

SUBCHAPTER 13I - NATURAL AREAS

SECTION .0100 - GENERAL PROVISIONS

07 NCAC 13I .0101 PURPOSE

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Amended Eff. October 1, 1984;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0101 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Expired Eff. June 1, 2018 pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A.

07 NCAC 13I .0102 DEFINITIONS

Whenever used in this Subchapter: "Natural area" means an area within the state parks and recreation system where natural processes are allowed to predominate and which is preserved for the primary purposes of resource conservation, environmental education, or scientific research.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Amended Eff. October 1, 1984;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0102 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

SECTION .0200 - SELECTION CRITERIA

07 NCAC 13I .0201 NATURAL FEATURES

Natural features are of primary importance and shall receive first consideration in establishing natural areas within the state parks and recreation system. These features include, but are not limited to:

- (1) formations or features of the natural landscape significantly illustrating geological processes;
- (2) significant fossil evidence of the development of life on earth;
- (3) exemplary or representative ecological communities (terrestrial and aquatic) maintained under prevailing natural conditions;
- (4) ecological communities significantly illustrating the processes of natural succession, including examples of communities maintained or perpetuated by fire;
- (5) habitats supporting rare or restricted species of plants or animals;
- (6) flora or fauna persisting from an earlier period;
- (7) unique or unusual natural features;
- (8) seasonal havens for concentrations of native animals, such as a bat colony or coastal bird rookery;
- (9) features of high natural and aesthetic quality illustrating the scenic grandeur of North Carolina.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0201 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0202 SITE EVALUATION

In assessing natural features, each site shall be evaluated with respect to:

- (1) presence of natural features, not adequately represented in other protected natural areas;
- (2) diversity of native flora and fauna;
- (3) quality and condition of natural features;
- (4) viability and self-sufficiency of the natural ecosystem when properly managed;
- (5) extent to which past disturbances have altered the natural features;
- (6) degree of vulnerability to disturbances and encroachments;
- (7) capability of being managed so as to protect and maintain natural conditions;

- (8) compatibility of protective management practices with current use of adjacent lands;
- (9) scientific and educational value.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0202 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0203 SIGNIFICANCE

- (a) Natural areas selected to be brought into the state parks and recreation system by purchase or gift shall be those which possess natural features of statewide significance. Only areas of high natural or scenic quality or exceptional scientific and educational value shall be considered for acquisition.
- (b) Where appropriate, natural areas worthy of permanent preservation but which are of less than statewide significance may be designated on lands already administered by the Division of Parks and Recreation to protect, preserve, and maintain one or more of the natural features listed in Rule .0201 of this Subchapter.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0203 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0204 SIZE AND BUFFER

Sites selected as natural areas shall be large enough to insure adequate buffer protection of the included natural features from external disturbances and encroachments.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0204 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0205 CONDITIONS INCONSISTENT WITH PRESERVATION

Purchase or acceptance as a gift of property for establishment of a natural area in the state parks and recreation system shall involve no commitments, privileges, or conditions inconsistent with conservation and maintenance of the property as a natural area.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0205 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

SECTION .0300 - NATURAL AREA CLASSIFICATION AND USE

07 NCAC 13I .0301 SCIENTIFIC AREAS

Natural areas shall be placed in the scientific area category where appropriate and necessary to ensure special protection for scientific and educational purposes. The scientific classification may be applied to an entire natural area or to a designated portion. Areas so classified shall be limited to access and use by responsible scientists and researchers, and to other individuals and small groups for educational and research purposes under careful supervision. Camping, picnicking, swimming, and other general recreational activities unrelated to observation and scientific study shall not be permitted. Scientific areas shall be closed to equestrian use. Roads, buildings, and other structures and improvements shall not be constructed except those necessary for site protection, essential research, and educational use of the area.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
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Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0301 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0302 INTERPRETIVE AREAS

Those areas which portray natural processes and features in an exemplary way, and which are not subject to serious impairment if opened to public visitation for nature study and interpretive use, shall be designated as interpretive areas. Use shall be primarily for educational and interpretive purposes with development limited to facilities necessary for safe access, sanitation, site protection, and maintenance, and to provide adequate interpretive programs. Interpretive areas and facilities shall not be used for general recreational activities. Camping, picnicking, and swimming shall not be permitted. Trails shall be limited to walking, hiking, and nature study, but special interpretive trails with wheelchair access for the handicapped may be accommodated.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Amended Eff. October 1, 1984;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0302 Eff. April 1, 2017;
Pursuant to G.S. 150B-21.3A, rule is necessary without substantive public interest Eff. May 1, 2018.

07 NCAC 13I .0303 CONSERVATION AREAS

Natural areas not otherwise identified as scientific areas or interpretive areas shall be classified as conservation areas. Conservation areas shall remain in their natural and undeveloped state but, where appropriate, may accommodate primitive camping facilities, equestrian trails, bicycle trails, and other compatible facilities in keeping with the preservation theme. Any or all uses, activities, and facilities shall be subject to restriction where they conflict with conservation needs. Conservation areas may be designated to provide buffer protection for scientific and interpretive areas or be established as separate and independent natural areas.

History Note: Authority G.S. 113-3; 113-8; 143B-10; 143B-135.16;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
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Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0303 Eff. April 1, 2017;
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SECTION .0400 - NATURAL AREA PROTECTION

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| 07 NCAC 13I .0424 | MANAGEMENT RESEARCH |

History Note: Authority G.S. 70-4; 113-3; 113-8; 113-35; 113-261; 113-272.4; 143B-10;
Eff. August 15, 1981;
Repealed Eff. October 1, 1984;
Transferred from 15A NCAC 12I .0401-.0424 Eff. April 1, 2017.