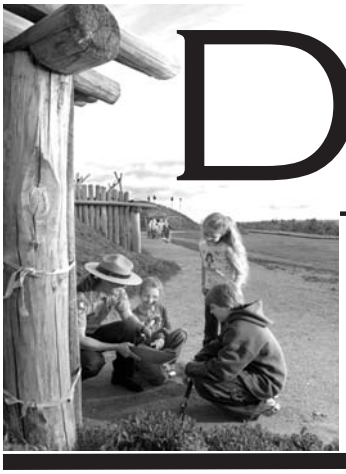

DISCOVER

NORTH DAKOTA PARKS AND RECREATION NEWS

VOLUME 14 ISSUE 1 SPRING/SUMMER 2009

Turtle River celebrates anniversary

CCC played large part in development of state park

It's a summer-long celebration as Turtle River State Park and the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department recognizes the park's 75th anniversary, with a variety of events being planned.

Turtle River park manager Steve Crandall explains several of the activities are still being planned, but there will be events specific to the anniversary on July 18 and August 20 and 22, including the official dedication of the Civilian Conservation Corps Memorial Visitor Center.

"When you look back at the history of our area, you find that the area was a school section that was used by the public because of its access to the river," Crandall explains. "The park provides a variety of habitat and is unique because it has one of the few wooded river valleys in North Dakota, while also having native prairie and wetlands."

In 1933 President Franklin Delano Roosevelt (FDR) created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) through his "New Deal" legislation, an effort to revitalize the United States suffering through the "Great Depression." In 1934 the State Historical Society purchased three-quarters of the school section (475 acres) along the Turtle River and designated it a state park and applied for a grant

Historic photo of CCC members working on rock wall at Turtle River State Park

Continued on page 7

Rising Lake Sakakawea lifts spirits

Lake levels make marina on deTrobriand bay viable

First the bad news… the new marina at Fort Stevenson State Park likely will not be operational this year with work not scheduled to be completed until at least August.

The good news… the spectacular rise of Lake Sakakawea provided more than enough water to reopen the old marina which has been dry for the past eight years. Even better, sportsmen are likely to see a resurgence in the big lake's fishery which was hurt by low water levels due to the extended drought the area experienced.

With a new contractor on site, Western Contracting of Sioux City, IA, work has gone smoothly, but there is still plenty left to do, according to park manager Richard Messerly.

"The contractor is hard at work right now completing all the riprap of the interior and exterior, removing the coffer dam, completing the earth work and the breakwaters," Messerly describes. "As federal funding becomes available we'll finish the concession building along with the water and sewer. The dock part of the marina, well, the bid has been let and awarded. We hope to have all the work

Work on the FSSP Marina is expected to be complete by August.

Continued on page 7

News from the director

State parks are awaiting your arrival

Are you ready to get out and play? State parks are ready for your arrival. After the rigors of the winter of 2008-2009 we suspect you have the urge to find places for rest and relaxation. As you read the content of this issue of *Discover*, you will find ample opportunity to *Get Out and Play* across the state park system. Inside is the annual removable insert containing a calendar of events inviting you to *Go Enjoy the Wonder of North Dakota*.

NDPRD director Douglass Prchal

Spring is slowly emerging from the grip of winter. The crisp morning air and bite in the daily winds may be reminders of this past winter and tend to dampen spirits. Keep your optimism and soak up the rays of sun. We will soon be seeking the shade of a nearby tree or picnic shelter complaining about the heat. That scenario seems to be the nature of North Dakota. Seasonal change is always exciting.

You will also be greeted with changes in your state park system. Some changes you will face resulted from spring flood damage. Specifically, the Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park campground received the brunt of rising water from the Heart and Missouri Rivers in April. Recovery is underway and you can read more about that inside. The heavy snowpack in the Sheyenne River basin sent rising water out of the banks of the river inundating areas of Fort Ransom State Park. We are fortunate major use areas were not impacted like the damage at Fort Abraham Lincoln. Other beneficial changes are described in the variety of articles to include program offerings, park improvements and a 75th birthday celebration at Turtle River state park. The 2009 Annual Pass acknowledges the 75 year old park created by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Legislative action for the department concluded, resulting in approval of the executive budget as submitted by the Governor. The journey to accomplish approval required a circuitous route. In light of that journey, I make an appeal to park visitors of the need to make contact with your respective legislators. It is important to let them know the value a system of state parks. Expressing your views supports the efforts of myself and staff each session. Legislators hear the importance of state parks from those presenting testimony and we know you trust us to take that message forward. During this session I found that approach is not enough. Hearing from their constituents is what amplifies the message. Let your legislators know your interest in having the park system available, the value it provides to you and to the communities nearby. Make those contacts now and continue throughout the season. As you continue your travels and outdoor adventures in 2010, again let them know.

These contacts will get the message across, you cannot make too many calls. Please join with us to get that message across. Let them know the kind of improvements you would like to see that are not available. Of equal value is letting them know the value of park staff who serve your needs while visiting. If you are unsure of how to present your point of view please pen a letter to us for transmittal or to use as a testimonial. We appreciate hearing from park users because is a critical element of input.

As you embark on your travels across North Dakota please go prepared. The weather can be changing and changing weather can bring a variety of unsuspected events. Planning for these encounters is an assurance for improved enjoyment. Staff are trained to safeguard your visit, but helping them do so is welcome. The stories and articles inside provide you with insight of what is planned for the summer season. Get out and enjoy the great outdoor opportunities afforded.

Subscribe to electronic version of Discover

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is exploring the development of an electronic version of Discover – e-Discover -- which is going to be sent out periodically to supplement the print version of Discover which is mailed out twice a year.

NDPRD director Doug Prchal is enthusiastic about using the Internet to keep communication lines open with park users and e-Discover is just another means of providing the latest information on an ongoing basis.

Before the department starts the process of creating the newsletter, which will be e-mailed to subscribers, it needs to develop a database of e-mail addresses. If you are interested in receiving the electronic version of Discover, just e-mail the department at parkrec@nd.gov, and include your e-mail address.

Through e-Discover, you'll be able to keep up with what's happening in your favorite parks. After all, weather and unforeseen circumstances can often change the best planned events and e-Discover will provide a fast response to any changes allowing readers to better plan for activities they want to participate in. The electronic version will be up-to-date, providing information on activities, events along with the people and places that make North Dakota state parks a great place to visit.

There is no charge for the electronic version of Discover and any time you want to be taken off the subscriber's list, just drop the department an e-mail to let us know.

DISCOVER

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Restoring the prairie

NDPRD seeds sites with native grasses

The sights and sounds of the prairie grasses whipping in the wind are part of North Dakota's heritage. Though the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) can't exactly recreate the prairie roaming bison once called home, it can provide better habitats for those species that occupy them today.

During the early, dry years in North Dakota, a lot of crested wheatgrass was planted across the plains as a forage crop for livestock. Since then, this and other non-native species have taken hold and thrived in North Dakota. These grasses and noxious weeds are very competitive and can invade large tracts of land. These invaded, low quality prairies are no longer as attractive to the many grassland birds, butterflies, and mammals that depend on them for survival. Biologists are working with park managers to identify grasslands in need of restoration work within our state parks.

Site preparation before seeding at Fort Stevenson State Park.

North Dakota's state parks still have good quality grasslands, but there are some in need of help. In the past few years, the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department (NDPRD) restored nearly 200 acres of degraded prairie. With financial assistance from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department, NDPRD is adding to those restored acres.

This summer, two sites will be seeded with native grasses and wildflowers. Only grasses and wildflowers native to North Dakota will be planted. The first few years after planting are generally the most labor-intensive. During this time, unwanted vegetation is removed using a combination of methods that include: herbicide application, prescribed burning, mechanical, and biological control. Establishing a prairie takes time and planning and a lot of patience as these restored prairies mature.

Native prairie at Icelandic State Park.

The benefits of native plantings are tremendous. They absorb more rainfall than many other types of cover. This reduces runoff and erosion while improving water quality. Grasslands with several different species are more resistance to diseases, drought, and pests. Once established, they are self sustaining and do not require watering, pesticides, or fertilizer.

NDPRD continues to make a committed effort to provide quality habitat for those species that depend upon native grasslands. These invigorated habitats, rich with grasses and showy wildflowers, provide a greater chance for the general public or wildlife enthusiast to encounter their favorite grassland bird or dancing butterfly. These restored sites provide excellent opportunities for hands-on learning and interpretive programs. They provide a unique setting to become familiar with plant identification and understand the importance of biodiversity.

Outdoor Learning Centers make nature education fun for everyone

Lake Metigoshe, Turtle River and Cross Ranch offer special programs

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department is establishing three Outdoor Learning Centers in state parks at Lake Metigoshe, Turtle River and Cross Ranch. All of the OLC locations are open year-round and are dedicated to promote awareness, understanding and an appreciation for the natural world through hands-on educational programming.

The Lake Metigoshe OLC, previously known as the Turtle Mountain Outdoor Learning Center, has operated since 1985 and is now under the direction of Amy Schmietz. Tina Harding leads the Turtle River center, officially established in May of 2009. The Cross Ranch center is in its early stages with newly hired interpreter Laura Kohn establishing the program.

"I think it's fun because you get to learn outside and it's all hands-on," Schimetz says. "Whether you're learning birds calls, identification, reading a compass or maneuvering a canoe, it's just a great time."

Outdoor Learning Centers are a great education experience as a state park provides a wonderful outdoor classroom to learn and participate in programs pertaining to orientation, outdoor living skills, birding, geocaching, water conservation and freshwater ecology, to name a few class offerings. Activities include learning compass skills, map reading, wild edible plant identification, birding skills, testing water samples and exploring a wetland in waders with a dip net in hand.

"Here at Lake Metigoshe State Park we're able to canoe to School Section Lake, which is completely surrounded by state park land," Schimetz describes. "There's no development of any kind, it's nature at its best. You see turtles sunning themselves, bird nests and beaver lodges, yet you're just a hop, skip and jump from civilization."

Many of these programs can be tailored for any age, making these parks a great place to visit whether it is for a school field trip, a scout program or for a church or youth group. Outdoor Learning Center programs usually range from an hour to two hours, depending upon the age of the groups, the number of participants, the equipment needed and the program itself. Reservations are required at least two weeks in advance. Those interested in making spring arrangements are encouraged to call early as dates fill up fast.

Outdoor Learning Center participants get up close and personal with nature as they learn about the environment.

"I get to teach people what I feel is cool about the outdoors," Schimetz says. "And it's all outside and all interactive. We have a great time."

The Outdoor Learning Centers are developing a continuing education opportunity for adults at Lake Metigoshe State Park. The North Dakota Natural Resources teacher's workshop is scheduled June 22-23. The workshop is worth one continuing

Continued on page 5

North Dakota's state parks provide an ideal setting for learning about nature. Kids of all ages get a hands on experience with the guidance of qualified interpreters.

Outdoor Learning Centers from page 4

education credit. Hands-on activities including owl pellet dissection, wildlife identification and canoeing. Project WET (Water Education for Teachers) demonstrations and Project Learning Tree activities are planned. Participants will walk away with great experiences as well as useful resources.

For more information on the workshop or Outdoor Learning Center arrangements, please contact Amy Schimetz at Lake Metigoshe State Park (701)263-4514, Tina Harding at Turtle River State Park (701) 594-4445, Laura Kohn at CRSP (701) 794-3731 or visit the OLC website at www.parkrec.nd.gov/parks/OLC.html.

Interpretive activities at ND state parks

All North Dakota state parks have interpreters for the summer season. These interpreters don't translate languages, they develop exciting, interactive programs that translate information about the history, culture, wildlife, plants and recreational opportunities surrounding the state parks as well as the state. Interpretive programs occur on weekends, starting in late May and continuing through Labor Day weekend.

Interpretive programs are fun for the whole family. Activities may include guided hikes, night hikes, canoeing adventures and geocaching as well as birding or wildflower walks. Campfire programs cover a wide variety of topics such as campfire cooking, state park trivia, birds of prey, animal adaptations, OHV safety demonstrations, military history and storytelling, just to name a few.

There are Dakota Explorer programs geared towards kids or those that are kids at heart. Race to find everything in a scavenger hunt, build a bird feeder, create a sundial or make nature crafts. Participants are sure to have a great time at these programs. Kids can request a Dakota Explorer booklet and enjoy doing additional nature and state park activities on their own. Booklets can be obtained and turned in at any state park throughout the year. If all of the activities are completed, the participants receive their very own Dakota Explorer prize. Special announcements are often made at the evening programs when there is a new Dakota Explorer, which ends up being a great photo opportunity!

All of the state parks' interpretive program calendars will be added to our department's website in late May – early June. Visit www.parkrec.nd.gov to find each park's activity calendar at that time for more information and details.

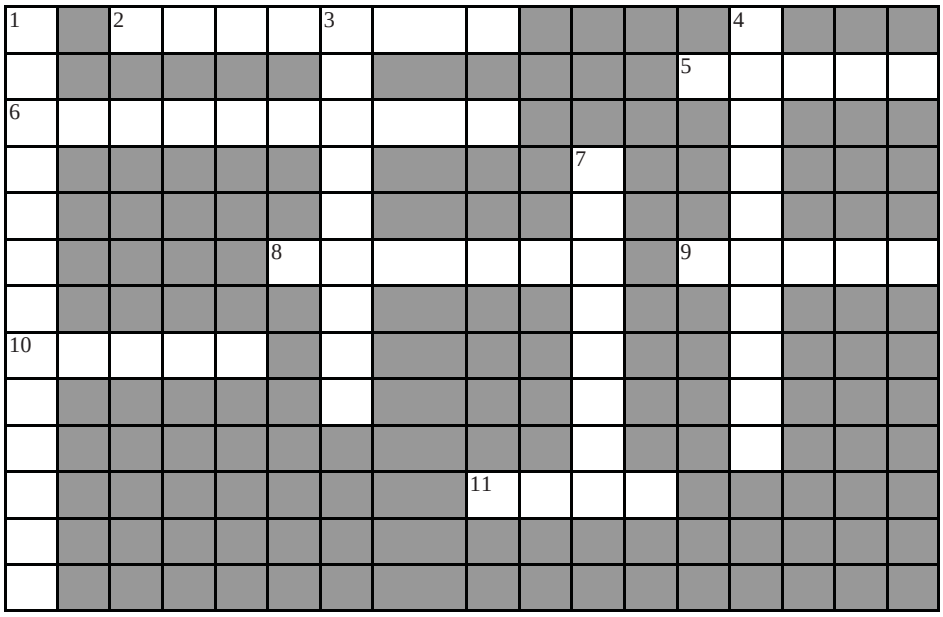
In addition to regular interpretive programs, state parks recognize nationwide events and offer a wide variety of programming to celebrate them. Here are a couple special events that the state parks will be celebrating this year.

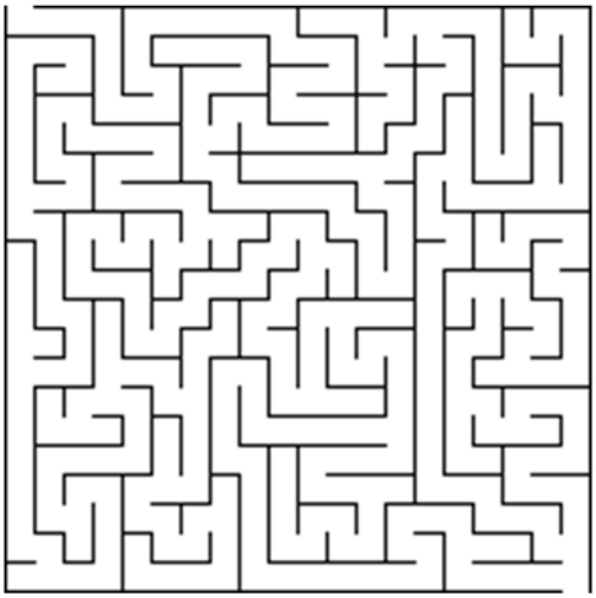
• National Trails Day- Saturday, June 6: National Trails Day is annually recognized the first Saturday in June. Celebrate this event by participating in the many recreational opportunities the state parks provide whether it is hiking, biking, geocaching, fishing, birding, swimming, etc. Participate in interpretive programming at many of the state parks for your chance to win National Trails Day prizes!

• Great American Backyard Campout-Saturday, June 27: Find your tent, pack the sleeping bag, gather your necessary belongings and come play in our backyard! Make a state park your destination for this nationally recognized camping event. Register your camping plans online at www.nwf.org/backyardcampout.

JUST FOR KIDS

Signs of Spring





ACROSS

2. _____butterfly will be making its annual migration north from Mexico.
5. Spring would not be official without the arrival of this bird.
6. The _____ winter song changes from "Chick-a-dee-dee-dee" to a "Fee-bee".
8. Cold-blooded critters like garter _____can be found warming themselves on the south-facing slopes.
9. The sights and sounds of the V formation of _____flying northward.
10. Snow will melt sooner on _____facing slopes.
11. With their duck-like quack, _____ frogs are usually the first to call in the spring.

DOWN

1. Pleasant earth smell comes from the _____of the litter from last summer plant growth.
3. When the marsh begins to turn green, the _____Blackbird returns.
4. The drumming of the _____ on your gutters and rainspouts.
7. Your first _____bite is a sure sign spring has arrived.

Word Box

chickadee
decomposition
geese
monarch
mosquito
redwinged
robin
snakes
south
wood
woodpecker

Crossword answers

Across
2. monarch
5. robin
6. chickadee
8. snakes
9. geese
10. south
11. wood
Down
1. decomposition
3. redwinged
4. woodpecker
7. mosquito

Spring Migration

The Canada goose is one of the earliest of the water birds to migrate in the spring. In their famous V-formations, honking up a storm, hundreds of thousands of Canada geese migrate north to their summer homes.

Can you help this Canada goose find its way back home?

New reservation system is a success

A reminder, that reservations can be made for North Dakota state park campsites by either calling 800-807-4723 or going on line at www.parkrec.nd.gov and selecting "Online Services."

The 2009 campsite reservation season opened May 15 and runs through Sept. 7, except at Fort Ransom State Park where sites can be reserved through Sept. 30. Campsites can be reserved up to 90 days in advance of arrival. Last year nearly three-quarters of all reservations for campsites were made online.

Cabin reservations, in parks providing those facilities, can be reserved up to a year in advance of arrival. Reservations for shelters, dorms and group or meeting facilities are still made by calling the park directly. A cancellation fee is charged for all cancelled campsite or cabin reservations. This fee ranges from $5 to a night's camping/cabin rental fee, depending on when the cancellation is made. About half of all state park campsites and all park cabins can be reserved in advance. The remaining campsites are available on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The online management system has a number of features making it useful to those making a reservation and visitors wanting a "first come, first served" campsite. Those browsing the online system are able to order an annual state park permit, view maps and tables shown availability system-wide, check individual campsite features, location of park amenities, upcoming special events and more.

Turtle River State Park celebrates from page 1

bringing the CCC to develop the park.

The park is located a mile and a half from Arvilla and about 20 miles west of Grand Forks. Originally, it was called Grand Forks State Park, but in 1938 the State Parks Committee changed the name to Turtle River State Park, following a proposal by the group's superintendent Russell Reid. He felt the name of Grand Forks didn't lend to a definite location with it being located in a county of the same name and near the city of Grand Forks.

The CCC began work in 1934, beginning with a general survey and reconnaissance of the area along with a rough cleanup and "grubbing" of the property. In 1936 CCC Company 764 arrived and started a number of projects including vehicle bridges, log and batten latrine, and foot trails. In 1937 construction began on the Woodland Lodge and bath house (now the CCC Memorial Shelter). A swimming area and beach were created by damming the Turtle River with a rubble masonry dam. Company 764 transfers out and little is accomplished until Company 4727 transfers in to Larimore and revives the development of the park.

By 1941, the CCC completes the bath house, concession, lodge and four overnight cabins. The park sees a lot of visitors which Reid feels "amply justifies the time and effort spent by the park authorities and federal government in its development." A year later all the major projects at the park are completed and coincidentally, the CCC and program is permanently disbanded.

"A lot of what the CCC built back between 1934 and 1941 is still in use today at the park," Crandall says. "We have some fine examples of the CCC's work in the form of shelters, the dam, bridges, paths and roadways."

Hopes are to have someone research and portray a CCC member in an effort to provide park visitors with a living history lesson. The Visitor Center's gallery will feature a number of displays dedicated to the CCC's work in eastern North Dakota, of which the efforts at Turtle River State Park are only one example.

On July 18, Crandall and staff are planning an amphitheater program as a tribute to the CCC while on August 20 the new visitor center will be dedicated with a grand birthday party on August 22 at the park featuring activities throughout the day.

A special poster commemorating Turtle River State Park's anniversary will be available to the public. It features current and historic pictures of the park along with a historic look at the park. This year, the annual park vehicle permit features the park and two of its most famous CCC structures, the rubble masonry dam and bath house which now serves at the CCC Memorial Shelter.

Ft. Stevens marina nearly finished from page 1

complete by August, but we don't expect to have the new marina operational in 2009."

Meanwhile, work is moving ahead to get the old marina on deTrobriand ready for operation. A contract with a Garrison businessman for operation of the marina is in place. Docks will be put in place to provide slips for 72 boats and there will be a full concessions.

"We hope to have everything in place at the old marina by Memorial Day. That marina has been dry for over eight years and now there is over eight feet of water. That's the magical number allowing plenty of depth for deep water or keel boats," Messerly says.

At the beginning of 2008, Lake Sakakawea was at a depth of 1807 feet above sea level. By the end of the summer the lake came up to 1826 and went into the winter at 1823. This spring, with a strong snowpack upstream and flooding downstream, the lake moved over 1830 and is projected by the Army Corps of Engineers to reach 1835 this summer. Messerly suspects that by February of 2010, the lake will reach a level of 1837.

"This is typically the way the lake rises. Not gradually, but in a huge event. There was flooding downstream and a good snowpack upstream. The Corps had to cut releases to prevent flooding and that's when we saw a great rise in the water levels. That's one reason why the dam was built, to prevent flooding," Messerly explains. "When the lake hits 1830, well that's the substrate at which the walleye naturally reproduce. It also means rainbow smelt will have good reproduction and all the foliage that had grown is now under water providing excellent habitat. That will really bring the fishery back and again make Lake Sakakawea one of the premier fisheries."

Once the new concessionaire is established, rental of the deTrobriand bay marina will begin. The parks has already taken some names of people interested in the slips, according to Messerly. When the new marina is ready, the docks at the old marina will be moved. Plans are to keep the old marina open. Messerly notes that the new marina has water to a depth of 40 feet, compared to the eight feet at the deTrobriand marina, and both marinas have launching facilities.

"The old marina will be maintained for its launching facility and possible have some mooring for sailboats and shore docking, but nothing has been finalized," Messerly says. "We'll have gas on the water at the new concession and it should all be hooked up and working by Memorial Day weekend."

Plans are also in the works to reengineer the curve in the road leading to the new marina on the west side of the park. The curve will be more gradual.

Flooding impacts state parks

Fort Abraham Lincoln hard hit by spring runoff

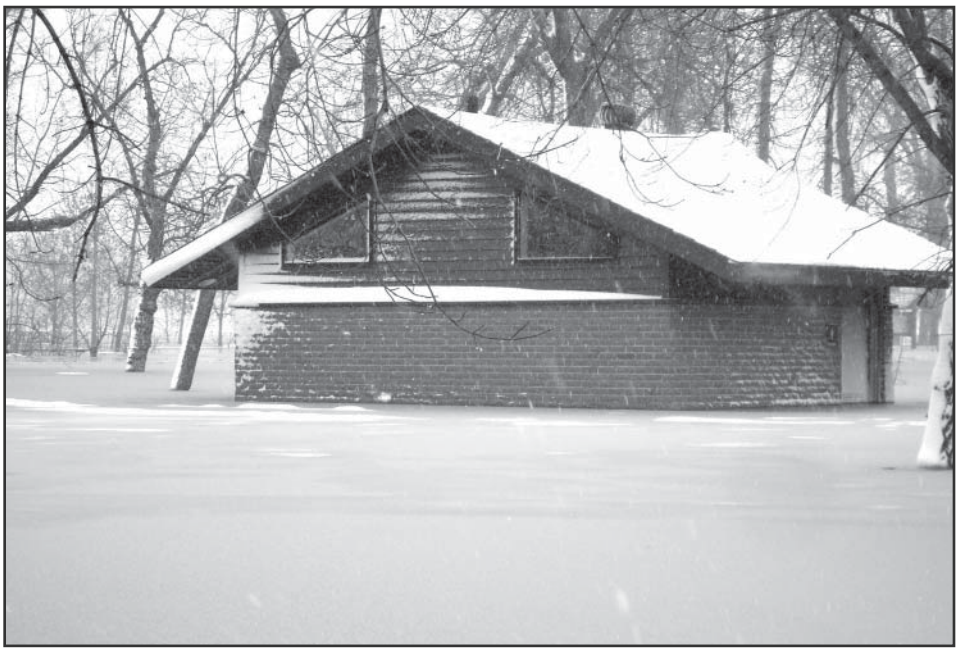
After a North Dakota winter brought record-breaking snowfall, unprecedented statewide flooding followed in the spring and a few North Dakota State Parks found themselves battling an opponent they couldn't beat.

Hardest hit was Bismarck-Mandan's Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park. Over 100 inches of snow had fallen during the winter in south-central North Dakota. Found at the confluence of the Heart River and mighty Missouri, the park was hit with a double-whammy. First, the Heart River surged out of its banks in late March, charged with heavy runoff all the way from Dickinson, inundating the modern campgrounds. Then an ice jam on the Missouri River kept the water from receding from the park, further escalating damage as freezing temperatures froze the water encasing much of the park's infrastructure in thick ice.

Park manager Dan Schelske was forced to close the park the last week of March. His account of the flooding, beginning March 22, can be found in the adjacent sidebar.

Interpretive programs, scheduled to begin April 1, were postponed and opened instead on May 1. The campground was closed and those with reservations for full-service campsites, scheduled to begin May 15, were notified the modern sites would be available, but without electricity, possibly through the Memorial Day weekend. The

Continued on page 9

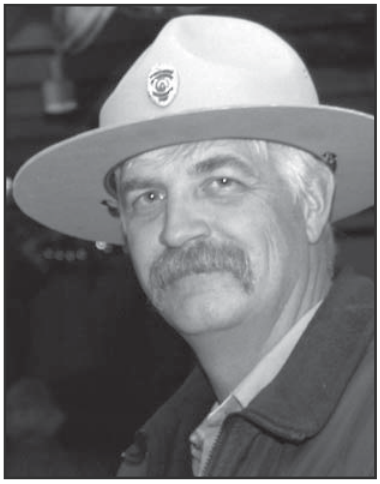


A comfort station at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park was half submerged by flooding of the Heart and Missouri rivers in April.

Manager describes flooding at FALSP

Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park manager Dan Schelske kept state park headquarters appraised of what was happening during the flooding with this running account.

Sunday: "The Heart River jammed up twice today near Mandan. The first time it backed the river up to the top of its bank at the Sitting Bull Bridge. We had dozens of sightseers come into the park, the ice sheet was still intact but around 3:30 a.m.the jam let loose and a wall of water and icebergs came down into the Missouri. The river came up four feet. We thought it was over – wrong. By 6 p.m. the Heart had jammed again and backed up to the top of the dike at Sitting Bull, around 8:30 it broke loose again and receded in Mandan. By 9 p.m. the Heart was within 2 feet of its bank in the campground with no place to go. We closed the campground road at dark."



Schelske

Monday: "At 8 a.m. the Heart is at the top of its bank flowing rapidly. Downstream, on the Missouri, it began to jam up again at our shop yard south to the Oahe Bend. We called headquarters for help to begin sandbagging the amphitheater, small comfort station and both cabins. Finished by 3:30 p.m. Used 156 bags brought from the county and 90 we had on hand. Ice was banging on the Veteran's Cemetery irrigation dock, so they came and pulled it out further. By 1 p.m. water started running into the south end campground, the west side had 10 inches or more. At 4 p.m. the rain started falling and temperature started dropping as well. We closed the campground until further notice. The campground lift station was shut down at 6 p.m., as the pumps can't keep up with water running into collection manholes. We now have no sewer service.

Tuesday: "There were five inches of heavy snow this morning and it's still falling accompanied by strong winds. The river continued to come up over night. I bought some

Continued on page 9

Park flooding from page 8

campground electrical system was compromised and in need of replacement. When the water finally did go down, it left a large mess to be cleaned up, with mud and debris covering everything.

By the end of April, North Dakota Parks and Recreation was just beginning to determine the full extent of the damage to FALSP and began the cleanup process.

"The water in the campground is slowly receding," Schelske reported. "We have seven pumps going and doing some quick calculations on pump capacity and hours, we have moved over 4 million gallons out of the campground (April 20)."

It does appear that the trolley that take visitors from the city of Mandan to the park will be out of commission this year, as the flooding washed out a section of the rail bed making it unsafe for travel.

At Fort Ransom State Park, the usually tranquil Sheyenne River, became a raging torrent of churning water threatening the Visitor Center and swamping the nearby children's playground, horse corrals and primitive campsites. Park staff from across the state responded, showing up on park manager John Kwapinski's doorstep to lend a helping hand.

The Sheyenne crested on April 14 and by April 23 it dropped over two feet, according to Kwapinski, allowing the stringers under the entrance bridge to again be seen.

"The Riverside Horse Corral, Hollows Picnic Area, most of the East Side Campground, amphitheater, and most of the North Country Trail are still under water," Kwapinski reported. "The sump pump is keeping up with ground water seepage into the crawl space under the visitor center, the basement of which has about 53 inches of water."

When the waters finally left Fort Abraham Lincoln's camp ground they left behind a mess for staff and volunteers to clean up.

At Icelandic State Park, the waters from Lake Renwick topped the campground road briefly, according to manager Justin Robinson.

"The lake is still seven feet above the normal pool," Robinson reported April 17. "The road to the campground is open again."

The only paved road to Beaver Lake State Park, located south of Napoleon off of state highway 3 was compromised by high water. According to manager Jim Loken. Logan County temporarily repaired the paved road, with permanent repair scheduled for later in the summer.

Manager's log from page 8

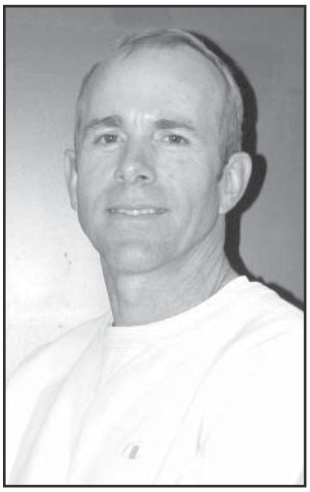
waders and took a stroll in the campground – took some pictures and marveled how quiet it was. All of the campground is under water. I cannot see any electrical pedestals and the lift station is under. Not much we can do for now."

Wednesday: "The rivers came up a couple of inches over night. There are over 8 inches of new snow now, the good wet heavy stuff. Spent the entire morning clearing the roads. By 12:30 p.m., the Morton County sheriff's office notified us to clear the park which had dozens of sightseer's in preparation of the ice explosion the Army Corps of Engineers is planning to break up the ice jam on the Missouri. Little after 4 p.m. – boom! They detonated more explosive over night. Four Department of Transportation trucks arrive with salt and two Blackhawk helicopters arrived with little or no notice to the park. We scrambled and got them set up. Lucky the North Dakota Highway Patrol and sheriff's office were here to help. Looks like the water got into the new comfort station. Temperatures are cold and the snow is not melting. River seems to have dropped during the day."

NDPRD News

New manager at Lewis & Clark State Park

Greg Corcoran is the new manager of Lewis and Clark State Park, replacing Al Larsen who resigned to take a new position last fall, announces North Dakota Parks and Recreation director Doug Prchal.



Corcoran

Corcoran is a former member of the North Dakota Highway Patrol who is returning to the state after returning to his home in Illinois for family matters. Corcoran worked for the North Dakota Highway Patrol from 2003-2007.

"After moving to Illinois, we found that in our hearts we wanted to return to North Dakota. We have the utmost admiration for the people who live here and when the opportunity presented itself we took it," Corcoran says. "This is a big challenge, starting a new career in what can be considered a somewhat remote area."

Corcoran and his wife have 11 children, nearly all of which have joined him at the park. He is presently learning the rules and regulations that go with running a state park, meeting people and reviewing the park's amenities to make sure they are ready for spring visitors.

"Mainly I'm going through the park's infrastructure making sure it's suitable for visitors. We're turning on the water and electrical supply," Corcoran says. "We're considering what it will take to put out docks if the water level comes up enough to support them."

Lewis & Clark State Park's new manager had high praise for the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department, noting he's had great support since arriving. He looks forward to serving the state and its visitors by providing a special experience at the park.

Cross Ranch gets new interpreter

Laura Kohn is the new Interpreter at Cross Ranch State Park.

Kohn

Growing up on an Iowa dairy farm, Laura acquired a love for animals and being outdoors. She graduated from Iowa State University with a Bachelor's of Science degree in Zoology and Animal Ecology, with an option in Animal Care. College brought many opportunities.

After college, Kohn accepted an internship in Salt Lake City, Utah with another non-profit group, HawkWatch International, working again with permanently disabled raptors and instructing groups of various sizes and all ages on the importance of raptors and our shared environment.

Kohn landed a position as a Seasonal Interpreter at North Dakota's Grahams Island State Park. There she could reach beyond the realm of raptors and learn more about other areas of biology and teach on varying topics including, cultural history, botany, habitat, and more. Afterwards, she returned to Salt Lake City to work with the Snowbird Ski & Summer Resort as its Children's Activity Coordinator.

Having enjoyed her experiences teaching environmental education, Kohn is looking forward to being outdoors, teaching the public on various topics at a great facility, while also expanding her knowledge in multiple areas, especially the local cultural history.

2008 NDPRD awards

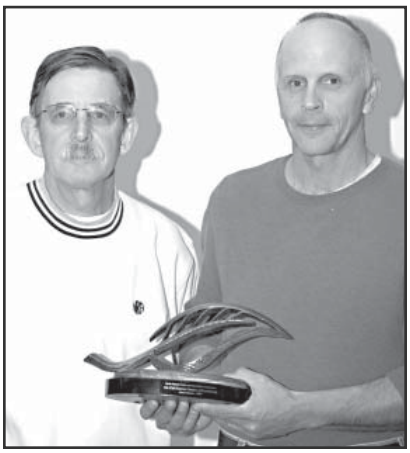
The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department held its annual staff meeting in December, where the efforts of staff and volunteers were recognized at the annual awards ceremony.

Cal Renner Award:

The Department's highest honor, the Cal Renner Award of Excellence, was awarded to long-time employee; Planning and Development Manager, Jesse Hanson. He was cited for commitment to excellence in: development of quality, sustainable trails in the state park system; energy efficiency retrofits across the park system, mitigation and rehabilitation efficiencies resulting from flood and storm disasters; and the small "behind the scenes" things often unnoticed by providing for quality infrastructure that serves the public.

Merit Awards:

Dennis Clark –Park Ranger at Icelandic State Park for his transition leadership during the past year.



Jesse Hanson (right) accepts the 2008 Cal Renner award from NDPRD director Doug Prchal.

Kathy Duttenhefner – Natural Resource Program coordinator for developing a series of children's programs at Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park.

Erik Dietrich – Motorized Recreation Coordinator, for his efforts to provide OHV and snowmobile training at the Law Enforcement Academy's Basic Training.

Dick Messerly – manager of Fort Stevenson State Park, for commitment to community service.

Planning Division – for creative efforts in infrastructure devel-

opment at Sully Creek and Little Missouri State Parks. Jesse Hanson and West District carpenter Jerry Grasl also received Merit awards for innovative and efficient project results in work at Sully Creek and Little Missouri State Parks.

Online Management System Team – Park Operations Assistant Karen Assel, former Information Technology Coordinator Barb Winking, Turtle River State Park manager Steve Crandall and Grahams Island State Park manager Henry Duray were cited for their efforts in development and implementation of the Online Management System.

Special Merit Awards:

Jim Wenning – Mercer County Sheriff's Office employee, for his volunteer work with the Lake Sakakawea State Park Wheelchair Hunt.

Bobby Koepplin – Cass County Rural Electric Cooperative rural development manager, for his contributions in development and promotion of several recreation and tourism initiatives in the Sheyenne River Valley which Fort Ransom State Park, the city of Fort Ransom, the ND Forest Service and the surrounding region benefitted.

Old Red Trail Committee – This group's efforts were instrumental in getting Old Highway 10 from Bismarck to Dickinson designated as a Scenic Byway.

Above left:NDPRD's Kevin Stankiewicz presents Old Red Trail representative Robin Reynold's with the department's Special Merit Award. Right: Ft. Ransom manager John Kwapinski presents the award to Bobby Koepplin.

Trnka nominated for tourism award

NDPRD's Maureen Trnka was among those nominated for the "Front-Line Employee" award, which is part of the Governor's Travel and Tourism awards recognizing outstanding leaders in the tourism industry. The awards were presented at the 2009 North Dakota Tourism Conference held in Grand Forks at the end of April.

Trnka is the long-time ranger for Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park providing park visitors with a special understanding of the historic nature of the park. The award is presented to those providing outstanding customer service to all visitors and tourists and helping ensure they have a positive experience.

Employer group recognizes NDPRD

The North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department was recognized for its efforts to employ National Guardsmen and Reservists by the National Committee for Employer support of the Guard and Reserve, earlier this year. Fort Abraham Lincoln State Park manager Dan Schelske and ranger Maureen Trnka accepted the award on behalf of their park and the department.

Little Missouri featured in riders magazine

Little Missouri State Park was prominently featured in the March 2009 issue of *The Trail Rider, America's Premiere Trail and Pleasure Riding Magazine.*

The story and photos were contributed by Kent and Charlene Krone. Entitled, *Ride a Mystical Sculpture,* the article details the Krones' visit to Little Missouri State Park and their adventures with ranger Gerry Brennan and other folks they meet at the park. Here are some excerpts from the story.

"We were riding in what is arguably the best park for trail riders in North Dakota, the Little Missouri State Park."

"Top-notch facilities feature manicured lawns, fire rings and picnic tables. Some sites have electrical hookups. There are four picnic shelters, as well as a recreational-vehicle dump station. Best of all, most sites have terrific views over the canyon edge into the dazzling badlands below."

2009 Order Form

North Dakota State Park Annual Vehicle Permit

The 2009 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 Addresss_____

City_____**State**____**Zip**_____

e-mail address_____

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

_____

Quantity	Cost	Total
_____2009 annual permit	$25/each	$_____
_____ND resident 65 and older Date of birth required for senior discount.	$20/each	$_____
_____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.

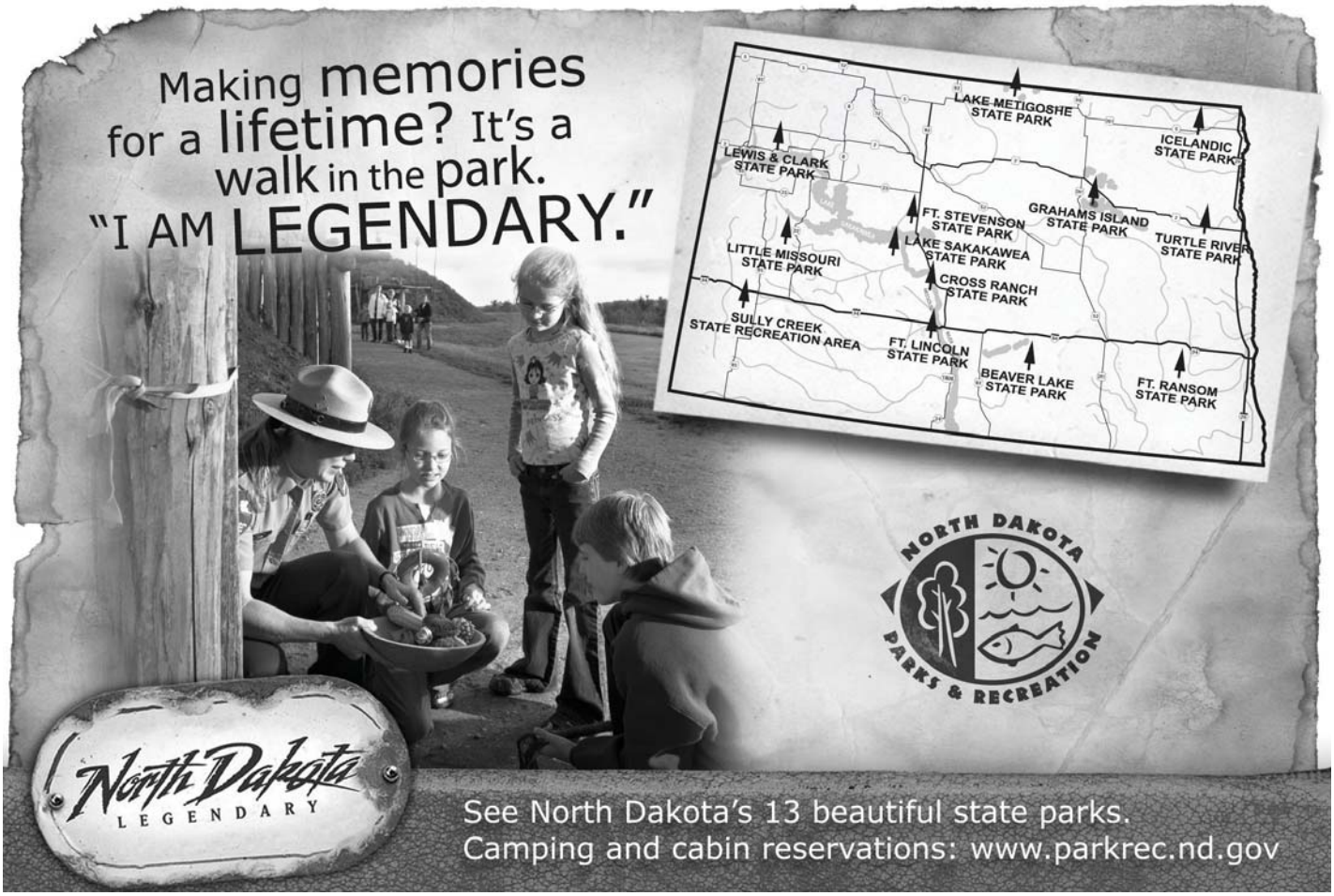
Method of payment

☐ Check ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

Card#_____

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

Signature_____



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