



STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENT AND CONSERVATION
NASHVILLE, TENNESSEE 37243-0435

JAMES H. FYKE
COMMISSIONER

PHIL BREDESEN
GOVERNOR

February 23, 2010

RE: *Economic Impact Study of Tennessee State Parks*

Dear Friend,

Tennessee's forthcoming state outdoor recreation plan, *Tennessee 2020*, cites the critical need of decision-makers to receive accurate information about the value of funding for parks, recreation, and conservation. The *Tennessee 2020* plan addresses this need by including an economic impact study performed by the University of Tennessee that quantifies the significant positive impact Tennessee State Parks have on the state's economy. I am pleased to share a summary of that "***Economic Impacts of Tennessee State Parks***" study with you, and I trust it will help inform citizens about the positive economic benefits parks and recreation in Tennessee.

This study indicates Tennessee State Parks pump millions of dollars into local economies and create thousands of jobs. For every one dollar spent from the General Fund to operate state parks, there is \$17 spent by park visitors in the park and surrounding areas. More tax revenues are actually generated from economic activity resulting from state park visitation than the amount of state funds provided to support park operations. The bottom line impact of state parks produces significant economic activity for Tennessee and also creates thousands of jobs in many rural areas of the state where jobs are needed most.

In times of scarce resources and hard choices, it's important to note that investments in Tennessee State Parks create a positive return. We are glad citizens recognize the value of their public investments in this sector, and that elected officials want to make sound economic decisions related to parks and recreation.

Even if you visit a Tennessee State Park just to enjoy our good nature, you are also supporting a vital economic engine for many communities. Our state parks and the local communities they sustain make Tennessee an even more attractive place to live, work and play. I hope you will make plans to visit an award-winning Tennessee State Park this year.

Sincerely,

James H. Fyke