Over 100 trips were made throughout the summer

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Special Merit Awards

Helping the NDPRD fulfill its mission

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department’s Special Merit Award recognizes those non-agency individuals, groups and organizations that play an important role in helping the department fulfill its mission.

This year’s recipients include campground hosts Don and Pat DeMars; Friends of Lewis and Clark State Park Phil Rabon and Lester Olson; and Benson County Commissioners David Davidson, Lowell Haagenon, Curtis Hvinden, Jason Lee and Michael Steffan.

Don and Pat DeMars have been campground hosts in North Dakota State Parks for the past 15 years, providing 9,802 hours of service. The couple hit a few major milestones in 2011 including 50 years of mar-

riage, 15 years as campground hosts, and six years as “full time RVers.” To celebrate they purchased a new home in Grand Forks, as they retire from being campground hosts and the full time RV lifestyle.

“I believe they have hosted at each and every North Dakota State Park, or at least those that staff a campground host, over the years,” says Turtle River State Park manager Steve Crandall. “In addition to giving so much of their lives to the service of the State Parks, they have been ‘exceptional’ hosts by anyone’s standards!”

Phil Rabon and Lester Olson were at the first Lewis and Clark State Park advisory group meeting in 1999, which eventually became the Friends of Lewis and Clark

State Park. Rabon and Olson volunteered to act as incorporators along with three others. They were originally elected to Friends board of directors with Rabon becoming vice president and Lester treasurer. Both served on the board until 2011 when they decided to retire. Olson served as treasurer the entire time and Rabon served as vice president several times.

“Under the leadership and visionary example of Phil and Lester ‘The Friends’ have made many significant contributions to Lewis and Clark State Park,” park manager Greg Corcoran says. “To name a few are construction of the playground, walking bridge, amphitheater seating, kiosk and

Continued on page 11

Parks provide events, activities for those wanting to play in a winter wonderland

While activities in North Dakota state parks do quiet down during the winter, there are still a few events scheduled that can be enjoyed in the snow and cold.

Cross Ranch State Park

At Cross Ranch State Park manager Eric Lang and interpreter Laura Kohn have put together several events for outdoor adventurers. For complete information on the events call 701-794-3731.

On Dec. 31, starting at noon, CRSP will hold its own Winter Olympics. This is a team oriented event with team registration from noon to 12:30 p.m. At 12:30 until 2 p.m. there will be a cross country ski/snowshoe relay; Snow volleyball takes place at 2 to 3:15 p.m.; Tug-of-War from 3:15 to 4 p.m. Following the events there will be an awards event with first, second and third place teams getting prizes. The Winter Olympics are snow dependent and subject to cancellation should there be a lack of snow.

Explore winter wildlife on Jan. 14 at CRSP. Sit in on a taxidermy talk or see the beautiful pictures of a winter photographer. After that, take a snowshoe hike look for winter wildlife in the park. The program runs from noon to 5 p.m.

On Jan. 28, CRSP is holding a crash course on surviving winter outdoors. Learn fire making basics to boil water for hot chocolate while sitting in the snow. Build a winter shelter and learn to tie some fool proof knots. The program runs from 1 to 3 p.m. Registration is required and the cost is \$5 per person.

The CRSP Winter Festival is scheduled for Feb. 11. Join the park staff in cross country skiing, including solar light skiing at dark along a portion of the groomed ski trails. In addition, there will be programming, soup and beverage available. There will also be horse drawn sleigh rides. The park does have cross country ski equipment available. The event starts at 1 p.m. and runs until 7 p.m.

A guided snowshoe hike is being held Feb. 25 at CRSP. Participants will explore The Nature Conservancy with a park ranger. The search will be one for bison and other winter wildlife. There will be snacks and warm drinks inside the visitor center afterwards. Call the park to find out further information on the hike.



Above: Snowshoers explore the Nature Conservancy at Cross Ranch State Park. Below: Youngsters learn to build a shelter at Turtle River State Park.



Turtle River State Park

A number of activities are being planned at Turtle River State Park by manager Steven Crandall and interpreter Tina Harding.

Winter Fest takes place on Dec. 28. At 10 a.m. park visitors will be able to design gingerbread cookies during the hot chocolate social; 11:30 a.m. participants will be snow sculpturing; 12:30 p.m. build a gingerbread house; 2:30 p.m. create a "Smash" gingerbread book; judging of the snow sculptures is at 3:15 p.m.

Dec. 29 is Polar Sled Day at TRSP. The event includes: Sled craft and hot chocolate social at 10 a.m.; winter scavenger hunt 11:30 a.m.; Wii winter ski contest 12:30 p.m.; Sled Hills Bulls Eye competition at 1:30 p.m.; winter golf/Tic Tac Snow competition at 2:30 p.m.

The Ski and Bike Shop Winter Play Day is Jan. 21. For those wanting to try cross country skiing, snowboarding or show shoeing, the Ski and Bike Shop along with TRSP will be providing instruction and lead groups to various parts of the park. Visitors can visit the newly remodeled chalet or take a few runs down the sledding hill.

February is Survival Month at TRSP. Classes are designed to teach kids what to do if they find

themselves lost. Participants will learn to build a fire; how to signal for help; and what to do to ensure they are rescued. At the end of the class, participants can show off their skills by building a shelter, a fire on snow and boiling water to drink. All participants are required to be accompanied by an adult and pre-registration is required. The fee for the class is \$5 per participant, but there is no charge for adult chaperones.

Lake Metigoshe State Park

The North Dakota Game and Fish Department's Becoming an Outdoors Woman (BOW) work shop is planned for Feb. 24-26 at Lake Metigoshe State Park. The workshops are designed primarily for women with an interest in learning skills usually associated with hunting, fishing, and related outdoor activities. The workshop is open to anyone age 18 or older, but is tailored primarily to women who have never tried these activities or who are beginners hoping to improve their skills or simply try out equipment relating to outdoors. Winter activities may include dog sledding, ice fishing, cross country skiing, snowshoeing, winter survival skills and tracking.

Former director visits headquarters

Dr. Gary Leppart, former director of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department from 1969 to 1977, stopped in at the NDPRD offices this past summer to visit and provide an update on what he's now doing.

Leppart, a native of Medora, ND, was at one time Assistant Director of State Tourism, which was a part of the North Dakota Highway Department and later appointed head of the State Outdoor Recreation Agency by Governor William Guy and later reappointed by Governor Art Link.

"Governor Link was trying to create a Department of Natural Resource, such as Minnesota has, but couldn't get it done, so for a while I played a dual role as director of Outdoor Recreation and director of State Parks," Leppart recalls. "It really was the best job I ever had and I believe I'd still have it, if the job had been politically secure. But I had a family to support and all it took was a change of leadership and I could've



Leppart

been out of a job." At the ripe old age of 36, Leppart decided to take a position with Montana's Bureau of Land Management, staying with BLM until he retired in 1999. He is now a full-time nature photographer specializing in the wildlife, landscapes and historic features of the Northern Plains and Rocky Mountain West. Leppart's work can be found online at <http://leppartphoto.zenfolio.com/>.

"While I was director the times were fairly prosperous and we saw a good budget increase at that time," Leppart says. "We oversaw about nine state parks. We also moved from our offices on the Capitol Grounds to Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park."

Part of Leppart's legacy with North Dakota State Parks was acquiring the lands for what's become Fort Ransom State Park in the beautiful Sheyenne

AmeriCorps team helps blaze trail at Lake Metigoshe State Park

An AmeriCorps NCCC team spent four weeks at Lake Metigoshe State Park this past fall helping develop a new trail that is being used to explore Hermerick Point through hiking, mountain biking and even snowshoeing.

AmeriCorps is a network of national service programs that engage Americans in intensive service to meet the nation's critical needs in education, public safety, health, and the environment. The AmeriCorps NCCC program (National Civilian Community Corps) is a full-time residential program for men and women ages 18-24, that strengthens communities while developing leaders through direct, team-based national and community service.

"They are a great group of young adults that really worked together well, didn't back down from any part of the project, and showed a lot of respect for each other," LMSP manager Larry Hagen says. "They were a great representation for the AmeriCorps NCCC organization."

"Primarily, they took what was a flagged route through the undeveloped areas of Hermerick Point and created, using IMBA (International Mountain Biking Association) standards, a hiking/biking trail that traverses around the outer edge of Hermerick Point," Hagen explains. "To build this route they manually cleared the path using tri-blades, chain saws, Pulaski's, shovels, axes and tampers – and a lot of sweat."

It was the first IMBA-styled trail the team had built and they did a great job, according to Hagen. The group had originally intended



Back (left to right): Kevin Johnson, CA; NDPRA employee Matt Westra; Darcy Christenson, WA; Kendra Patrick, WA; Front: Sarah Moffitt, RI; Kim Vegliante, GA; Kristy Hawes, MA; Erin Hurley, OH.

to spend six weeks working on the trail, but because of the Mouse River flood, the visit was shortened by two weeks. In that time the team was able to complete a great portion of the proposed route for LMSP. The team also assisted a local church with a re-shingling project and assisted the local Grain Train organization with a day of loading trucks.

"The end result of their efforts is a trail

that can be used for hiking, biking, snow shoeing and just exploring," Hagen says. "We look forward to years of service for that trail area."

The team's name was "Double Oak 7" and included Kevin Johnson, Darcy Christenson, Kendra Patrick Sarah Moffitt, Kim Vegliante, Kristy Hawes and Erin Hurley.

'Play in our Backyard' geocaching contest is proving very popular

By Amy Schimetz

Interpreter

Lake Metigoshe State Park

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's "Play in our Backyard" geocaching contest officially started on Sept. 1. The contest will run through Sept. 4, 2012. To enter, geocachers must visit the 11 contest caches within 11 state parks, collect a unique sticker at each contest cache, place it on the official entry form and mail it in. Prizes will be given away to those that find all, or the most, contest caches. Up to 30 individuals will win prizes that include the option of cabin stays or free camping. There are five first-place winners receiving seven nights free camping or two nights in a cabin, ten, second-place winners receiving five nights free camping or a night in a cabin and 15, third-place winners receiving two nights free camping. Contest details and entry forms can be found at http://www.parkrec.nd.gov/activities/geocaching_contest.html

Many have taken the "Play in Our Backyard" geocaching contest challenge, traveling North Dakota, stopping at the state parks to collect the unique sticker from each contest cache and decorating their entry forms with stickers. Within the first week of the "Play in our Backyard" contest, there were over 60 visits to contest caches throughout the state. As of Oct. 19, four of the five first-place prizes were awarded. Congratulations to "dakota-gray" from Bismarck, "donvil" from Williston, "sbarosko" from Minot and "shellshock" from Bismarck. There are still plenty of prizes yet to be won so get out and Play in Our Backyard!

Here are what some cachers were saying about the parks, caches, contest and their overall experiences.

@ BLS: "Out on a 2-day state park geo marathon run. Very nice little park. First visit. Never knew it existed till the geohunt came up."

@ FALSP: "This cache is what brought us to the park. TFTC"

@ FRSP: "We got our first sticker for the state park contest. Lived around FT. Ransom most of our lives, but we did not know about the graves on top of the hill. Thanks for the history lesson."

@ LCSP: "Found just before dark after returning from 6 days in MT. Thanks for my first sticker. This will be fun."



@ TRSP: "...I like looking for regular sized caches and this is a nice hide. We bring the Cub Scouts and Girl Scouts out here every year for some hiking or camping. It is so nice having such a nice park so close to home. Thank you for putting out all the caches for us to find."

@ GISP: "First time to this park. It is very pretty. TFTC"

@ CRSP: "#4 in the Backyard contest. Really nice trails, saw a couple of kayakers on the river. TFTC"

Geocaching within the ND State Parks started in 2002 with the placement of the first cache at Cross Ranch State Park with more following in 2003 at Lewis & Clark and Fort Stevenson State Parks. The goals pertaining to their placement within the ND State Parks included the possibility of attracting a new usergroup, to offer yet another recreational activity within the parks, get new and existing visitors to further explore the parks and obtain direct feedback about not only the caches, but our parks' trails, facilities and infrastructure. Over the years, the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department has supported geocaching and the goals associated with

geocaching within the parks were accomplished. This became evident through the logs left by cachers. For instance, we learned that new visitors came to FALSP specifically to cache, a couple re-visited GISP after many years because of a new cache and a family that camps at LMSP frequently, explored a trail that they didn't know was there until a cache was placed there. Currently, there are 35 geocaches within the North Dakota State Parks, 11 of them are part of the "Play in Our Backyard" contest caches.

It is our hope that the "Play in Our Backyard" geocaching contest will provide an exciting challenge to cachers and reward them with not only prizes, but memorable experiences within the North Dakota State Parks. Many people assume that the state parks close in the winter. That is a myth! The

North Dakota State Parks are great places to explore in the off-season whether it is to have a get-a-way at a cabin or get out on the trails on a set of cross country skis or snowshoes.

In previous years, geocaching enthusiasts could obtain a permit that validated placing and owning a cache within a state park. Recent policy changes dictate that the parks themselves will own any new geocaches placed within the state parks, through a park profile on the geocaching website. Despite such changes, there are still many opportunities where geocaching enthusiasts can partner with the state parks. Those interested should contact the state park and work with their resident geocacher to perhaps suggest places to hide a cache within the park, propose names for new cache(s), assist in developing text for the new cache(s) descriptions, help relocate parks' caches every two years or assist with facilitating geocaching meetings, programs and events within the state parks. Everyone is welcomed and encouraged to seek geocaches in any and all of our state parks.

Kid's Page

Cross-Outs

What does a snowman eat for breakfast? The answer's hidden in the words below. Follow the instructions on the right. Then read what's left, and the answer's in sight!

WOOL SWEATER WINTER FOLD MITTENS
 COCOA FROSTED CHILI WARMTH SKIING
 SLEDDING REDPOLL DEER CHICKADEE WONDERLAND
 SCARF BOLD BOOTS FLAKES NUTHATCH
 COYOTE WHITE BLUEJAY CIDER FOX

Cross out

- 3 mammals active in the winter
- 4 ND wintering songbirds
- 3 wintery foods or drinks
- 5 words beginning with "W"
- 4 winter clothes
- 2 words rhyming with "cold"
- 2 wintertime activities

Wintery Words Scrabble

Use the letters in the words on the left to make a new Wintery Words. The first one has been done for you.

| | | |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| NO SON WON |  | <i>SNOW</i> |
| HIT WITH WE | | _____ |
| SKI GNAT SATIN | | _____ |
| LIFE RACE LEAP | | _____ |
| RENT TWIN NET | | _____ |

Winter Weather

Cold weather keeps people from spending as much time outdoors. To find out what North Dakota's winters may bring, read the clues, then write the winter weather words described on the blanks. Read the boxes from top down to see where you might be hoping to go.

1. _____

a long heavy snowstorm

2. _____

frozen or partly frozen rain

3. _____ _____

a decrease in body temperature to a really low level

4. _____ _____

a period of colder than average weather

5. _____ _____

The cooling affect of wind on exposed skin

| |
|--|
| ANSWERS- CROSS-OUTS (FROSTED FLAKES); WORDS SCRABBLE (SNOW, WHITE, SKATING, FIREPLACE, WINTER); WINTER WEATHER (BLIZZARD, SLEET, HYPOTHERMIA, COLD SPELL, WINDCHILL-BEACH) |
|--|

Youth snowmobile classes

To register or for more info call 701-328-5357 or check the NDPRD website at www.parkrec.nd.gov

Monday, Dec. 5

5 to 9 p.m.
 Otter Tail Power Company
 226 Main Ave.
 Rugby ND

Tuesday, Dec. 6

5 to 9 p.m.
 Raymond Family
 Community Center
 1002 11th St. W.
 Williston, ND

Friday, Dec. 9

5 to 9 p.m.
 Chautauqua Gallery
 Lake Region State College
 1801 College Dr. N
 Devils Lake, ND

Tuesday, Dec. 13

5 to 9 p.m.
 May-Port CG High School
 900 Main St. West
 Mayville, ND 58257
 Phone 701-788-2281

Tuesday, Dec. 13

5 to 9 p.m.
 Divide County High School
 2061 1st St. NE
 Crosby, ND

Saturday, Dec. 17

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Kindred High School
 55 1st Ave S.
 Kindred, ND

Sunday, Dec. 18

10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Central Time
 Beulah Fire Hall
 100 7th Street NW
 Beulah, ND

Thursday, Dec. 22

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Forest Service Office
 101 5th St.
 Walhalla, ND

Thursday, Dec. 29

10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Cavalier County Courthouse
 901 3rd Street
 Langdon, ND

Saturday, Jan. 7

1 to 5 p.m.
 Park Shelter
 4635 35th Ave. N
 Reiles Acres, ND

Tuesday, Jan. 10

5 to 9 p.m.
 Harvey Fire Hall
 713 Alder Ave
 Harvey, ND

NDPRD News

Trautman becomes ranger at FSSP

Chad Trautman was hired as ranger at Fort Stevenson State Park, replacing ranger Ryan Nelson who moved to Gramham Island State Park to become assistant manager.

Trautman had previously worked in the North Dakota State Park from 1999-2004, but took a job with the National Park Service at Wind Cave in South Dakota.



Trautman

"I decided that Fort Stevenson and the North Dakota Park System was a great place to work so when the opportunity presented itself I wanted to return," Trautman says.

Trautman is originally from Mitchell, SD and has a Bachelor of Science Degree in Biology. He is now living in Garrison, ND with his wife Stephanie and their five children.

Trail Guide recognized by ND Library Association

The North Dakota Library Association recognized the NDPRD's North Dakota State Trail Guide with second place in its Notable Government Document category.

The award is voted on by NDLA conference attendees for state publications that have caught their eye. The top three vote-getters are sent to the American Library Association for national judging.

NDPRD former director and program honored

The North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association recognized former NDPRD director Douglass Prchal and the department's Artist in Residency Program at its annual meeting held in September.

The Artist in Residency in North Dakota State Park program was recognized

for its success with the NDRPA's Arts and Humanities Award, while retired director Douglass Prchal received the Individual Citation Award.

In 2009, the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department and North Dakota Council on the Arts formed a collaborative effort allowing North Dakota artists to showcase their craft and talents.

The Artist in Residency program provides artists the opportunity to live and work in a state park for one week. During that time artists are asked to complete works contributing to the public's understanding and appreciation of North Dakota's natural, historical and cultural diversity. Artists are also asked to conduct public workshops and presentations during their residency. The program has met with a lot of enthusiasm and is successful in reaching out to the public and preserving state parks through inspired art works.

Douglass Prchal's career with North Dakota Parks and Recreation spanned 30 years, the last 16 as the department's director. Governor Ed Schafer appointed Prchal NDPRD director in 1992 a position he held until retiring in 2010.

LMSP gets yurt

Lake Metigoshe State Park now has its own yurt available to the public, joining the



two that have been available at Cross Ranch State Park for the past year.

The bright blue yurt was originally ordered and set to appear at the North Dakota State Fair before being set up at LMSP. But the State Fair was cancelled in 2011 due to the severe flooding in the Minot area.

The yurt is set up near School Section Lake with a view of the lake just out

the front door. The yurt is designed for up to five people with a propane fireplace, electricity and a vault toilet nearby. Cooking is not allowed in the yurt, but a fire ring will be set up outside.

For more information and availability contact Lake Metigoshe State Park or check the NDPRD website.

LSSP wheelchair hunt is again successful

The 10th annual Wheelchair hunt at Lake Sakakawea State Park again proved successful, according to manager John Tunge.

"Four of the five hunters filled their deer tags, the fifth had opportunities but couldn't connect," Tunge says. "It was a long weekend for us, the days started at 4:30 a.m. and ended around 8 p.m. The extra efforts by the park staff was certainly evident. The hunters and their families were given an opportunity they could get nowhere else."



Pat Harland displays the deer he shot during the LSSP hunt

NDPRD sets 2012 Sports Show schedule

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department will again be participating in several sports shows in 2012.

Expect to see the NDPRD booth at the Bismarck Tribune Sports Show Feb. 24-26; Grand Forks Men's Show, Feb. 25-26; Fargo, Red River Valley Sportsmen's Boat, Camping & Vacation Show, March 1-4; Minot KX Sports Show, March 9-11; Williston Men's Show 16-18.

Beaver Lake State Park turns 80 from page 1

the anniversary park guide, "Perhaps the unique feature of the park is the story of its establishment and the organization which has made it possible. It is a park area which has been developed through the active cooperation of the local people. The State Parks Committee acknowledges with deep gratitude the unselfish efforts of the local park board which has been instrumental in developing Beaver Lake State Park into one of the finest recreational areas in south central North Dakota."

The original park was 143 acres in size and has since doubled. It featured what was referred to as the fastest quarter-mile horse race track in the country which looped around a baseball field. The race track is still in place today, but

instead of horses' hooves thundering in heated races, it's ringed by campsites and the traffic consists of recreational vehicles and hikers.

In exploring the park you'll find the monument erected in honor of the park's founders; a bell given by the Gackle Fire Department which cracked in its use; and the remnants of a stone cabin erected by O.F. Arntz in the late 1930s which was later bought by the park board and used to house the park's caretaker.

Today visitors can enjoy the swim beach on the north side of the park or take to the water from the ramp and dock area. A new visitor's center / administrative office was built in 2010. There are three beautiful cabins overlooking the lake available to the public along with the camp-

sites. Several trails provide hikers and mountain bikers access to the various habitat including woody draws and rolling prairie grasslands. An extensive prairie restoration project provides visitors with sweeping views of plants native to the area.

Survey from page 1

or its website at www.parkrec.nd.gov. This information and data from various other North Dakota Park Districts will also be available from the North Dakota Recreation and Park Association at 701-355-4458, email clearfour@btinet.net or its website at www.ndrpa.com.

Special Merit Awards from page 5

picnic shelter. Programs such as Christmas in July, Butt Shot Run, the Friends annual picnic and the amphitheater programs successfully promoted the park throughout western North Dakota." Rabon and Olson were instrumental in every aspect of fund raising, project completion and program development, according to Corcoran. "Through their leadership and willingness to volunteer their efforts are remarkable and should be recognized through this award," Corcoran adds.

Early in 2011 the rise of Devils Lake placed Grahams Island State Park in a precarious situation. The lake was threatening to overtop a three-mile stretch of Island Road the only access to the

park and to seven homes in the vicinity. When the winds blew they brought water down on the road and began eroding its base along with leaving debris which had to be removed, sometimes several times a day. Because of the treacherous conditions there were some thoughts the road would have to be barricaded and the park closed.

But the Benson County Commission -- David Davidson, Lowell Haagenon, Curtis Hvinden, Jason Lee and Michael Steffan -- stepped forward to provide resources to keep the road open.

The NDPRD recognizes the efforts of the commissioners with its Special Merit Award. They took the time to listen to the problems and took the necessary steps to help the park remain open.

Merit Awards from page 5

to accomplish this. There were times when conditions were so severe that the road was closed. There were marginal days that required skill and nerve to get the job done. Doug played a significant part in accomplishing this. Without question it was a task that was above and beyond the call of duty. His effort and commitment to take on this job and get it done, without incident, is the reason that I highly recommend him for the award."

With the NDPRD call center and online reservation system unable to manage the reservation system for GISP because of the uncertainty of access, the park managed its own reservation system and most of this went through Haagenon. Not only did she have to handle

the thousands of calls for reservations and information, but she also had to fight the elements and the lake in getting to and from GISP to home.

"Getting to and from work was harder than a day at work. The routes to get to the park were often like driving through an obstacle course. The Island Road is rough, rutted and near impossible to travel when wet due to the clay fill -- driving through a maze of trucks, equipment and flaggers," Duray says. "A degree of anxiety existed at all times concerning upcoming weather. I would recommend a merit award for Theresa based on her fortitude and endurance to get through and put up with the situation at Grahams Island State Park."

Visitation from page 2

on a first-come, first-served basis. Grahams Island is a favorite spot for Devils Lake sportsmen and the park regularly draws over 100,000 people a year, but in 2011 daily visitation was down nearly 50 percent.

State, federal and local governments did provide funding for a road raise for Grahams Island which started in September. Access remains open while the work is ongoing with completion expected next summer.

North Dakota Highway 22, the main route used to access Little Missouri State Park, suffered extensive damage when rain soaked soils gave way and slumped. Highway 22 north of the park was closed while the southern route was under construction most of the summer as travelers were forced to the ditches to avoid construction. Visitation to Little Missouri was down nearly 40 percent.

But other state parks made up for the decrease in visitation.

Lewis and Clark State Park continues its remarkable popularity. In 2007, Lewis and Clark saw only 22,000 visitors, but in 2011 it had over

84,000 through the first three quarters and could exceed 100,000 by year's end. The rise of Lake Sakakawea and the booming economy in western North Dakota have made Lewis and Clark the system's fifth most popular park just behind Fort Stevenson (123,000), Lake Metigoshe (122,000), Lake Sakakawea (107,000) and Icelandic (95,000). Lake Metigoshe saw nearly a 30 percent increase in visitors; Lake Sakakawea 8 percent; and Icelandic 4.5 percent.

Camping in the state parks saw more of an impact due to the closures at FALSP, CRSP and SCSP. Through September, camping was down nearly 14 percent. Nearly all of the decline can be attributed to the closures at FALSP and CRSP which accounted for a loss of nearly 8,000 camping nights.

As the parks get ready for winter and repairs are made, expectations are high for 2012. Hopes are 2011 was just a glitch in what has been an upward trend for state parks and with a little help with the weather, visitation and camping will return to record setting heights.



North Dakota Parks &
 Recreation Department
 1600 E. Century Ave., Suite 3
 Bismarck, ND 58503

2012 North Dakota State Park Annual Vehicle Permit Order Form

The 2012 Annual Vehicle Permit for North Dakota state parks can be ordered by mail at a cost of \$25 each. ND residents ages 65 and older can receive a discount price of \$20. Permits come with a card and envelope making them ideal for gift giving. Make checks or money orders payable to the ND Parks and Recreation Dept., or supply credit card information below, and mail to: **North Dakota Parks and Recreation Dept.**

**1600 E. Century Ave., Suite 3
 Bismarck, ND 58503**

Name _____ Phone _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

e-mail address _____

Vehicle license number(s) on which permit will be used:

| Quantity | Cost | Total |
|--|-----------|----------|
| _____ 2012 annual permit | \$25/each | \$ _____ |
| _____ ND resident 65 and older | \$20/each | \$ _____ |
| <small>Date of birth required for senior discount.</small> | | |
| _____ number gift envelopes | | |

If permit is given as gift please provide the permit holder's above information. Disabled veterans and former POWs must apply in person at parks or Bismarck office to receive special discount.

Method of payment

Check Visa MasterCard Discover

Card# _____

V-Code (last 3 digits on back of card) _____ Exp. Date _____

Signature _____