

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

NEWS RELEASE

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For more information, contact Gordon Weixel, 701-328-5358

NDPRD program, former director recognized

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is honored to have a former director and one of its many programs recognized at the recent North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association annual conference.

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. In the last three years, nine artists have participated in the Artist in Residency Program in eight different state parks. The program recruits writers, composers, visual and performing artists to experience the state's natural resources and allow them to express their experience through their art.

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. Prchal's many accomplishments include:

- Planning and development of Cross Ranch State Park;
- Design of Icelandic State Park's Pioneer Heritage Center;
- Master planning for the majority of the state park system;
- Changing the department's focus from development to protection and preservation of the park system during the budget crunch of the 1990s;
- Encouraging interpretation and education efforts in state parks;
- Development of trails in state parks and the Pembina Gorge by securing funding through the state legislature.

The awards were given at the North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association annual meeting held Sept. 20, at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.