

N.C. state parks offer diversity of family and group recreation

By JENNIFER HARLEY
Staff Writer

Camping, picnicking, swimming, hiking, canoeing and fishing are just a few of the many activities state parks and recreation areas in the Triangle offer.

Those eager to explore miles of wilderness trails, pursue water sports or relax with an afternoon picnic or a game of frisbee can take advantage of the facilities open to them.

Though hours and regulations vary slightly from park to park, most parks are open year-round from early morning until dusk. Most activities are free. Rowboats and canoes, where available, are rented out from June 1 through Labor Day.

The campgrounds are open all year, but facilities are limited during the winter months. The parks permit fishing during park hours as long as anglers conform to North Carolina's

licensing regulations. Some parks offer sight-seeing tours, nature study programs and youth group camping. Here is a list of some area parks:

■ Jordan Lake State Recreation Area is a Triangle area's facility which caters to boaters and water-sport enthusiasts. On the 13,900-acre lake with 150 miles of shoreline, interim boating, swimming, sailing and windsurfing are popular. Picnicking facilities are available.

Jordan Lake also offers excellent fishing for largemouth bass, bluegill and catfish. It is located six or seven miles south of Chapel Hill on Mount Carmel Church Road. The Falls Lake Recreation Area, seven miles north of Raleigh, offers similar fishing conditions, but no boat rentals.

■ The Eno River State Park, three miles north of Durham, follows a

14-mile stretch of the Eno River. This 1,965-acre recreation area offers camping and picnicking facilities, canoeing, rafting, fishing and hiking trails.

A suspension bridge across the river connects both sides of the park. Scott Ruth, president of the UNC Outing Club, visited the park last spring and says the well-marked river trails are not difficult. Old cabins in the park are of historical interest and worth visiting. Ruth suggests spending an afternoon at the park, lying in the sun or picnicking along the river.

■ The William B. Umstead State Park, located within the Research Triangle, extends over 5,000 acres. It is divided into two sections and family camping, fishing, hiking and horse trails. Ed Littrell, Umstead Park's superintendent, says families tend to frequent the park more often than students. He says hiking is the most popular activity.

Spring and fall are Umstead's busiest times, according to Littrell. Littrell says most people stay four to six hours. Prices at Umstead are "as close to free as you can get," Littrell said. Individual campers pay \$5 per night, and group rates are available at an average 50 cents per person.



The Eno River in Eno River State Park

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Residents try to block OWASA's plans

By SHEILA SIMMONS
Staff Writer

Coventry Homeowners Association has filed a lawsuit against Orange Water and Sewer Association to prevent the use of easements that would disrupt residents in Coventry Townhouses, Coventry attorney Grainger Barrett said Thursday.

OWASA granted the easements this summer to Goforth Properties for the use of water and sewer lines. Goforth Properties is building

For those willing to travel a little farther, the Kerr Lake State Recreation Area just north of Henderson has over 1,000 campsites scattered throughout seven parks. Water-related activities include swimming, fishing, boating and waterskiing. Special events held throughout the year include a spring art show,

summer folk art and crafts festival, fishing tournaments, and, in June, the Governor's Cup Invitational Regatta.

Close to home, the N.C. Botanical Gardens off N.C. 15-501 in Chapel Hill have several free facilities open to the public. These features include

hiking trails open from dawn till dusk and a special collections exhibit. The Mason Farm grounds behind Finley Golf Course are also under the direction of the botanical gardens, but sightseers must obtain a permit from the botanical gardens during business hours in order to visit.

Sedgewood Apartments, a 225-apartment complex west of the 45 Coventry townhouses, and plans to run the lines through the property, Barrett said.

Easements are parcels of land surrounding private property of which the developer retains ownership. They are used for detention basins, ditches, sidewalks, curbs and other service functions.

"No one (at Coventry) had asked if the easements existed," Barrett said.

The installment of the lines will affect all of the residents in the townhouses, since television, gas and water lines may be temporarily cut because of construction, Barrett said.

Dust, noise, and traffic congestion while the lines were going in also would disturb residents, he said.

Construction will last a week to 10 days, but Barrett said he did not know when it would begin.

According to Barrett, the easements on the Coventry land belong to a private company and not to OWASA.

But Everett Billingsley, OWASA director, said the easements that they granted to Goforth are valid.

"It's just a difference of opinion that has to be worked out," he said.

The easements run from south of Goforth's property through Coventry and into Essex drive.

Chapel Hill Planning Board approved the building of Sedgewood last spring and approved the easements for Goforth Properties at its meeting Tuesday.

The board approved the building of Sedgewood without checking on the easements under the stipulation that OWASA would work out utility arrangements with Goforth before construction began, according to Chris Berdnt, long-range planning director.

Barrett said at that time, he did not know OWASA had easement rights on the land where Coventry townhouses now sit. "The plans were approved by OWASA without telling us," he said.

Barrett said he did not know if the easements would bring down the property value of the townhouses, but they may inconvenience residents in the future.

"There may be times when those lines will have to be repaired, and then somebody's going to have to come back in and dig them up," he said.

OWASA has not responded yet to the lawsuit, Billingsley said. It will be discussed in the next meeting.



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