

By: Senator Rice
By: Representative Beck

SENATE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

TO RECOGNIZE ONE HUNDRED (100) YEARS OF ARKANSAS
STATE PARKS AND PROCLAIM 2023 AS ARKANSAS STATE PARKS
CENTENNIAL YEAR.

Subtitle

TO RECOGNIZE ONE HUNDRED (100) YEARS OF
ARKANSAS STATE PARKS AND PROCLAIM 2023 AS
ARKANSAS STATE PARKS CENTENNIAL YEAR.

WHEREAS, one hundred (100) years ago, Governor Thomas Chipman McRae signed into law an act authorizing the acceptance of land for parks and state reservations in Arkansas and through the founding vision of Dr. T.W. Hardison, House Bill 873 passed without a dissenting vote and was signed into law as Act 276 of 1923; and

WHEREAS, Act 276 of 1923 designated land for the establishment of Petit Jean State Park and included Arkansas as a party to the state park movement in America; and

WHEREAS, later legislation would provide for creation of the initial State Park Commission, now known as the State Parks, Recreation, and Travel Commission and charge the commission with the duty to select, acquire, and oversee lands entrusted to its care; and

WHEREAS, through the passion and pursuit of Dr. T.W. Hardison, the state park idea, originating in the 1920s, is a legacy that Arkansans appreciate and enjoy today, and in the words of Dr. Hardison "State parks are



first and primarily conservation areas. That concept is not in conflict with their use for recreation, and, properly administered, state parks can provide the best type of recreation for the population without impairing their natural beauty”; and

WHEREAS, President Franklin Delano Roosevelt created the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), and the work of the CCC began in 1933 in Arkansas with the goal of providing access for all to nature; and

WHEREAS, the investment by the CCC created the following state parks in Arkansas: Petit Jean State Park; Mount Nebo State Park; Crowley’s Ridge State Park; Devil’s Den State Park; Lake Catherine State Park; and the Buffalo River State Park; and

WHEREAS, the enduring works of the CCC, built with dedicated labor and detailed craftsmanship, using timber and stone that blend perfectly with their surrounding landscapes, are still a part of the Arkansas State Parks essential experience, and these legacies can be seen in our parks’ roads, trails, lakes, beaches, and facilities; and

WHEREAS, Governor Dale Bumpers invested more in Arkansas State Parks and the number of state parks doubled; and

WHEREAS, the importance of Arkansas State Parks to its citizens was displayed in 1996, when voters approved an amendment to the State’s Constitution for the collection of a one-eighth of one cent (\$.00125) tax to support State Parks, Arkansas Game and Fish, Arkansas Heritage, and Keep Arkansas Beautiful and this measure was strongly supported by Governor Mike Huckabee and First Lady Janet Huckabee; and

WHEREAS, with fifty-two (52) state parks and fifty-five thousand (55,000) acres, the various landscapes found in parks in forty-nine (49) counties are the perfect setting for trails, campsites, cabins, lodges, recreation areas, where citizens and guests connect with our state’s beauty and history; and

WHEREAS, each state park is a significant part of the fabric of Arkansas, and the Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism is charged with an important role in interpreting, maintaining, and protecting some of the most cherished natural, historical, and cultural resources found in Arkansas; and

WHEREAS, the state parks of Arkansas have impacted and enhanced the quality of life of Arkansans and served guests from around the world and collectively the Arkansas State Park system is one of the state's largest tourism and economic drivers, adding over one billion dollars (\$1,000,000,000) each year to the state's economy; and

WHEREAS, last year over eight million (8,000,000) guests visited Arkansas's parks and museums and support for Arkansas State Parks is at an all-time high,

NOW THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE NINETY-FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF ARKANSAS, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING THEREIN:

THAT the Senate and the House of Representatives concurring, recognize and commemorate the one hundredth anniversary of Arkansas State Parks and proclaim 2023 as Arkansas State Parks Centennial Year.