

# DISCOVER



## NORTH DAKOTA PARKS AND RECREATION NEWS

VOLUME 17 ISSUE 2 WWW.PARKREC.ND.GOV FALL/WINTER 2012

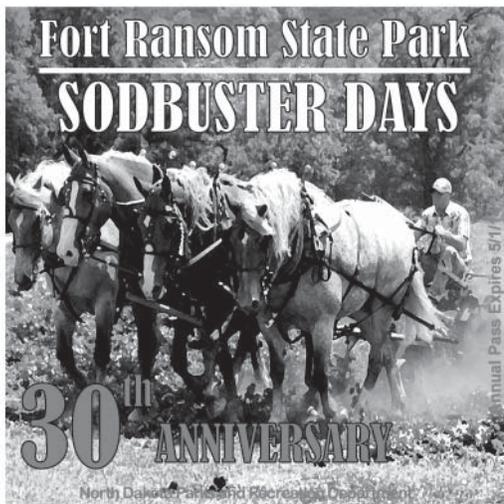
### *Fort Ransom Sodbusters featured on the 2013 NDPRD vehicle pass*

The 2013 North Dakota State Park annual vehicle permit features the 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Fort Ransom State Park Sodbusters event.

The event is put on by the Fort Ransom Sodbusters Association in cooperation with Fort Ransom State Park and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation

Department. Sodbuster Days debuted in 1984 as a one-day event, expanding to four two-day shows in 1989 as part of North Dakota's centennial celebration. Since 1990 it has been held as a two-day event, twice a year.

For the past 30 years visitors to Fort Ransom State Park have experienced "living history" in the form of Sodbuster Days, an event held twice a year during the second full weekend in July and first weekend after Labor Day. Sodbuster Days pay tribute to the state's pioneer ancestors and their lifestyle. Members of the Fort Ransom Sodbusters Association perform many of the pioneer village activities as they were originally conducted. Among the homesteading activities conducted during



Sodbuster Days are flintknapping, looming, carding, weaving, tating, spinning, blacksmithing and silversmithing. An antique machinery exhibit is a permanent display which was developed and maintained by the Sodbusters and put to work during demonstrations. There is entertainment in the form of folk

music and bluegrass. Visitors can take part in such culinary delights as homemade ice cream, corn meal muffins, sauerkraut and much more. Kids have an opportunity to participate in pioneer games.

Besides its dedication to the Sodbusters event, the Sodbuster Association is a strong supporter of Fort Ransom State Park and responsible for many of the improvements made to the Sunne demonstration farm helping put up buildings such as the machinery building and music building.

The mission of the Fort Ransom Sodbuster's Association, a non-profit volunteer organization formed in 1986, is to pay tribute

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### **Record camping**

North Dakota State Parks again exceeded a million visitors in 2012 and recorded what is believed the highest number of campers in the park system's history this past year.

It's estimated the state parks will have 1,045,200 visitors by the end of 2012 (these numbers were put together just prior the year's end). Records show the parks had 61,331 campers in 2012 which is 10 percent higher than 2011.

The numbers show the park system has made a remarkable recovery from 2011, when flooding impacted nearly all of the system's 13 parks. The campground at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park was closed from May of 2011 to June 1, 2012 as FALSP had to completely renovate its campground which was destroyed by unprecedented Missouri River flooding in 2011. Cross Ranch State Park's campground wasn't inundated like FALSP's, but the flooding prevented access to the campground which remained closed from May to the beginning of September. Sully Creek State Park's campground was also closed for a month when Little Missouri River waters overflowed its banks and flooded the park.

"I can't say enough about the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) staff that worked to protect the parks during the flooding and helped in the recovery when the waters subsided," says NDPRD director

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## News from the director

# It's going to busy for NDPRD in 2013

A new year is upon us and it brings with it the 2013 Legislative Session. This will keep the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department busy right up to the camping season as the state lawmakers consider the NDPRD budget.

Governor Jack Dalrymple did well by the NDPRD with his proposed budget released prior to the legislative session. Included in his proposal are: a new visitors center at Fort Stevenson State Park, a new comfort station at Lake Sakakawea State Park, an additional campground loop at Lewis and Clark State Park, and a portion of the funds to purchase Kit's Marina at Lake Sakakawea State Park. NDPRD staff and I will be spending a lot of time keeping track of various department related bills and testifying on their behalf. The NDPRD welcomes all the support it can get as lawmakers review the NDPRD budget and other bills related to the agency.

In this issue readers will find information on the department's strategy to update the Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park Master Plan. We've been working hard on pulling this altogether with



**NDPRD  
director  
Mark  
Zimmerman**

the help of community leaders along with the directors of the State Historical Society and Division of Tourism. There are some exciting changes in store for one of North Dakota's most popular state parks.

The department is also beginning to develop plans to celebrate its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. Long-time park manager Henry Duray and Assistant Field Manager Karen Assel are co-chairs of the anniversary committee and will be looking at a variety of ways the NDPRD can mark this historic event.

I want to remind everyone, that although it is winter, the state parks' off-season, the parks remain open and there is plenty to do. Most of the parks have trails that are open for cross country skiing and snowshoeing and several hold winter events. At Turtle River State Park the Chalet is open and the park features one of the best sledding hills in the Red River Valley. Cross Ranch and Lake Metigoshe state parks have cabins and yurts available to rent and maintain

cross country skiing trails. The more adventurous might want to try a little sub-zero camping. As an old Boy Scout, this is one of my favorite activities, nothing quite like sleeping outside in a sleeping bag during a crisp winter night and becoming a "zero hero."

During the winter it's easier to spot wildlife because foliage doesn't get in the way. Park staff have taken some amazing pictures of animals which can be accessed online through the NDPRD website at [www.parkrec.nd.gov](http://www.parkrec.nd.gov).

North Dakota's state parks again eclipsed a million visitors in 2012 and they saw some of the greatest camping numbers in the history of the department. I expect that 2013 is going to be another good year and encourage everyone to visit a state park no matter what the time of year, there's always plenty to see and do.

## Parks Day at the Capitol, State Fair and sports shows

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is going to reach out to outdoor enthusiasts during the upcoming months with several informational exhibits planned.

The first will be Jan. 23 at the state capitol from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. It will be the second time the NDPRD will hold a "Parks Day at the Capitol," the first coming during the 2011 legislative session. State park managers, state park support groups, Snowmobile North Dakota, the North Dakota Recreation and Parks Association, and headquarter divisions will be represented providing information and answering questions. It's also very likely that Roscoe the Raccoon will be around and available for pictures.

Soon after the sports show season will kickoff and as always the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department will be participating in several. The first is the Bismarck Tribune Sports Show on Feb. 15-17 at the Bismarck Civic Center's Exhibit hall. The Grand Forks Men's show is Feb. 22-24 at the Alerus Center. The KX Sports Show in Minot is March 7-10 and is always well attended. Williston is holding its 28<sup>th</sup> annual Sports and Recreation Show March 15-17 at the Raymond Family Community Center. Along with information on state parks and recreation programs visitors to the NDPRD booth can sign up to win an annual vehicle pass or purchase one.

The NDPRD will return to the North Dakota State Fair after having appeared for the first time in several years in 2012. The department will again have an outdoor area located just across from the Bunny Barn or directly west from the Grand Stand. Several thousand visitors attended the exhibit last year. Along with park information, the display will have its OHV simulator and games to play. Make plans to stop by when you're at the fair July 19-27.

## DISCOVER

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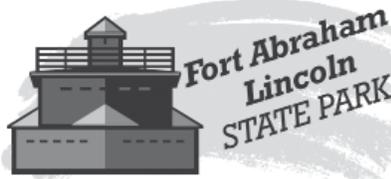
# Planning for FALSP's future

A master plan for Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park is being developed by the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD). 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.

On Jan. 9, the NDPRD is holding a public meeting to bring aspects of the plan forward for discussion. The meeting is being held at the new Mandan middle school starting at 7 p.m. A short presentation will be given and then the public will have an opportunity to visit displays on the various amenities being considered for the park. NDPRD staff will be on hand to take comments and the public will also have the opportunity to provide written comment.

The master plan will look at many facets of Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park including:

- Expansion of camping facilities
- Enhancement of existing facilities
- A new visitors' center at the park's entrance
- Alternative rental accommodations



- Park transportation system
- Future land acquisitions
- Relocation of manager's residence
- Interpretive and recreational events and programming

The citizens' group, represented by local leaders and affected 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.

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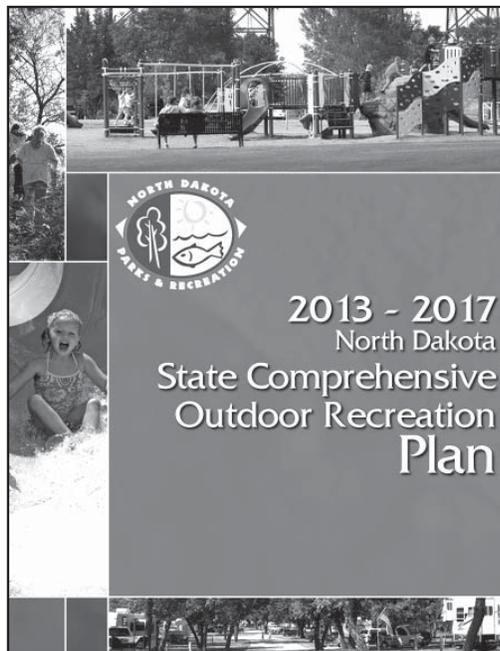
## NDPRD completes outdoor recreation plan

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's 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 Dakota's 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 Jan. 2013 at the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department website [www.parkrec.nd.gov](http://www.parkrec.nd.gov).

# 2012 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.

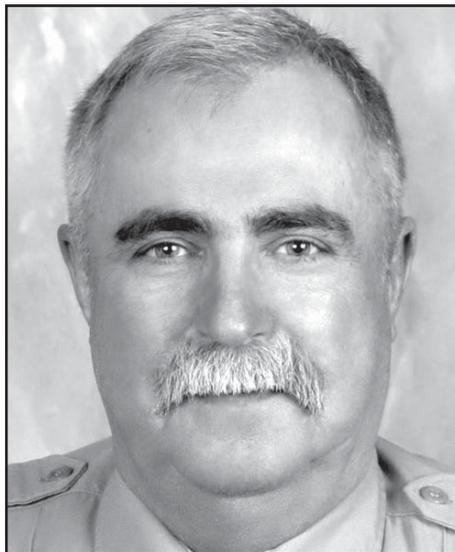
Merit Awards are given to current departmental employees, temporary or classified. Special Merit Awards are intended for volunteers, friends groups, individual members of friends group or other agency employees.

## Tunge receives NDRPD's highest award

Long-time Lake Sakakawea State Park manager John Tunge is 2012's recipient of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's highest award, the Cal Renner Award of Excellence.

Tunge was nominated by LSSP park ranger Keith Orth; NDRPD park managers Steve Crandall, Larry Hagen, Greg Corcoran and John Kwapinski; Mercer County Sheriff Dean Danzeisen, North Dakota Highway Patrol trooper Christa Sommer; NDRPD headquarters administrator Carol Jorgenson; LSSP's Eli Schumann and Terry Morrison.

Tunge joined the NDRPD in 1976, becoming manager of LSSP in 1979. During his long career with the department Tunge was instrumental to many internal committees, held various offices of the State Park Management Association, served on the Mercer County Ambulance Board and Riverdale Credit Union. He leads department efforts in law enforcement including developing and maintaining the NDRPD's Law Enforcement Policies; working with the POST Board in qualifying department Peace Officers in training, licensing, sidarm qualifications; is the NDRPD contact for BCI and other law



**Tunge**

enforcement agencies.

"John is responsible for the annual handicap deer hunt held at LSSP since 2002. This allows those confined to a wheelchair to experience the art of hunting," says Orth. "John Tunge has been influential with people working within and outside the department

for over 36 years. He sees that the vision and philosophy of the NDRPD Mission Statement is followed. John leads by example and he has been an inspiration to many NDRPD employees in their lives and professional careers. He is highly respected and admired by friends, colleagues, professional and the public."

Hagen was proud to nominate Tunge for the award. "Since 1978, John has been my friend, boss, and confidante. As a park manager John has been instrumental in setting policy, rules and regulations. He has taken an important role in employee training, weapons training, and equipment purchases," Hagen says. His commitment to quality has shown through by the actions of his staff and by the quality of the facilities he was in charge of at Lake Sakakawea State Park. John is the type of manager that the state of North Dakota can be proud of," Hagen says.

The award was announced in December following the NDRPD's annual winter meeting and will be presented during in-service training in February.

## Going above and beyond call of duty

The 2012 North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department's Merit Award winners are: Outdoor Recreation Trainer Matt Gardner, Biologist Justin Parks, Little Missouri State Park supervisor Ryan Gardner, and the Pembina Gorge Development Team of Recreation Manager Mike Duerre, Planner Marc Brown and Recreation Division Manager Arik Spencer.

Matt Gardner, nominated by Recreation Division Manager Arik Spencer, for his development of a new series of Off-Highway Vehicle public service announcements.

"Matt worked hand-in-hand with the



**R. Gardner**

contractor selected to film the PSAs in developing the PSA topics and script. Matt took the lead on selecting the filming sites and finding staff and volunteers to serve as actors?"



**Parks**



**M. Gardner**

Spencer describes. "His hard work and ingenuity are apparent to all that view the PSAs. Matt took this effort on in addition to his existing duties and did a great job."

In 2012 the NDRPD's weed spraying program faced a major setback when it lost two of its weed technicians. With no weed techs available, department Biologist Justin Parks took it upon himself to spray the remaining weed acres in

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# Recognizing those who support NDPRD

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department wouldn't have the success it does without those individuals and organizations that support its state parks and recreational programs. In 2012 the NDPRD recognizes State Paleontologist John Hoganson; electrician Craig Kjellerson; musical entertainers Cottonwood; the Garrison Area Improvement Association; and Snowmobile North Dakota with the Special Merit Award.

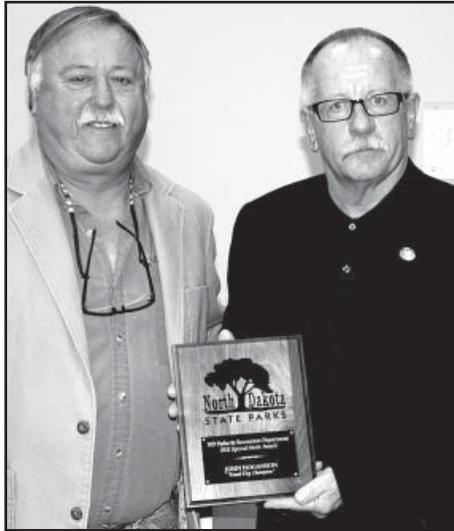
Hoganson was instrumental in the launching and continuation of fossil digs across North Dakota, according to NDPRD Director Mark Zimmerman, who nominated Hoganson. "From the tree covered hills of the Pembina Gorge to the rugged western North Dakota badlands, John has garnered national and international recognition to the natural and paleo resources of the state," Zimmerman says.

The NDPRD had the fortune of partnering with Hoganson, the Department of Mineral Resources, State Historical Society of ND, and the Walhalla community in hosting nine separate and very successful digs in the summer of 2012. There were 169 participants in the fossil digs including youth groups and visitors from Colorado, Florida and Minnesota. As the NDPRD expands its program offerings the fossil digs play a major role in that effort.

Craig Kjellerson, an electrician for Triangle Electric, has been outstanding in his support of Lewis and Clark State Park, according to manager Greg Corcoran.

"This past year the park underwent an electrical upgrade which was not completed by another contractor until a day before the official park opener," Corcoran describes. "That weekend the campground was filled to capacity and the cabins were booked as well. That morning we discovered that the cabins did not have electrical power. Craig, already with a full agenda, made time to come out to the park and investigate the problem. He discovered that the underground power lines leading to the cabin had been severed and would need reconnecting, a daunting task that would take several hours to complete and rain was in the forecast. With the help of a couple of campers, Craig finished the task after a grueling 11 hours. The cabins were again operational and the renters able to enjoy an entire weekend all because Triangle Electric and one of its employees, Craig Kjellerson.

Kejellerson has provided assistance a number of time to the park over the past four



**Top left: Hoganson and Zimmerman. Top right: GAIA representatives Youngs and Witt. Bottom left: Cottonwood members Koch and Wiese. Bottom right: SND members Wanner, Nordby and Thronson**

seasons, says Corcoran, and never charged for those services.

Cross Ranch State Park is a special place to the members of the bluegrass music group Cottonwood. The park has provided the families involved with the band years of wonderful memories as they camped in the park and performed at the annual Missouri River Bluegrass Festival. They've been promoters of the festivals for several years.

Cottonwood stepped up its commitment the past couple of years with some special performances. The first helped reopen the park after having been closed due to Missouri flooding in 2011. In 2012 the group held a special Bluegrass Goes Pink concert in support of breast cancer research and held a second Labor Day concert.

"Cottonwood is truly the musical ambassadors for Cross Ranch State Park and are deserving of the special Award of Merit," Zimmerman says.

Members of the Washburn, ND group are Keith Koch, Jill Wiese, Dan Foster, Lee Benjamin and Bob Wiese.

The Garrison Area Improvement Association, nominated by Fort Stevenson State Park manager Dick Messerly, has given outstanding support to the opening and on-going operation of the new Garrison Bay Marina.

"As the Garrison Bay Marina project was completed by the Corps of Engineers it became evident the original plan of moving the existing dock system from deTrobriland Bay Marina was not going to be possible. So

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# Annual pass

From page 1

to North Dakota's pioneers. Through the organization's efforts the "Sunne Farm" site on the Fort Ransom State Park grounds has been preserved. The group also acquires, restores, preserves and displays original machinery and other artifacts used by pioneers.

Information about the Association can be found at [www.ransomcountynd.com](http://www.ransomcountynd.com) or [www.fortransom.nd.com](http://www.fortransom.nd.com). For more about Fort Ransom State park, including camping and events go to the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department website at [www.parkrec.nd.gov](http://www.parkrec.nd.gov).

# Special Merit awards

From page 5

the state parks system, according to Natural Resource Management Coordinator Kathy Duttonhefner, who nominated Parks for the Merit Award.

Juggling both positions, Justin efficiently and effectively managed to meet the Programs noxious weed control objectives for 2012. Justin had little time to re-organize his summer field season to include weed spraying," Duttonhefner says. "Justin is nominated for his dedication and willingness to step right in taking a 'noxious' problem simply because someone had to do it. And he did it well."

Ryan Gardner had been working for the NDPRD for four years, first as a seasonal park ranger at Grahams Island State Park before being hired as a nine-month ranger at Cross Ranch State park.

"Ryan has demonstrated his commitment to the department several times and his willingness to do whatever is necessary to assist the department," says CRSP Manager Eric Lang, who nominated Gardner. "Although we had a lot of work lined up here at CRSP that Ryan had wanted to take care of from the flooding before the camping season began, Ryan was called on to assist the shower house build at Little Missouri State Park. He was then asked to take over the Ranger Supervisor position at that park. Ryan had concerns about taking the position because he didn't know anything about horses or horse park operations, but he willingly accepted the position. Ryan jumped into the job in stride and did a phenomenal job of not only addressing the park's maintenance and upkeep needs, but he also used the opportunity to learn more of the requirements of managing a park. Ryan took a difficult situation and turned it into a pleasant experience"

On June 30, of 2112, the Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area celebrated its

[parkrec.nd.gov](http://www.parkrec.nd.gov).

The 2013 annual North Dakota state parks annual permit can be purchased from North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department headquarters in Bismarck, from any of the state parks or online. An annual permit is \$25; senior pass (state residents age 65 and older) \$20; ND Veterans with service-related disability qualify for a discount. The pass allows daily entrance to any North Dakota State Park and is good until May 1, 2014.

grand opening after eight years of planning, fundraising, working with area landowners and agencies, and on the ground work. While a lot of people were involved in the process, Spencer, Duerre and Brown took the lead in the area's development and were recognized for their efforts with the Merit Award.

There were numerous hurdles to overcome. Spencer developed a strategy to get the trail from point A to point B. Duerre identified the needed land acquisitions and worked with those landowners while Spencer

# Merit awards

From page 5

the new Garrison Bay Marina was looking like it might open with no dock slips," Messerly recounts. "GAIA financed the purchase and installation of three new dock piers and the new marina was able to be opened with 60 new dock slips. Since that time GAIA has taken on other tasks to promote the new marina. Another recent effort is an agreement where GAIA provides a new pontoon boat for rental by the park. Pontoon rental will be in high demand as the park has received a large number of calls requesting pontoon rental. All of the above mentioned support has allowed the new Garrison Bay Marina to be an outstanding facility at Fort Stevenson State Park.

In the fall of 2011, due to a procurement issue, NDPRD needed to conduct a snowmobile groomer field test to determine if our procurement specs needed to be modified. NDPRD and Snowmobile North Dakota worked together to plan and conduct ND's first ever head to head snowmobile groomer field test. Because the pending groomer purchase was to be funded by the Recreational Trail Program, the groomer testing had to be

# Visitation

From page 1

Mark Zimmerman. "All the hard work paid off as park visitors returned in record numbers in 2012. Because of the flooding, visitors and campers didn't have the opportunities they usually enjoyed. We knew early last spring campers were just itching to get back to the state parks from the interest we received at our exhibits at the sports shows."

Visitation numbers are likely much higher than the estimates. The counters at Icelandic State Park have been able to record only a portion of the vehicles entering the park because the access road was rerouted to allow work on Renwick Dam.

worked to ensure the funding was in place and the legal paperwork was complete. With the trail corridor secure, Brown laid out the trail with Duerre's assistance. It was a difficult process with several legal restriction to comply with and a highly vegetated, steeply graded landscape which proved to be unforgiving to the slightest misstep. The result is a world class trail.

designed, scheduled and completed within a short seven month window to comply with the grant deadline. On March 9-10, 2012 NDPRD and SND held the first Snowmobile Groomer and Drag Equipment Field Test in Bottineau, ND.

Everyone involved in the field test agreed that it was a huge success, including the manufacturers, who indicated that they had never went head to head in a field test before. After the testing was complete, NDPRD current procurement specs were upheld, resulting in our ability to purchase the proper equipment for the snowmobile trail system. Other state snowmobile programs have contacted SND and NDPRD to learn more about our testing process

How SND's crew and volunteers handled this field test is a testament to the organizations work ethic and their enduring passion for snowmobiling in North Dakota! They are a great asset to the sport of snowmobiling as well as an asset to the NDPRD.



**North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department**  
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# 2013 North Dakota State Park Annual Vehicle Permit Order Form

The 2013 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
_____ 2013 annual permit	\$25/each	\$ _____
_____ ND resident 65 and older	\$20/each	\$ _____
Date of birth required for senior discount: _____ 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 \_\_\_\_\_