

DIVISION OF PARKS AND RECREATION

August 28, 1986

STAFF DIRECTIVE 86-8

TO: Administrative Staff
Section Chiefs
District Park Superintendents
Park Superintendents
Regional Park and Recreation Consultants

FROM: Director William W. Davis

SUBJECT: Research Policy and Process

The Division of Parks and Recreation must manage many uses of system resources. In order to protect resources and users, and to prevent conflicts, it is necessary for the Division to establish a research policy and process.

POLICY

It is the policy of the Division to encourage research activities which are consistent with rules and regulations, management plans, and environmental impact statements associated with units of North Carolina's State Park and Recreation System. Furthermore, it is the policy of the Division that scientific research on the lands and waters administered by the Division will be permitted through a Research Activity Permit (RAP) process.

CRITERIA AND PROCESS

The criteria and procedures for implementing this policy are as follows:

Projects Requiring a Permit

Effective immediately, a Research Activity Permit will be required for research projects involving:

- The collection, removal, destruction, or disturbance of plants, animals, soils, rocks, air, or waters of a unit of the State Park and Recreation System for purposes of scientific research.
- The placement and use of monitoring stations in a system unit.
- The use of park resources, including the time and effort of park personnel.

- The public, or having an impact on the public's experience in a system unit.

Investigative activity conducted as an unobtrusive by-product of outdoor recreation such as individual bird counts and wildflower photography are encouraged and not subject to the permitting process.

Process

Any person or organization interested in conducting research in a state park should initiate the RAP process by contacting the superintendent of the park in which the project is proposed. If a proposal involves more than one park the appropriate District Superintendent or the Head of Interpretation and Education should be the initial contact.

Proposals for research activities, such as the collection of a small number of common species, which have minor, short-term impacts on resources or visitors may be approved by individual park superintendents. Proposals for more comprehensive or long-term projects will be referred to Division staff for review. This review may take up to 60 days to complete, so all applicants are encouraged to submit proposals at least 60 calendar days prior to the intended beginning date. The Division reserves the right to limit the period of the permit. The permit will be suspended or revoked at any time during the course of the project if an investigator fails to comply with the terms of the permit or other park rules and regulations.

The RAP process applies to all research initiated by the Division, as well as proposals developed by other individuals or organizations.

Evaluation

RAP applications will be evaluated in relation to the goals of the Division, legal constraints, and the contribution of the research to the information needs of the park.

1. Goals

Research and collecting in areas managed by the Division will be judged by whether it is appropriate for such activity to occur in a unit of the state park and recreation system. The principle issue in this decision is whether the research is compatible with the goals of the Division.

Casual research activities which are entirely non-destructive (such as preparation of species lists without collecting voucher specimens, quadrant sampling involving estimation of plant species cover in non-permanent quadrants, observation of animal behavior, etc.) are generally judged appropriate, since they represent uses of units of the state park and recreation system which are qualitatively no different than many recreational uses.

More extensive research projects, such as those involving sampling of biotic and abiotic materials (establishment of permanent plots and monitoring stations,

collection of large series of specimens, long term studies, collection of a restricted species, and research in a restricted area such as a registered or designated natural area) may be judged appropriate if the benefits of the project are determined to substantially outweigh the potential negative impacts.

2. Legal Constraints

Certain types of research may require compliance with environmental and administrative regulations that affect the resources administered by the Division. After the initial review of a proposal the applicant will be notified if there is a need for compliance with the following regulations:

- Archaeological Resource Protection Act
- NC Environmental Policy Act
- Coastal Area Management Act
- Sedimentation and Erosion Control Act

It will be the applicant's responsibility to provide evidence that all requirements specified by these, and any other applicable laws and regulations, have been fulfilled. Applicants should be aware that in some cases, compliance requirements can take several months to meet.

3. Contribution to the Park and Recreation System Data Base

Research that will provide information useful to the future management of a unit of the state park and recreation system or to the development of educational programs in a unit will be actively encouraged and recruited. In some cases it may be appropriate for the Division to negotiate with researchers to develop a methodology that will generate data that will fit the needs of the Division as much as possible, without requiring excessive modifications in the researcher's scope of work.

Project Approval/Denial

Permits may be approved, denied, or conditionally approved with additional terms specified by the Division. Permits may be suspended or revoked if the project is found to be contrary to Division goals and regulations. Approved projects will be appropriately signed, numbered, dated and returned to the applicant. At that time a Division project coordinator will be assigned to the project and all future communication should be with the coordinator. In cases where a permit is denied the applicant may submit a written appeal to the appropriate District Superintendent or the Division Director when the project involves more than one district.

Reports

Each individual or organization receiving a Research Activity Permit will be responsible for providing the Division of Parks and Recreation with one copy of a comprehensive report at the conclusion of the project. In addition, annual reports will be required for all projects of more than one-year duration. Reports should include a statement of goals and objectives, methodology, results, and conclusions. Progress reports may also be required but will be specified when a permit is issued.

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH ACTIVITY PERMIT

North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation

* FOR ADMINISTRATIVE USE ONLY *	* Permit number: *
* Date application received: _____ *	* _____ *
* Application approved by: _____ *	* Date Issued: _____ *
* _____ *	* _____ *
* Comments/conditions: _____ *	*****
* _____ *	
* _____ *	
* _____ *	
* _____ *	
* _____ *	
* _____ *	
* _____ *	

Applicant must complete the following items:

1. Date: _____
2. Principal investigator:
 - A. Name _____
 - B. Institutional Affiliation (if any) _____
 - C. Address (street, city, state, zip): _____

 - D. Telephone (work) _____ (home) _____
3. Field or project director (if different from Principal investigator):
 - A. Name _____

- B. Institutional Affiliation (if any) _____
- C. Address (street, city, state, zip): _____

- D. Telephone (work) _____ (home) _____
4. Park and Recreation System Unit where research is to be performed:
- A. Name _____
- B. Estimated acreage of proposed investigation: _____
5. Proposed schedule: (include beginning and completion dates):
- A. Field work _____ to _____
- B. Total project _____ to _____
6. Purpose of research (attach brief project synopsis, including specific objectives and methodology, on separate page).
7. Resources: (Types of resources to be taken from the park and recreation system unit. Indicate species and quantity).
- A. Plants _____
- B. Animals _____
- C. Soils _____
- D. Rocks or minerals _____
- E. Other (explain) _____
8. Ground disturbance (indicate amount, type, and duration):

9. Name and address of proposed curatorial facility:

10. Publication: (Indicate name of publication and anticipated text submittal date)

11. Attachments:

- A. A 1:24,000 (1"=2000') USGS quad clearly indicating the location of the proposed investigations.
- B. A copy of the resume/vita of the Principal Investigator.
- C. A copy of the resume/vita of the Field Director if different from the Principal Investigator.

12. Signature of principal investigator:
