

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

NEWS RELEASE

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State park 3rd quarter visitation rebounds slightly

Third quarter visitation was slightly behind 2007 as North Dakota state parks welcomed 438,398 guests in July, August and September as compared to 451,626 last year, a difference of nearly 3 percent.

Doug Prchal, director of the North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department, is generally pleased with visitation numbers explaining the system recovered nicely from a slow second quarter visitation.

“Any number of factors can influence park visitation including the weather, poor fishing, road construction, fuel prices and the economy,” Prchal explains. “This year North Dakota parks have experienced a little of everything, from rising prices at the gas pump to cold, wet weather. Despite these setbacks, state parks remain a popular get away, though we are seeing a change in our customers’ habits.”

Several park managers report that campers came earlier, stayed longer and didn’t stray far from the park which can account for a change in the counts of park visitors. Through September, the state parks saw 50,706 campers and cabin use had an occupancy rate of 8,279 people.

With the Labor Day weekend marking the end of summer, North Dakota parks have seen the usual slow down in daily visitation and camping. During September state parks saw 76,067 visitors as compared to 162,954 in August. October and early November offer shoulder season facilities for the state’s hunters which will hopefully close the year end visitation at par with 2007. The extended fall weather provides a good opportunity to come out and play, the autumn colors still abound.