

North Dakota Parks & Recreation Department

## **NEWS RELEASE**

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### **888,994 visit state parks in 2008**

Despite economic woes and early inclement weather, 2008 visitation to North Dakota State Parks was down less than 1 percent from 2007, the final visitation report show.

There were 888,994 visitors to state parks last year as compared to 895,267 in 2007. This is a difference of 0.7 percent. July remained the busiest month with 203,279 visits made to state parks, while in June there were 170,151 and August had 166,769.

All three months of the final quarter of 2008 showed improvement over 2007 with 86,711 visitors as compared to 75,459, a 15 percent increase. With snows blanketing the state, the parks are a welcome diversion, providing outdoor activities such as cross country skiing and sledding.

North Dakota Parks and Recreation Department director Doug Prchal is generally pleased with visitation in 2008, noting the parks performed well though conditions were far from ideal throughout much of the year.

“We’re gearing up for 2009 with expectations that the state park system is going to be extremely busy,” Prchal says. The North Dakota Parks and Recreation system remains one of the best values for family entertainment dollars. We’re committed to providing the best outdoor family experiences.”

Camping numbers were also slightly down with 51,529 campers during the year versus 52,904 in 2007, a difference of 2.6 percent. Use of state park cabins was up slightly with 2,431 cabin nights booked as compared to 2,242, an increase of 8 percent.