

Committee: Natural History, Parks & Wildlands

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Defend Missouri State Parks

WHEREAS, more than 18 million people visit Missouri state parks and historic sites, generating more than \$1.1 billion annually in economic activity (2012 data); and

WHEREAS, the state park system is now utterly dependent on the Parks, Soil and Water Sales Tax (1/2 of 1/10th of 1%), for operations and maintenance, and the tax must be renewed by vote of the people in 2016; and

WHEREAS, Missouri State Parks through a planning process dating back to 1990 has acquired land and established new parks along the Sinking Creek tributary of Current River, the Eleven Point River, and the Rock Island Railroad to commemorate the 2017 centennial of Missouri State Parks; and

WHEREAS, a small number of members of the Missouri General Assembly have introduced more than a dozen bills moving rapidly through the legislative process that could damage the park system now and in the future, hobble the acquisition of new parkland, jeopardize renewal of the Parks and Soils Sales Tax, and hurt the economies of their own districts and the state—bills that would require the sale of the Eleven Point lands, mandate local hearings or concurrent approval of both houses for any proposed land purchases or donations, remove the tax exemption for state park land, allow ATVs on the Katy Trail, and cut funding for the park director's salary and core operations of certain parks; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED that the Conservation Federation of Missouri, assembled at the Capitol Plaza Hotel, Jefferson City, MO, this 20th day of March, 2016, defend and encourage others to defend Missouri State Parks by: Staunchly opposing harmful state park bills (e.g., HB2187, SB682, SB683, HJR101, HB2047) and encouraging CFM affiliates and citizens to contact their legislators opposing the bills and asking for their support of the people of Missouri in their desire to support state parks; and supporting restoration in the senate of funds for state parks deleted by the house from HB2006; and vigorously supporting renewal of the Parks, Soil, and Water Sales Tax and using CFM communications capability and media access to encourage CFM members, affiliate organizations, and the general public to likewise support renewal of the tax.