

By: Perry

S.R. No. 149

SENATE RESOLUTION

WHEREAS, The Senate of the State of Texas is pleased to recognize the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, which, in partnership with the Texas Parks and Wildlife Foundation, is celebrating 100 years of Texas State Parks in 2023; and

WHEREAS, In 1923, Governor Pat Neff convinced the state legislature to create a six-member State Parks Board to locate sites for the establishment of a state parks system, citing the need for overnight camping spots for the rising number of people traveling by car; and

WHEREAS, President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Civilian Conservation Corps was formed in 1933 in an effort to help the country's unemployed citizens rise from the Great Depression; the program organized young men into companies and dispersed them to parks across the state to build features pavilions, bridges, refectories, lodges, cabins, and picnic areas; the design of these new projects reflected a natural style and utilized local wood and stonework, which provided aesthetically pleasing and structurally sound facilities and park areas, including the iconic pavilion at Garner State Park and features of state parks at Palo Duro Canyon, Abilene, Lockhart, Bastrop, Fort Davis, and more; and

WHEREAS, In 1963, Governor John Connally merged the State Parks Board with the Texas Game and Fish Commission to form the

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department; this initiated the "Golden Age of Texas State Parks," which brought increased revenue streams to contribute to the refurbishment of existing parks and the development of new parks such as those at Pedernales Falls, Mustang Island, Galveston Island, McKinney Falls, and Lost Maples; and

WHEREAS, In 1993, state lawmakers dedicated a portion of state taxes from the sale of sporting goods to provide stable funding for parks, and in 2019, Texas voters passed a constitutional amendment that ensures all sales tax from sporting goods will go to the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department and Texas Historical Commission for the support of state parks and state historic sites in perpetuity; and

WHEREAS, The Centennial Celebration will focus on four main goals: to engage new and diverse audiences, pursue partnerships, celebrate 100 years of stewardship, and invest for the future; and

WHEREAS, Park lovers everywhere will celebrate the centennial of our state park system, which showcases the diversity of Texas' natural beauty, from forests and prairies to arid mountains, cool rivers, and the windswept coast; and

WHEREAS, Texas State Parks are economic drivers in rural communities and provide outdoor recreational opportunities to a growing population of Texans while conserving the natural and cultural resources of our great state; parks provide outdoor recreational access to many Texans who might not otherwise be able to experience the physical, emotional, and mental

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well-being that can be gained by participating in outdoor activities and spending time in nature; and

WHEREAS, Texas State Parks' resources contribute to the clean water relied on by people and by wildlife, and state parks encompass 481,000 acres of Texas aquifers, rivers, and reservoirs; parks also provide some 640,000 acres of critical wildlife habitat, including habitat that benefits more than 50 threatened and endangered species; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, That the Senate of the State of Texas, 88th Legislature, hereby join in celebrating 2023 as the Texas State Parks Centennial; and, be it further

RESOLVED, That a copy of this Resolution be prepared for the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department as an expression of esteem from the Texas Senate.