



## **Myron Floyd (1960-Present)**

Department Head and Professor -  
Department of Parks, Recreation,  
and Tourism Management

**North Carolina State University**

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*"It's always good to be in a position where you can help people and give something back." Myron Floyd, 2005.*

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### **Overview**

Note interview conducted in 2010. Dr. Myron Floyd is Professor and Department Head in the Department of Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management at North Carolina State University. Active in both teaching and research, Dr. Floyd has taught courses in evaluation and research methods and park management. He is widely acknowledged as a leading scholar in the area of race/ethnicity and outdoor recreation behavior. His most recent research examines how public parks and other built environment features contribute to physical activity in low income communities of color. Funding for his research comes from public and private granting agencies including the National Park Service, US Forest Service, and the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. His research appears in a variety of highly regarded scientific journals including Leisure Sciences, Journal of Leisure Research, American Journal of Preventive Medicine, Circulation, and Environment and Behavior. Dr. Floyd serves on the Forestry Research Advisory Council which provides advice to the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture on research priorities for the US Forest Service and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture. He also serves on the Board of Directors for the Rails-to Trails Conservancy. Dr. Floyd is the 2004 recipient of the Allen V. Sabora Research Award from the University of Illinois, the 2006 recipient of the Benton H. Box Award for Teaching Excellence from Clemson University, and the 2008 recipient of the National Recreation and Park Association Theodore and Franklin Roosevelt Award for Excellence in Recreation and Park Research. He is an elected Fellow of the Academy of Leisure Sciences.

*This interview was conducted in 2010.*

## **Early Life and Education**

Myron Floyd was born on January 23, 1960 in South Carolina. He is the youngest child of Stephen, a farmer and carpenter, and Ernestine, a schoolteacher. In retrospect, Floyd recognizes that growing up in a rural, farming community influenced his decision to pursue an environmental career. Large, cultivated lands make him feel at home and he feels attached to areas that combine farmland and countryside.

Floyd earned his bachelor's degree in recreation and park administration from Clemson University in 1983. After working as a park ranger in the South Carolina State Park Service where he focused on maintenance work and interpretation, he was promoted to a park management position. Despite this promotion, Floyd felt that his career was incomplete. Subsequently, Floyd decided to enroll in graduate school. He received a master's degree in parks, recreation and tourism management at Clemson University in 1986, and completed his doctorate at Texas A&M in 1991 where he focused on recreation and resource development.

## **Career**

After completing his doctorate, Floyd returned to Clemson as a faculty member, and has since been on the faculty of Texas A&M and the University of Florida. He recently accepted a position at North Carolina State University and will begin teaching there in fall 2005. Throughout his career, his research has focused on methodology and contemporary theories in recreation and leisure.

## **Mentoring Others**

As a faculty member, Floyd is in a position to mentor and work with promising students. He has served on masters and doctoral committees for students and provides encouragement to students who demonstrate the potential to be great environmentalists. He accomplishes this by involving them in his research and teaching as well as by making them aware of the opportunities that are available to them. He believes that the environmental field is a good way to go and regularly encourages students to consider environmental careers. Floyd believes that the field is often overlooked; an observation that saddens him as he feels that the field is filled with potential and can provide great opportunities. As Floyd makes his move to North Carolina State University, the idea of mentoring is on his mind, and he hopes to advise more students of color who are interested in environmental science and environmental justice.

As a minority male, Floyd recognizes that he has not always received the level of respect that he should receive as a professor. He has found that individuals are often not as forgiving of minor mistakes and can be very critical. Those times are noticeable and discouraging. However, he notes that once he gets to know people that often changes. His advisors prepared him for this; he makes a point of reaching out to young people in the field to help prepare them for what they are likely to encounter professionally. As Floyd sees it, "It is important that they have someone to identify with as it can be rough being the only black faculty member in a department."

## **Importance of Mentoring to Career**

As Floyd has progressed through the academic ranks, several individuals have served as mentors for him, including Robert Becker, Frances McGuire, Richard Conover, and James Gramman. Robert Becker was Floyd's graduate advisor. He was very influential in shaping Floyd's work by providing not only advice but also funding for Floyd's research projects. Dr. Frances McGuire was an integral member of Floyd's thesis committee while Dr. Richard Conover exposed him to the politics of natural resources and outdoor recreation. James Gramman was Floyd's Ph.D. advisor. He served as a steady, positive role model for Floyd. Floyd also acknowledges that there are many additional people that have been quick to give advice when called upon.

## **Advice to Young Professionals**

While Floyd believes that he has not yet seen the greatest moment of his career, he has enjoyed his work to date. Regarding the environment, Floyd says, "it's good work, helping people. It challenges you intellectually and emotionally as you work with people who are different from you. I'm naturally curious. I like learning and reading. The quest for knowledge is what motivates me. When you get an article or a grant proposal accepted, those are the small things that are great about this. It's always good to be in a position where you can help people and give something back. It's something we all need and I like being in this position where I can influence others and help others reach their goals. In turn, I hope they'll do the same thing."