

Are 750K Annual Visitors Loving Carolina Beach State Park to Death?

Park Earns “Hot Spot” Status Bringing National Outdoor Enthusiasts to Enlighten Public

on Unintended Impact and “Leave No Trace” Skills

Free Events October 6 – 9 to Train Outdoor Enthusiasts How to Diminish Their Impact on Natural Surroundings

September 25, 2017 -- The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and its Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers team are partnering with Carolina Beach State Park, in collaboration with Wilmington’s National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education. They will be hosting several events that are free and open to the public October 6 - 9 to help raise awareness on how to preserve and protect Carolina Beach State Park, particularly its Venus Flytrap habitat.

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics is a national organization that protects the outdoors by teaching and inspiring people to enjoy it responsibly. The Center accomplishes this mission by delivering cutting-edge education and research to millions of people across the country every year. Leave No Trace selected Carolina Beach State Park as a 'Hot Spot' in the nation to help raise awareness among local visitors about outdoor recreation ethics in natural areas. The park was nominated for Hot Spot status by Wilmington's National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education.

“Carolina Beach State Park is like many of the areas where we love to spend time outdoors; the impact of recreational use, however, can compromise the natural habitat for both flora and fauna,” said Carolina Beach Superintendent Chris Helms. “It’s not intentional or malicious; rather it is often a lack of knowledge. So, we’re taking this opportunity to train our park visitors important leave-no-trace skills.” Carolina Beach State Park offers various recreational opportunities for boating, hiking, fishing, picnicking and camping. The park is home to the one of only natural Venus Flytrap populations in the United States that is open to the public. This carnivorous plant species is currently listed as a vulnerable species on the International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) Red list of threatened species.

More than 750,000 people visited Carolina Beach State Park during the 2016/17 fiscal year, and visitation trends continue to increase. The popular park sees recreation-related impacts including:

- Soil compaction and erosion as a result of visitor created trails
- Damage to vegetation/trees
- Habitat destruction of an the endemic plant species, the Venus Flytrap

Unintended Consequences of Loving the Great Outdoors:

According to the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, the typical if unintended consequences of outdoor recreation aren't pretty: litter, dog poop, invasive species, habituated wildlife, trail and campsite erosion, water sources polluted with human wastes, names carved in trees, filthy campfire rings, cigarette butts, damaged cultural and historic sites, toilet paper around campsites, pets chasing wildlife -- the list goes on and on.

These Leave No Trace Hot Spots benefit from increased awareness about how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. "If we know the consequences of our actions and the ways to minimize our individual and cumulative impacts, we can all go a long way towards protecting the places we cherish for future generations," said Mr. Helms.

Schedule of Public Events:

The following events are free and open to the public and we encourage people of all ages to attend. For more information visit the following website: <https://lnt.org/get-involved/hot-spots>

Schedule of Events

Friday, October 6: Ribbon Cutting and Unveiling of Updated Flytrap Trail & New Sign: 10:30am: Kick-off the week with Carolina Beach State Park, Subaru/Leave No Trace traveling trainers, The National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education, and local officials for the ribbon cutting for the updated Flytrap trail and the unveiling of the new Keep It Clean sign that was created. **Carolina Beach State Park. For more information contact the park office at [\(910\) 458-8206](tel:9104588206).**

Friday, October 6: Overview of Leave No Trace for the Public and Visitors of Carolina Beach State Park: 11 am-12 pm: Join the Subaru/Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers and Carolina Beach State Park rangers for an interactive presentation where they'll talk about the how to enjoy Venus Flytraps and the outdoors responsibly. Participants also will be provided with information on how to easily and effectively integrate Leave No Trace into their daily lives. **Carolina Beach State Park, Auditorium. For more information contact the park office at [\(910\) 458-8206](tel:9104588206).**

Saturday, October 7: Fall Flytrap Bash: Flytrap Crafts & Games, Leave No Trace Carnivorous Plant Hikes, Camping 101 Workshops, and Kayak Paddle Demos: 10 am-2 pm at Carolina Beach State Park Picnic Area: Help protect the Venus Flytrap by participating in the Fall Flytrap Bash and learn the principles of how to 'Leave No Trace'. Participate in Flytrap crafts & games, carnivorous plant hikes, camping skills workshops, and kayak demonstrations and paddle workshops.

11 am – 2 pm Paddle with a Pro & Kayak Demo: Experience kayaking w/ **PaddleNC** and learn proper techniques plus paddle safety with the experienced **PaddleNC** professionals.

Sunday, October 8: Leave No Trace Nature Walk & Carnivorous Plant Hike: 11 am-12 pm: Join the Subaru/Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers and Carolina Beach State Park rangers for an interactive nature walk & carnivorous plant hike. Learn about Venus Flytraps, other carnivorous plants in the area and how to enjoy the outdoors responsibly. Participants also will be provided with information on how to easily and effectively integrate Leave No Trace into their daily lives. **Carolina Beach State Park. For more information contact the park office at [\(910\) 458-8206](tel:9104588206).**

Media Contact:

Margee Herring, PR/The National Center for Outdoor & Adventure Education, margeeherring@gmail.com, [\(910\)233-2466](tel:9102332466)

Katie Hall, PIO/NC Division of Parks & Recreation, katie.hall@ncparks.gov, [\(919\) 707-9350](tel:9197079350)

Kate Lessman, Think Big Media PR/ Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics, kate@thinkbigmediapr.com, [\(303\)325-3036](tel:3033253036)