



North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund

ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021



DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION
Dwayne Patterson, Director

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
Roy Cooper, Governor | D. Reid Wilson, Secretary

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Mount Ida Wilderness Area, Marion

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) was established in July 1994 to provide a dedicated funding source for improvements in state parks, matching grants for local parks and public access to the state's beaches and estuaries. PARTF is funded by an annual appropriation as well as revenue from personalized license plates. The Parks and Recreation Authority, a citizen board, allocates PARTF revenue for projects in state parks and for grants to local governments to buy parkland and build facilities for public recreation.

Pursuant to G.S. 143B-135.56, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is to be allocated as follows:

- Sixty-five percent for the State Parks System or a State Recreational Forest for capital projects, repairs, and renovations of facilities and to acquire land;
- Thirty percent to provide grants to local governments on a dollar-for-dollar basis to establish or improve parks and recreational projects;
- Five percent for the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program;
- A maximum of three percent may be used by the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR) for the operating expenses associated with managing capital improvements projects, acquiring land, and administering the grants program for local governments.

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund is housed within the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation (DPR). DPR transfers five percent of PARTF revenue to the Division of Coastal Management for the Coastal and Estuarine Water Beach Access Program. The Division of Coastal Management administers these funds and offers matching grants to local governments in 20 coastal counties.

2020-21 Parks and Recreation Authority Members



Mavis Gragg
Chairperson
Durham



Chad Brown
Stanley



Vinnie Goel
Morrisville



Woody Gurley
La Grange



Beth Heile
Valdese



Lewis Ledford
Raleigh



Margaret Newbold
Vilas



Cynthia Tart
Hampstead

The North Carolina Parks and Recreation Authority, a nine-member board, oversees the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. The Governor appoints five members, including the chairperson. The General Assembly appoints four members, two by the President Pro Tempore of the Senate and two by the Speaker of the House. Members are appointed for three-year terms.

The Authority is charged with six powers and duties:

- to allocate funds for land acquisition
- to allocate funds for capital projects
- to solicit financial and material support
- to receive public and private donations and funds for deposit into the Trust Fund
- to develop effective support for parks and recreation
- and to advise the Secretary of DNCR on any matter referred to the body.

The Parks and Recreation Authority held six meetings during fiscal year 2020-21.



3.0 Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Revenue Summary

Total PARTF revenue available for state and local parks as well as coastal access projects was \$17,018,590 from appropriations and personalized license plate fees. The state park system received \$10,730,221 (65 percent), the local government matching grant program \$4,952,410 (30 percent) and the Coastal Access grant program \$850,929 (five percent). Reserved for administrative expenses (three percent) was \$485,030 (Table 3-1).

Table 3-1: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Deposits and Distribution of Revenues Fiscal Year 2020-21

Revenue	Amount
PARTF Recurring Appropriation	\$ 16,242,884
Personalized Registration Plates Revenue	\$1,525,706
Direct Appropriation	(\$750,000)
Total PARTF Revenue	\$ 17,018,590

Distribution	Amount
State Parks System / Dupont Recreational State Forest	\$ 10,730,221
Local Governments Matching Grant Program	\$ 4,952,410
Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program	\$ 850,929
Administrative Expenses Reserve	\$ 485,030
Total PARTF Allocation	\$ 17,018,590



Catawba River Soccer Complex, Morganton

4.0 Grant Program for Local Governments



4.1 Program Description

The Parks and Recreation Trust Fund program provides dollar-for-dollar matching grants to local governments to acquire land for public parks and to build or renovate recreational facilities. North Carolina counties and incorporated municipalities are eligible for PARTF grants. Public authorities, as defined by N.C. General Statute §159-7, are also eligible if they are authorized to acquire parkland or develop facilities for public recreation.

Each year, the Parks and Recreation Authority announces the availability of PARTF matching grants and the schedule for applying to local government officials. A local government can request a maximum grant amount of \$500,000 in PARTF assistance with each grant application.

The Division of Parks and Recreation assists local governments in several ways. The PARTF staff posts a PARTF Application Video Guide online where local governments can learn about the program and how to complete an application. The video is available on YouTube for viewing on demand. The Division contracts with North Carolina State University to provide technical assistance to local governments through the Recreation Resources Service (RRS). RRS provides advice to local governments on preparing grant applications with four consultants in regional offices.

The members of the Parks and Recreation Authority select grant recipients through a point-system vote. The factors considered by the Authority include but are not limited to the criteria contained in the PARTF scoring system, the population of the applicant community, the geographic distribution of projects across the state, the grant funds requested in comparison to the funds available and compliance with prior grant agreements. Applications were due May 1, 2020. The Parks and Recreation Authority met in September 2020 to award the matching grants.

4.2 Description of Applications and Grants

The PARTF revenue allocated to local grants for fiscal year 2020-21 was \$ 4,952,410. Sixty-six local governments submitted PARTF applications, requesting \$20.5 million in PARTF assistance. The Authority awarded 17 grants for \$ 5,248,683 (Table 4-1). The difference between the fiscal year distribution and the amount awarded is \$ 296,273. This additional revenue is from unspent administrative funds from previous years, withdrawn projects, and projects completed under budget.

**Table 4-1: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
Matching Grants Awarded to Local Governments Fiscal Year 2020-21**

Applicant	County	Project	Funds Awarded
Bertie	Bertie	Tall Glass of Water Phase 1	500,000
Boone	Watauga	Boone Greenway Skate Park	72,500
East Bend	Yadkin	East Bend Town Square	200,000
Granite Falls	Caldwell	Granite Falls Recreation Center Expansion	250,000
Hendersonville	Henderson	Clear Creek Greenway	376,000
Hookerton	Greene	Hookerton Community Park Improvements	195,400
Hope Mills	Cumberland	Heritage Park	300,000
Huntersville	Mecklenburg	Ranson / Rosedale Park	150,000
Iredell	Iredell	Iredell County Recreation Center	425,000
Johnston	Johnston	Greater Cleveland Park and Open Space	500,000
Kernersville	Forsyth	Civitan Fitness Park	263,533
Monroe	Union	Belk Tonawanda Park - Phase IB	425,000
Morrisville	Wake	Crabtree Creek Nature Park	500,000
Mount Airy	Surry	Granite City Greenway Connector Phase IV	350,000
Pembroke	Robeson	Splash Pad	178,750
Rocky Mount	Nash	Battle Park Renovation	350,000
Stanfield	Stanly	Pete Henkel Park Phase 1	212,500
17 awards			\$5,248,683

4.3 Examples of Completed Local Government Projects



Creekside Park Enhancement, Archdale



Briar Chapel Park, Chatham County



Creedmoor Community Center

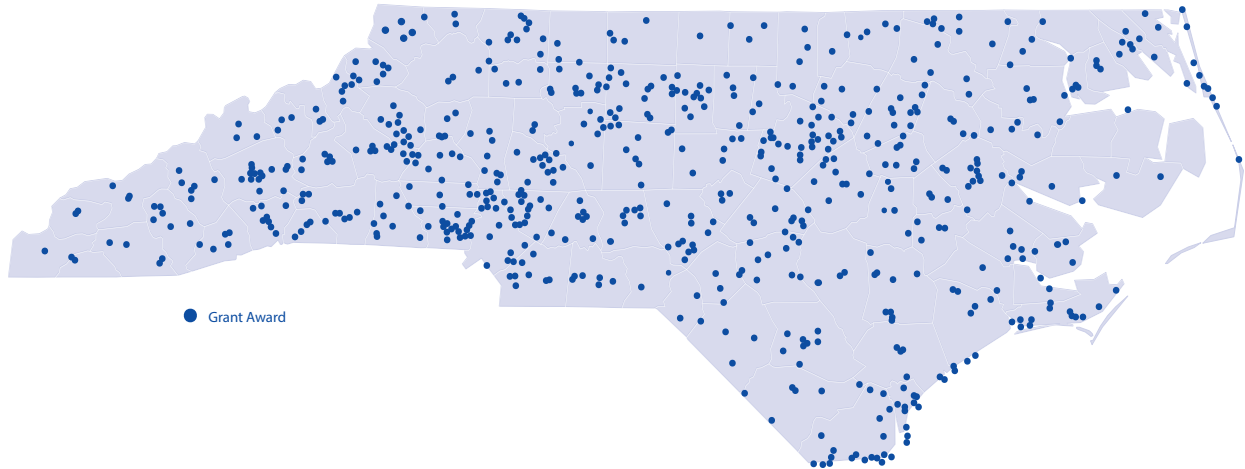


New London Park

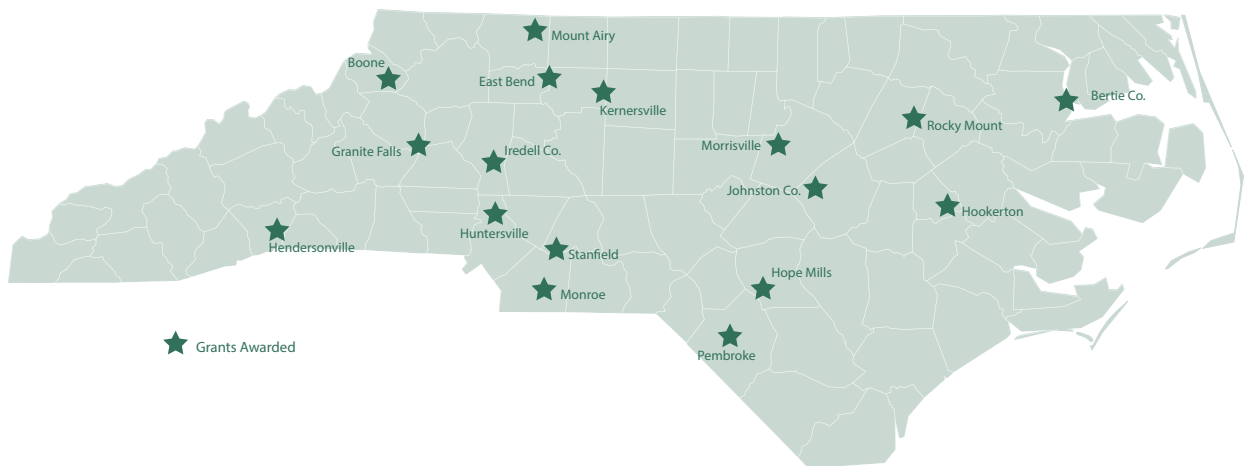
4.4 Geographic Distribution of Grants

Since 1995, the Parks and Recreation Authority has awarded 935 matching grants in all 100 counties across North Carolina totaling \$216 million.

Distribution of PARTF Grants by County 1995-2020



Distribution of PARTF Grants by County from 2020-21 Grant Cycle



5.0 State Parks

The Parks and Recreation Authority allocates PARTF revenue to capital improvement and land acquisition projects for the state parks system. DPR develops priorities for the state parks system and recommends projects for the board's approval. The PARTF revenue for state park projects for fiscal year 2020-21 was \$ 10,730,221 and an additional \$81,214 from administrative funds from the previous year.

The total amount awarded to state park projects in FY 20-21 was \$12,128,977 including funds from projects from previous years completed under budget or postponed (Tables 5-1 and 5-2).

The Parks and Recreation Authority allocated \$432,457 for projects at Dupont State Recreational Forest (§143B-135.56 (b)(1)). Section 7.0 provides additional information about these projects.

5.1 Land Acquisition

**Table 5-1: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
State Parks System Land Acquisition Projects Fiscal Year 2020-21**

Unit	Acres	PARTF Funds	Description
Beech Creek Bog State Natural Area	17	\$220,000	Ward Tract - Critical inholding with an exceptional natural heritage area.
Bob's Creek State Natural Area	2,421	\$200,000	Phase III - Completes the initial land acquisition.
Bushy Lake State Natural Area	468	\$850,000	Nash Johnston Tract - contains a sand rim natural community and significant areas of wetlands.
Chimney Rock State Park	57	\$270,000	Phase II of Carlisle tract acquisition - an inholding on Rumbling Bald Mountain to protect high quality natural resources and connect trail segments. \$27,000 was transferred from Chimney Rock land acquisition to Elk Knob for acquisition of inholdings totaling 3-acres.
Elk Knob State Park	63	\$220,000	Thorton Tract - An area of exceptional national significance on the south-facing slope of Elk Knob.
Hanging Rock State Park	179	\$703,500	Several tracts needed to provide trails to Danbury.
Pisgah View State Park	200	\$1,000,000	Phase III acquisitions in the South Hominy Creek watershed for the newly established state park.
Sugar Mountain Bog State Natural Area	27	\$189,000	State significant heritage area and rare mountain bog wetland.
Totals	3,432	\$3,652,500	

5.2 Construction and Renovation

**Table 5-2: North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund
State Parks System Capital Improvement Projects Fiscal Year 2020-21**

Park	Project	Funding
Carolina Beach State Park	Campground Renovation	\$353,000
Chimney Rock State Park	Retaining Wall	\$550,000
Eno River State Park	New Visitor Center	\$269,460
Fall Lake State Recreation Area	Electrical Improvements for Recreational Vehicle Campsites	\$1,355,170
Jockey's Ridge State Park	Visitor Center Maintenance	\$675,326
Lumber River State Park	Contact Station	\$85,000
Mount Mitchell State Park	Restaurant Renovation	\$2,400,000
Major Maintenance	Systemwide Maintenance projects	\$2,000,000
Major Maintenance Roofs	Systemwide Roof Repairs	\$238,521
Major Maintenance Trails	Sustainable Trail Renovations – Cliffs of the Neuse & Morrow Mountain State Parks	\$550,000
Total		\$ 8,476,477



Parking Lot Wall Repair, Chimney Rock State Park

5.3 Operating Expenses Associated with State Park Projects

In allocating PARTF funds to the state parks system, the Parks and Recreation Authority considered the operating expenses that may be associated with the projects (\$143B-135.56 (e)). The Division of Parks and Recreation estimated these costs and presented them for the board's consideration when the projects were proposed for funding. The estimated costs are based on conceptual plans for each project.

Table 5-3: Operating Expense Associated With State Park Projects

State Park	Project	Estimated Operating Expenses*	
		Minimal Level	Optimal Level
Eno River State Park	New Visitor Center	\$314,188 Ranger Maintenance Mechanic Administrative Assistant	\$385,960 Ranger Maintenance Mechanic Administrative Assistant Educator
Falls Lake State Recreation Area	RV Campsite Electrical Improvements	\$82,000 Electrician	\$157,000 Electrician Interpreter
Lumber River State Park	Contact Station	\$248,000 Park Ranger Maintenance	\$248,000 Park Ranger Maintenance

*Costs associated with Connect NC Bond Projects, which PARTF funds are supplementing.

6.1 Program Description

North Carolina's Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program was established by the General Assembly in 1981. The program began receiving five percent of the revenues from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund during the 1996-97 fiscal year. The program's enabling legislation (§ 113A-134.1) states that public interest would be served by providing increased access to coastal waters, public parking facilities, or other related public uses.

The program, administered by the Division of Coastal Management (DCM), offers matching grant funds primarily to local governments throughout the 20 coastal counties. Since 1981, over 451 public access sites have been acquired or improved at a cost of over \$47 million in grant funds. Local governments are responsible for construction, operation, and long-term maintenance of the facilities. While most of the early projects were located along the oceanfront, more projects are now designed to improve access to estuarine shorelines, coastal rivers, and urban waterfronts.

The Division of Coastal Management sends pre-application requests for proposals (RFPs) to local governments in the 20 coastal counties annually. Criteria developed by the Coastal Resources Commission are used to select grant recipients. Local governments are given eighteen (18) months to complete projects. Extensions may be granted for unforeseen events and delays, such as hurricanes, with a three (3) year maximum life of a contract.

Local governments are required to match from 10 percent to 25 percent of the project costs based on the type of project being funded and the communities' economic status per the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Tier designations, as outlined by (§ 143B-437.08). The required cash match may include Federal and other State funds provided these funds are not already being used as match funds for any other state or federal program.



Pasquotank County Boardwalk

6.2 Types of Projects Funded

Communities can apply for the following types of projects:

Land Acquisition/Easement

- Purchase of land for future public access facilities.
- Purchase of easements for public access.

Construction Projects

- Facilities such as dune crossovers, boardwalks, and piers that provide access to the water.
- Support facilities such as parking areas, restrooms, and other facilities.
- Boat Launch facilities- boat launch and ramp facilities, whether motorized or not, may be part of a project provided pedestrian access is still a major component of the project.

Rehabilitation

- Urban waterfront access sites - improved public access to deteriorating or underutilized urban waterfronts through reconstruction or rehabilitation.
- Reconstruction or relocation of existing damaged public access facilities. Primarily for sites not originally funded by this program or for improvements to any sites at least fifteen (15) years old.

6.3 PARTF Awards Based on FY 2020-21 Deposits and Other Unencumbered Funds

State appropriations are allocated to DCM through PARTF. The amount transferred from the PARTF to DCM during fiscal year 2020-21 was \$850,929. The amount budgeted for grants in addition to this allocation include funds unused from previous fiscal years and returned funds from previous grants. Table 6-1 provides the list of local governments that have been awarded grant funding. Additional information on current and past grants awarded can be found [here](#).



Corolla Village Bathhouse, Currituck County



Salisbury Street Restrooms and Access, Wrightsville Beach

6.O Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program

Table 6-1: Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Program Communities Awarded or Prioritized for FY 2020-21 Funding Based on Earlier Deposits and State Appropriations

Local Government	Project Description	Total Project Costs	Grant Amount
Belville	Brunswick Riverwalk Park	255,400	191,550
Bertie County [†]	Bertie Tall Glass of Water Project Phase I	163,080	146,772
Caswell Beach	Regional Access Handicapped Rebuild	59,466	44,600
Craven County	Creekside Park	123,400	88,500
Holly Ridge [†]	Morris Landing Restrooms	89,681	80,713
Kill Devil Hills	Moor Shores Estuarine Access	119,692	89,769
Morehead City	S. 10th Street Kayak Launch	45,000	33,750
Murfreesboro [†]	Murfree's Landing Phase II	189,000	170,000
NC Coastal Reserve	Currituck Banks Reserve Boardwalk	122,329	122,329
Ocean Isle Beach	Chadbourne Street Beach Access Replacement	36,617	27,463
Pasquotank County [†]	Pasquotank River Public Access Improvement Phase IV	99,917	89,925
Swansboro [†]	Bicentennial Park Boardwalk and Public Day Docks	158,350	142,350
Totals		\$1,461,932	\$1,227,721

[†] Denotes communities that are Tier 1 jurisdictions. \$627,750 or about 51.1% of the grant awards are proposed for Tier 1 communities.

The above project list does not include any direct partnerships with other State agencies. The only non-award use of the funds is providing access site signs made by the State Division of Corrections. Signs are provided to local governments for new sites and for replacement of weathered signs.

7.O DuPont State Recreational Forest

Since 2017 in keeping with N.C.G.S. 143B-135.56, the Parks and Recreation Authority allocated four percent (4%) of the annual appropriation for State Parks for capital projects, repairs, renovations, and land acquisitions at DuPont State Recreational Forest (DSRF). The amount transferred was \$432,457. In fiscal year 2021, State Forest staff made progress on capital projects supported by PARTF funds, expending a total of \$309,624. Table 7-1 provides a summary of expenditures.

Table 7-1: DuPont State Recreational Forest PARTF expenditures for FY 2020-21

Capital Project	Expenditures
Forest roads and trails – repair and renovation	\$ 85,918
Ranger Headquarters at Lake Julia – repair and renovation	\$ 30,380
Forest access areas – repair and renovation	\$ 124,845
Old Camp Summit Cabin – repair and renovation	\$ 68,481
Total	\$309,624

Triple Falls Trail – Repair and Renovation



Triple Falls Trail - Before



Triple Falls Trail - After

Forest trails at DSRF constitute one of the most extensive outdoor recreational systems in North Carolina. These natural surface pathways endure traffic from bicyclists, equestrians, hikers, and forest ranger operations with vehicles. In addition, these trails are exposed to significant rainfall contributing to continuous erosion and sedimentation. The maintenance of this trail system is a year-round operation and requires an investment of materials and labor. During fiscal year 2020-2021, DSRF used PARTF funds to purchase gravel, fencing and erosion control materials to be able to repair and renovate Triple Falls Trail, one of the most traveled trails in the forest with approximately 400,000 visitors using it each year.

Old Camp Summit Cabin – Repair and Renovation



Old Camp Summit Cabin

Since its acquisition in 2000, this building had been unoccupied. It was once part of Camp Summit's facilities which still provide recreational benefits and office space for DSRF operations such as the equestrian facilities near Bridal Veil Falls and the Ranger Headquarters near Lake Julia. The approximately 40-year-old building was renovated with improvements to the roof, electrical systems, heating and cooling systems, and water supply systems. In addition, hazardous trees in proximity to the building were removed. This facility supports the operations of DSRF's law enforcement agents.

Ranger Headquarters at Lake Julia – Repair and Renovation



Ranger Headquarters at Lake Julia

This facility has served as the main office for forest ranger staff since the early 2000s. It was previously an overnight lodge used by the DuPont Corporation before becoming state property. Before the DuPont Corporation's ownership and until the mid-1980s, the building served as the infirmary for the summer operations of Camp Summit. In 2019, mold contamination was detected in parts of the facility, making it a high priority for renovation and structural improvements. During 2021, PARTF funds were used for designing renovation work, which includes new electrical system layouts, updated heating and cooling systems, a new floorplan to support forest administrative and operational work, and the removal of mold sources throughout the structure. Remodeling construction is expected to be complete by October 2022.

Forest Access Areas – Repair and Renovation



Hooker Falls Access Area



Lake Imaging Access Area

During fiscal year 2020-2021, DSRF undertook repairs and renovations to three of the most utilized access areas and parking lots in the Forest: Hooker Falls, High Falls, and Lake Imaging. Improvements included extensive grading, rebuilding gravel bases, stormwater management, erosion control measures, redesign of parking arrangements, directional signage, and stone stairways in select locations. These renovations improve the visitor experience by providing an organized parking accommodation and allowing for better emergency access to the more popular trailheads in DSRF. In addition, nearby sensitive areas such as streams and natural floodplain communities were further protected from stormwater and sedimentation impacts that were more prevalent before these improvements were made. Before and after images of the project improvements follow.