

NEWS RELEASE

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NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF ART PARK FACT SHEET

PURPOSE AND HISTORY

Encompassing 164 acres of rolling fields, woodlands, and meandering creeks, the Museum Park showcases the connection between art and nature. The Park is filled with more than a dozen site-specific temporary and permanent works of art commissioned by the Museum. The Museum Park, which connects with the Capital Area Greenway system, is one of the largest of its kind in the nation.

The origins of the Park date to late 1999, when the Museum opened the Museum Park Trail, developed jointly with the N.C. Department of Transportation. The mile-long bicycle/pedestrian loop was the first phase of a network of art trails planned for the site. The Park was developed from a former farm that was part of a now-relocated state prison. North Carolina legislators granted use of the 164-acre site to the North Carolina Department of Cultural Resources in the summer of 2000.

Outdoor activities range from concerts, film screenings, and festivals in the Joseph. M. Bryan, Jr., Theater and John Deere Green near the Museum to nurture study and contemplation of art projects. The Museum Park art program facilitates collaborations among artists, designers, and environmental scientists to create works of art that are inspired by the natural world. The Park is also a laboratory for experimentation with environmental art and ecological restoration. Planning and policy are developed with the assistance of the Partnership for Art and Ecology between the Museum and the College of Natural Resources of North Carolina State University.

TRAILS

The Museum Park's trail system leads visitors through natural areas and to commissioned works of art. Designed for hiking, walking, and jogging, the trails allow visitors to experience art and nature. Cyclists, dogs, and self-propelled wheeled vehicles may travel on the paved trails. Museum Park trails are designed for different types of activity. Paved trails welcome bicycles and leashed dogs. Mulched and gravel trails are reserved for foot traffic.

Greenway Trail: This paved trail winds through woodlands and across House Creek and then crosses the Raleigh Beltline via the longest pedestrian bridge in the state. The Greenway continues eastward through the campus of Meredith College to the Hillsborough Street–NCSU area. To the west it leads to Blue Ridge Road and extends to Umstead State Park via the Reedy Creek Greenway. The Greenway is a joint project of the Raleigh Department of Parks and Recreation, the N.C. Department of Transportation, and the Museum.

Blue Loop: Through a generous gift from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina, the Museum undertook a major expansion and revision of Museum Park trails. The centerpiece of the project is a one-mile trail (the Blue Loop) for walking and cycling.

SELECTED WORKS OF ART

Nature is the backdrop for contemporary art installations by regional, national, and international artists.

Gyre, 1999, by Thomas Sayre: Three huge ellipses made of concrete, colored with iron oxide, reinforced with steel, and mottled with pebble residue from earth casting.

Wind Machine, 2002, by Vollis Simpson: A 35-foot-tall kinetic work constructed from found objects including bicycle wheels, propellers, candleholders and a model airplane, and featuring a whirligig atop a red, white, and blue pole.

Cloud Chamber for the Trees and Sky, 2003, by Chris Drury: Stone, wood, and turf structure. A *camera obscura* (an oversize pinhole camera) inverts an image of the sky inside the chamber.

Crossroads, 2005, by Martha Jackson-Jarvis: The sculpture, a tall sentinel form, combines brightly colored Italian glass tiles, orange and red carnelian stones, and shattered bricks (recycled from the Polk Youth Correctional Facility, located on the Museum grounds from 1920 to 1993) to create a densely patterned, textured mosaic.

Benches, bike racks, and sign structures, 2005, by Al Frega: Functional art made of metal bars salvaged from the former prison that once occupied part of the Museum grounds.

Lowe's Park Pavilion, 2007, by Mike Cindric and Vincent Petrarca: An Art as Shelter project whose shimmering panels mimic the iridescence of a dragonfly's wings. The structure provides seating and shelter and is often used as outdoor classroom.

Collapse I, 2000, and Untitled, 2007, by Ledelle Moe: Large-scale human figure sculptures constructed of welded steel bars, construction mesh and concrete.

Invasive, 2008, by Steed Taylor: A series of "road tattoos" resembling invasive plant species painted on the paved surfaces of the Museum Park trails.

A Closer Look, 2010, by Tim Purus: 12 metal plaques installed along the paths and trails, each with a unique illustration of animals and plants native to North Carolina. They were designed as reliefs so that visitors may create rubbings of the image using a crayon and paper.

Park Pictures, 2011, by Anthony Goicolea: Large-scale outdoor picture frames in three locations along the House Creek Greenway Trail, featuring digitally manipulated photography by contemporary artists Anthony Goicolea.

The Conversationalist, 1997, by Chakaia Booker: Made of interlacing repurposed tires, the large-scale sculpture refers to textiles, African art, scarification, and opposing viewpoints.

POND RENOVATION

With generous support from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Museum's retention pond was redesigned in October 2010 to aesthetically control and clean storm water before it enters North Carolina's streams and rivers. The newly constructed landscape manages storm water flow from a 50-acre drainage site starting at the new West Building and flowing down to the pond. The pond has been transformed into a series of wetlands featuring terraces planted with native perennials and ornamental grasses. As water moves across these various ecosystems, pollutants will be filtered from the water via plant roots and soil particles. The pond and surrounding areas will serve to improve water quality and beautify the area with diverse species of plants.

The pond renovation is part of a comprehensive storm water management initiative for the 164-acre Museum campus, which also includes a 90,000-gallon underground water storage cistern, rain gardens, and drought-tolerant plantings and fescue lawn.

PROGRAMS AND RESOURCES

Performing arts and films: Opened in April 1997, the Joseph M. Bryan, Jr., Theater in the Museum Park is a 500-seat outdoor theater, with lawn seating for 2,000. The facility spells out the phrase "PICTURE THIS" in 80-foot-long letters. The theater was created by textual artist Barbara Kruger and a design team that included architects Henry Smith-Miller and Laurie Hawkinson and landscape architect Nicholas Quennell.

The Museum Park Theater hosts outdoor films and musical performances throughout the summer, and features an area where visitors can picnic.

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Admission and hours: The Park is open during daylight hours and entry is free. The Park is patrolled by State Capitol Police, Park staff, and Museum security. Admission may be charged for performances in the Park Theater.

Restrooms, water fountains, and snacks are available inside the Museum and during events in the Park Theater. As the Museum expands, the Park will stay open with trail entrances at the top of the Museum driveway, via the Reedy Creek Pedestrian Bridge and at the rear of the Museum parking lot.

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