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N.C. parks see record attendance despite drought

From Staff Reports

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State parks in North Carolina today reported record attendance in 2007, or 13.4 million visits, despite a drought that closed some locations and curtailed the summer season for swimming and boating.

That represents a 6.5 percent increase compared with 2006 and a 260 percent increase during the past 25 years, according to the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources.

The state parks system manages nearly 200,000 acres, including 31 state parks and four state recreation areas that are open to the public. It also includes a network of state natural areas dedicated to conservation of natural resources.

Among the parks and recreation areas, 23 reported increases in attendance in 2007. Jockey's Ridge State Park in Dare County reported the highest attendance at 1.5 million visits. That's an increase of 43 percent compared with 2006.

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