

# MAJOR EVENTS HISTORY OF S.C. DEPARTMENT OF PARKS, RECREATION, AND TOURISM

The agency provided the information below in the Program Evaluation Report it submitted in March 2018.<sup>1</sup>

- 1934
  - The South Carolina Legislature charged the Commission of Forestry, the only agency with a mandate to conserve natural resources, with the responsibility of developing and administering a state park system. The Civilian Conservation Corps, the National Park Service, and the U. S. Forest Service began assisting the state in the development of the park system.
  - Aiken State Park property (1,067 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Cheraw State Park property (7,361 acres) acquired through donation from U.S. Government and various landowners.
  - Givhans Ferry State Park property (1,235 acres) acquired through donation from City of Charleston.
  - Kings Mountain State Park property (6,141 acres) acquired through donation from U.S. Government.
  - Myrtle Beach State Park property (312 acres) acquired through donation from Myrtle Beach Farms.
  - Poinsett State Park property (1,000 acres) acquired through donation from Sumter County.
  
- 1935
  - Chester State Park property (523 acres) acquired through purchase from Lake View Corporation and other various landowners.
  - Edisto Beach State Park property (1,255 acres) acquired through donation from Edisto Company.
  - Lee State Park property (2,839 acres) acquired through donation from Lee County.
  - Oconee State Park property (1,165 acres) acquired through donation from Oconee County.
  - Paris Mountain State Park property (1,275 acres) acquired through donation from City of Greenville and purchase from single landowner.
  - Table Rock State Park property (2,860 acres) acquired through donations from Pickens County and City of Greenville.
  
- 1936
  - Myrtle Beach State Park becomes the first state park opened to the public.
  - Aiken State Park opened to the public.
  - Poinsett State Park opened to the public.
  - Kings Mountain State Park opened to the public.
  - Chester State Park opened to the public.

- 1937
  - Barnwell State Park property (307 acres) acquired through purchase from various owners.
  - Sesquicentennial State Park property (1,445 acres) acquired through donation from Sesquicentennial Commission.
  - Edisto Beach State Park opened to the public.
  - Givhans Ferry State Park opened to the public.
  - Oconee State Park opened to the public.
  - Paris Mountain State Park opened to the public.
- 1938
  - Hunting Island State Park property (5,000 acres) acquired through donation from Beaufort County.
  - Lake Greenwood State Park property (914 acres) acquired through donation from Greenwood County.
  - Colleton State Park property (35.44 acres) acquired through donation from U.S. Government.
- 1939
  - Barnwell State Park opened to the public.
  - Cheraw State park opened to the public.
- 1940
  - Colleton State Park opened to the public.
  - Lake Greenwood State Park opened to the public.
  - Sesquicentennial State Park opened to the public.
  - Table Rock State Park opened to the public.
- 1941
  - Hunting Island State Park opened to the public.
  - Lee State Park opened to the public.
  - General Thomas Sumter's Tomb property (5 acres) acquired through donation from individual landowner.
- 1942
  - Santee State Park property (2,346 acres) acquired through donation from Orangeburg County.
- 1943
  - All of Myrtle Beach and Hunting Island State Parks, and a portion of Edisto Beach State Park, were turned over to the armed forces for training purposes and shore patrol until the end of WWII.
- 1945
  - Rivers Bridge State Historic Site property (390 acres) acquired through donation from Confederate Memorial Association.
  - Rivers Bridge State Historic Site opened to the public.
- 1948
  - Fort Watson property (2.8 acres) acquired through lease from SC Public Service Authority.
- 1949

- Croft State Park property (7,088 acres) acquired through purchase from U.S. Government.
- Santee State Park opened to the public.
- 1950
  - Pleasant Ridge State Park property (300 acres) acquired through purchase from the Enoree River Baptist Association.
- 1951
  - Little Pee Dee State Park property (835 acres) acquired through donation from Dillon County.
- 1953
  - Andrew Jackson State Park property (360 acres) acquired through donation from Lancaster County.
- 1955
  - Little Pee Dee State Park opened to the public.
  - Pleasant Ridge State Park opened to the public as a segregated park for African Americans.
- 1956
  - Edisto Beach State Park was closed after segregated operation was challenged by the NAACP.
- 1957
  - Andrew Jackson State Park opened to the public.
- 1960
  - Huntington Beach State Park property (2,500 acres) acquired through lease from Brookgreen Trustees.
  - Rose Hill State Historic Site property (44 acres) acquired through purchase from individual landowner.
  - Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site property (21.5 acres) acquired through lease from Westvaco and donation from the Protestant Episcopal Church and opened to the public.
- 1961
  - Rose Hill State Historic Site opened to the public.
  - A class action suit was filed to integrate the parks and an order was issued for State Parks to comply with the Civil Rights Act of 1954.
- 1962
  - Recreation Land Trust Fund (RELT) created by legislation. S.C. Code Ann 51-11-10.
  - Huntington Beach State Park opened to the public.
  - General Francis Marion's Tomb property (9.65 acres) acquired through donation from Flack-Jones Lumber Company.
- 1963
  - SC Attorney General ordered all South Carolina State Parks closed in response to 1961 Federal Order.
  - Eutaw Springs property (2.6 acres) acquired through lease from SC Public Service Authority.
  - Colonel Isaac Haynes' Tomb property (1 acre) acquired through donation from individual property owner.

- 1965
  - South Carolina joins Travel South USA, a coalition of Southeastern state travel directors designated by the Southern Governors Association to participate in cooperative tourism marketing initiatives.
  - Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a federal grant program, established by Congress.
  
- 1966
  - Sadlers Creek State Park property (394.7 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers.
  - All State Parks reopened on a fully integrated basis.
  
- 1967
  - State Parks, Recreation and Tourism Commission was established and absorbed the State Travel Office from the State Development Board, the State Recreation Commission, and the existing State Park system.
  - State Director – Robert Hickman appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (1967-1973).
  - Baker Creek State Park property (1,305 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers.
  
- 1968
  - Baker Creek State Park opened to the public.
  - Sadlers Creek State Park opened to the public.
  - Little River Welcome Center (Highway 17) opened.
  
- 1969
  - Hickory Knob State Park property (1,090.55 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers.
  - Additional property (76.86 acres) for Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site acquired through quitclaim from Westvaco.
  
- 1970
  - Dreher Island State Park property (348 acres) acquired through lease from South Carolina Electric & Gas Company and opened to the public.
  - Keowee-Toxaway State Park property (1,000 acres) acquired through donation from Duke Power Company.
  - Landsford Canal State Park property (244 acres) acquired through donation from Duke Power Company.
  - Charles Towne Landing property (664 acres) acquired through legislative transfer from Tricentennial Commission and opened to the public.
  - Fair Play Welcome Center (I-85 Northbound) opened.
  - Allendale Welcome Center (Highway 301) opened.
  - Landrum Welcome Center (I-26 Southbound) opened.
  
- 1971
  - Lynches River State Park property (668 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Wildcat Wayside property (62.9 acres) acquired through transfer from State Highway Department and Department of Interior.
  - North Augusta Welcome Center (I-20 Eastbound) opened.
  
- 1972

- Hamilton Branch State Park property (731 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers and opened to the public.
- Hampton Plantation State Historic Site property (322 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
- 1973
  - State Director – Fred Brinkman appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (1973-1991).
  - Hickory Knob State Park opened to the public.
  - Landsford Canal State Park opened to the public.
  - N.R. Goodale State Park property (700 acres) acquired through donation from Kershaw County and opened to the public.
  - Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site property (350 acres) acquired through donation from individual landowner.
  - Woods Bay State Park property (1,541 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners and opened to the public.
  - Dillon Welcome Center (I-95 Southbound) opened.
  - Santee Welcome Center (1-95 Southbound) opened in mobile facility.
- 1975
  - Keowee-Toxaway State Park opened to the public.
  - Redcliffe Plantation State Historic Site opened to the public.
  - Musgrove Mill State Historic Site property (365 acres) through purchase from various landowners.
  - Hanging Rock property (250 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Santee Welcome Center (1-95 Southbound) relocates to permanent facility.
- 1976
  - Caesars Head State Park property (7,467 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Lake Hartwell State Park property (680.5 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers and purchase from various landowners.
  - Oconee Station State Historic Site property (210.7 acres) acquired through purchase from single landowner.
  - Jones Gap State Park property (3,346 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Additional property (208 acres) for Table Rock State Park acquired through purchase from various landowners.
- 1978
  - Hardeeville Welcome Center (I-95 Northbound) opened.
- 1979
  - Sergeant Jasper State Park property (441.83 acres) acquired through purchase from Union Camp.
- 1980
  - Lake Warren State Park property (422 acres) acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - South Carolina Film Office established by Governor Riley. Film Office reports directly to Governor's Office.
- 1981
  - Fort Mill Welcome Center (I-77 Southbound) opened.

- South Carolina Film Office transferred to SCETV.
- 1982
  - Calhoun Falls State Park property (438 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers.
  - Lake Wateree State Park property (238.28 acres) acquired through purchase from Crescent Land & Timber.
  - McCalla property (6,239 acres) acquired through lease from US Army Corps of Engineers.
  - Additional property (247.02 acres) for Colonial Dorchester State Historic Site acquired through purchase from Westvaco.
  - 247 acres of property at Givhans Ferry State Park transferred to Westvaco.
- 1983
  - South Carolina Film Office transferred to SC Arts Commission.
- 1984
  - Additional property (131.65 acres) acquired for Santee State Park through purchase from Santee Shores.
- 1985
  - South Carolina Film Office transferred to SC Development Board.
  - Pleasant Ridge State Park property transferred to Greenville County Recreation.
  - Jones Gap State Park opened to the public.
  - Lake Hartwell State Park opened to the public.
  - Lake Wateree State Park opened to the public.
- 1986
  - Caesars Head State Park opened to the public.
  - The US Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that government employees at all levels, except for certain exempt management and professional classifications, were entitled to overtime compensation for all work over 40 hours per week. Prior to this, many park personnel had been working over 70 hours per week during peak season. The court ruling caused the immediate loss of man-hours to the park system equivalent to 71 full-time employees. In response, the General Assembly authorized 62 new positions. As a result, specially trained personnel were hired for maintenance and visitor services, which led to improvement in both operations and interpretive programming.
- 1987
  - South Carolina Film Office closed.
  - Parks and Recreation Development Fund (PARD) established by legislation. S.C. Code Ann. 51-23-30.
- 1988
  - South Carolina Film Office reopened under SC Development Board.
- 1989
  - Hurricane Hugo devastation caused approximately \$4.5 million in damage at state parks.
- 1990
  - Lake Warren State Park opened to the public.
  - Tourism Division split into two Departments: International Tourism and Domestic Tourism.

- 1991
  - Devils Fork State Park property (622 acres) acquired through lease from Duke Power Company and opened to the public.
  - Additional property (14.78 acres) at Hampton Plantation State Historic Site acquired through purchase from various landowners.
  - Additional property (15 acres) for Table Rock State Park acquired through donation from single landowner.
  - The Recreational Trails Program, a federal grant program, established by Congress.
- 1992
  - State Director – John W. “Bill” Lawrence appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (1992-1993).
- 1993
  - SCPRT becomes a cabinet agency.
  - Primary source of SCPRT funding changed from Admissions Tax collections to State General Fund.
  - State Director – Grace (McKown) Young appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (1993-1997).
- 1994
  - Oconee Station State Historic Site opened to the public.
  - South Carolina Film Office transferred to SCPRT. The Film Office is expanded to include Film, Entertainment and Sports Development.
- 1996
  - South Carolina National Heritage Corridor established by Congress.
- 1997
  - State Director – William “Buddy” Jennings appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (1997-2000).
- 1998
  - South Carolina National Heritage Corridor placed under SCPRT management through an agreement with the National Park Service.
- 1999
  - South Carolina Film Office transferred to SC Department of Commerce.
  - Sergeant Jasper State Park property sold to Jasper County.
- 2000
  - State Director – John Durst appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (2000-2003).
- 2001
  - Allendale Welcome Center (Highway 301) closed permanently.
  - SCPRT budget reduced by \$339,446 through one mid-year budget reduction.
- 2002
  - SCPRT budget reduced by \$2,181,327 through two budget reductions.
- 2003
  - State Director – Chad Prosser appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (2003-2011).
  - SCPRT budget reduced by \$2,934,793 through two budget reductions.

- Agency restructured due to budget reductions. All Division Director positions were eliminated. The offices of Tourism Marketing, Tourism Sales, and New Market Development were merged into the office of Tourism Sales & Marketing. The Parks and Recreation Division was split into two separate offices: State Parks and Recreation, Planning and Engineering. The offices of Business Development, Sports Development, and Heritage Tourism Development were merged into the office of Community and Economic Development. The offices of Budget and Fiscal Management and Finance were merged into the Finance office. The office of Internal Policy & Programs was changed to Research and Policy Development.
- Musgrove Mill State Historic Site opened.
- SC State Parks began to utilize a business approach for State Parks operations at certain park locations.
- 2005
  - The South Carolina Motion Picture Incentive Act established local and state sales and use tax exemptions and tax rebates for qualified wage and supplier spending in South Carolina by motion picture production companies. S.C. Code Ann.
  - Department of Performance Development eliminated. Staff transferred to various departments throughout the agency.
  - SC State Parks implemented a Central Reservation System for all State Parks accommodations.
- 2006
  - Destination Specific Marketing Fund program established.
- 2007
  - SCPRT's grant program, Tourism Marketing Partnership Program (TMPP), replaced by the Tourism Partnership Fund (TPF) grant program. The TPF grant program allowed for greater flexibility for grant-eligible activities.
- 2008
  - South Carolina Film Office transferred to SCPRT.
  - SCPRT established Product Development grant program to provide financial assistance to local government for tourism-related project planning and construction.
- 2009
  - SCPRT's budget reduced by \$6,512,739 through a series of targeted and mid-year budget reductions.
  - Agency restructured following budget reductions. Department of Community and Economic Development eliminated. Department of Recreation, Planning and Engineering (RP&E) eliminated. Remaining Engineering staff moved under State Parks Service. Department of Tourism and Recreation Development created from remaining RP&E and Community and Economic Development staff.
  - Product Development grant program eliminated due to budget reductions.
- 2010
  - SCPRT's budget reduced by \$2,313,254 through two mid-year budget reductions.
- 2011
  - State Director – Duane Parrish appointed as Agency Director of SCPRT (2011-present).



- SC State Parks implemented revenue enhancement strategies in order to pursue the goal of full operational self-sufficiency.
- The Tourism Partnership Fund grant program replaced by the Tourism Advertising Grant (TAG) program. The TAG program restricted grant-eligible activities to paid advertising purchases.
- At the direction of Governor Nikki Haley, SCPRT Duane Parrish worked with Commerce Secretary Bobby Hitt and Hilton Head-based organizations to secure title and presenting sponsorships for the Heritage Golf Tournament from RBC and Boeing.
- 2013
  - SCPRT launches the Undiscovered SC marketing initiative with the establishment of the SC BBQ Trail.
  - The Tourism Oriented Directional Signage (TODS) program established by legislation.
  - Department of Tourism & Recreation Development eliminated; remaining staff transferred to Administrative Services.
- 2014
  - SCPRT signs an MOU with SCDOT and assumed full operational control of all SC Welcome Center facilities.
  - South Carolina Chef Ambassador program established as a joint program between SCPRT and the SC Department of Agriculture.
  - SCPRT released from management responsibilities of the South Carolina National Heritage Corridor by Governor's Executive Order 2014-33.
  - Department of Public Relations & Information eliminated; remaining staff transferred to Communications or Tourism Sales & Marketing.
  - SCPRT established the Undiscovered SC grant program to provide financial assistance for the construction of rural tourism projects.
- 2015
  - Technology upgrades and renovations completed at Landrum Welcome Center.
  - SCPRT established the Sports Tourism Advertising & Recruitment grant program to provide financial assistance to local governments for recruiting and hosting new sports tourism events.
- 2016
  - Hurricane Matthew caused \$8.7 million in physical damages at SC State Parks and resulted in temporary closures at 18 State Parks.
  - SCPRT established the Beach Renourishment Financial Assistance grant program.
  - Design phase and construction began for new facilities for Hardeeville Welcome Center.
  - Design phase and construction began for new facilities for Fort Mill Welcome Center.
- 2017
  - Construction of new Welcome Center facility at Fort Mill completed.
  - Construction of new Welcome Center facility at Hardeeville completed.
  - Design phase of new facilities for Dillon Welcome Center began.
  - St. Phillips Island property (4,680 acres) acquired through purchase from single landowner to become part of Hunting Island State Park.

---

<sup>1</sup> The agency was asked, "Please provide the major events history of the agency by year, from its origin to the present, in a bulleted list. Include the names of each director with the year the director started and major events (e.g., programs added, cut, departments/divisions changed, etc.)."