

By Senator Dockery

15-1262-06

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Senate Resolution

A resolution commending the Division of Recreation and Parks within the Department of Environmental Protection on the excellence of its management of Florida's magnificent state park system and declaring a year-long celebration of Florida State Parks.

WHEREAS, the Division of Recreation and Parks manages an expansive and diverse state park system spanning 720,000 acres and 159 park properties, and has again received national recognition for its partnerships, resource management, recreation programs, and innovative marketing initiatives promoting ecotourism, and

WHEREAS, Florida's park rangers, managers, and support staff have dedicated their lives to "the Real Florida" as great interpreters and stewards of the state's most treasured natural and cultural resources, and

WHEREAS, Florida's countless public and private partners have helped to provide expanded resource-based recreational opportunities for more than 17 million annual visitors to Florida's state parks, and

WHEREAS, the Friends of Florida State Parks and 78 Citizen Support Organizations assisted the Florida Park Service last year and more than 6,000 volunteers donated a record-breaking 1 million hours of service, the equivalent of 505 full-time employees, having a value of more than \$18 million, and

WHEREAS, the division's program known as "Get REAL in Florida State Parks" uses parks as classrooms and provides programs for school-aged children, seniors, other residents,

1 and visitors to boost interest and participation in cultural,
2 historical, and resource-based recreation, and

3 WHEREAS, in addition to preserving 720,000 acres of
4 Florida's finest, most pristine natural areas for enjoyment by
5 this and future generations, the Division of Recreation and
6 Parks has an annual direct economic impact of \$665 million and
7 has created more than 13,000 jobs for Florida's communities,
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the Division of Recreation and Parks was
10 awarded the prestigious 2005 National Gold Medal Award for
11 excellence in the field of park and recreation management and
12 Florida was recognized as having the best state park system in
13 all 50 states at the recent meeting of the National Recreation
14 and Park Association Annual Congress in San Antonio, Texas,
15 and

16 WHEREAS, the Division of Recreation and Parks is the
17 first state park system in the nation to receive this award
18 twice, and has been named a finalist or winner in each year of
19 eligibility, NOW, THEREFORE,

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21 Be It Resolved by the Senate of the State of Florida:

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23 That the Senate proclaims that the entire year of 2006
24 be celebrated statewide in honor of Florida State Parks and
25 authorizes the Department of Environmental Protection to
26 celebrate and publicize the great accomplishments of the
27 Division of Recreation and Parks.

28 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this resolution,
29 with the Seal of the Senate affixed, be presented to Colleen
30 M. Castille, Secretary of Environmental Protection; Bob
31 Ballard, Deputy Secretary of Environmental Protection; and

1 Mike Bullock, Director of the Division of Recreation and
2 Parks, as a tangible token of the sentiments of the Florida
3 Senate.
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