ID # (assigned by CSG): 12-S-11-NC

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: North Carolina
Assign Program Category (applicant): Parks & Recreation (Use list at end of application)

Program Name: North Carolina Pocket Ranger Mobile Application
Administering Agency: N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation
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  http://pocketranger.com/

1. How long has this program operated (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old as of April 5, 2012 to be eligible for this year’s award.

   In partnership with the N.C. Division of Parks and Recreation and North Carolina Friends of State Parks, a non-profit support organization, ParksByNature Network—creator of the Pocket Ranger® app—launched the program in June 2009. The Approved Guide for North Carolina State Parks was released to the public in April 2011.

2. Describe the program:

   • Why was it created?

     Our goal is twofold. First, the program was created as a way to connect the burgeoning, tech-savvy generation of parkgoers with useful information about state parks—all at the touch of a button. In making this information accessible to the general public, we endeavored to facilitate visitors’ outdoor experience in a way to promote visitation and participation at no cost to the state or taxpayers. Secondly, we
utilize the fastest-growing mobile technology to find new ways to generate funds to sustain state park systems without hindering on the state or consumers for support.

- Why is it a new and creative approach or method?

In this day and age, when a person does not leave their home without their credit card or cellphone, technology is king. To that end, we’ve created a mobile application that allows smartphone users access to detailed park information, news and alerts, events, safety signals, and some of the most advanced GPS features on the market. This mobile application is on trend with a greener, sustainable lifestyle, as it helps reduce on print collateral—both the government and parkgoers seize to need to print maps and brochures of park information.

- What are the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order?

As listed on the PocketRanger website, the app offers users:

- Interactive GPS Feature for on/off line use.
- GeoChallenges, which includes geocache and geoquest activities and games that can be played at a number of state parks.
- Friend Finder - Tracking features that allow users access to their companion’s whereabouts on the trail.
- Advanced GPS Features, such as the ability to mark waypoints, record tracks, cache maps and share your activities with others.
- GPS Parks Nearest Me feature will help locate parks nearest the user. Exploring your surroundings has never been easier!
- A built-in compass can help point to your direction.
- Record, Save and Recall tracks or waypoints at your convenience.

- Is it effective? Provide tangible results and examples.

Yes. Based on user comments, feedback we've received through our suggestions inbox, the public has had a very positive response to the program, which continues to grow everyday. – because – based on user comments, feedbacks, suggestions a very positive response from the program and grows everyday. As the mobile market continues to grow, more people are downloading the app and experiencing North Carolina State Parks in a whole new way.

Some feedback we’ve received:

March 12 - “I was using the NC state Parks android apparently..first let me say its great!!!! Just love it!!”

January 2 – “Fantastic App! We can't wait to get out on the trails when the weather gets a bit warmer. Thank you.”

3. Did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator’s name, present address, telephone number, and e-mail address.
ParksByNature Network is based in New York City. The first mobile app under PBN’s program was Rhode Island but North Carolina’s Pocket Ranger® app followed shortly thereafter.

4. Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

Yes, there are other GPS-navigation mobile apps, which offer similar technology, on the market as well as mobile apps with outdoor information but none that combines both technologies to offer one, comprehensive program.

5. What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter when attempting to adopt this program?

The beauty of this program is that, with ParksByNature Network’s help, this technology can be adopted across all state park systems, both at a smaller and larger scale. The mobile program does not require state-employed state time and therefore can be implemented at zero expense to tax payers or the state. Only potential obstacles could be associated with bidding and contractual policies, procedures and statutes that could delay pursuing a similar arrangement.

Additional Web Information and Descriptions

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lahkHrjyCvI
http://www.nchikes.com/content/n.c.+parks+pocket+ranger+app/16491
http://www.carolinaoutdoorsguide.com/YourLand/state-parks-debut-pocket-ranger-app
http://pocketranger.com/

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Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state’s submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

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- Revenue
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- Health Services
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- Human Services

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- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

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- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
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**Public Safety/Corrections**
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Save in .doc or rtf. Return completed application AND video (if applicable) electronically to innovations@csg.org or mail to:

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**Contact:**
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This application is also available at www.csg.org.