



The Florida State Parks Foundation Celebrates A Momentous 2021 Legislative Session

This is a year of record funding

TALLAHASSEE, FLORIDA, UNITED STATES, May 3, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- The Florida State Parks Foundation today applauded the Legislature's decision to fully fund Florida's award-winning state parks.

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“In every sense this has been one of the most successful legislative sessions ever as far as Florida's award-winning state parks are concerned. This is a year of record funding,” said Foundation President Gil Ziffer.

“Both the House and the Senate recognized the important multi-faceted role that our state parks play and agreed to increased funding over and above that requested by the

Governor,” he said.

The final approved budget provides \$50 million for fixed capital outlay for facility repairs, improvements and so on, \$13.8 million for the Land and Recreation Grant programs, \$1.5 m for recreational trails programs, and \$2 million for Florida Recreational Development Assistance programs.

“Florida State Parks represent one of the state's greatest success stories. They are a major contributor to the state's tourism industry, support thousands of jobs, and pour billions of dollars into the state's economy. At the same time, they preserve many of the jewels of our natural environment and Florida's significant historical and cultural sites,” Ziffer said.

“As the acknowledged premier state park system in the nation, it is vital that Florida State Parks continue to receive full funding and we are grateful that the legislature acknowledged this. When comparing the \$50 million that has been provided for fixed capital outlay in the budget with the \$2.6 billion in economic impact the state parks generated in 2019 from nearly 30 million visitors, it is difficult to think of a better return on the investment anywhere,” he said.

“Florida's state parks play an important role in providing open spaces where people can recreate and exercise in a safe, socially distanced environment. The demand for these open spaces will

continue to increase as Florida's population is expected to top 23 million by 2025 and tourism numbers grow," said Foundation CEO Julia Gill Woodward.

"To meet this growing demand, it is important that state parks continue to provide exceptional value in terms of visitor experience and the range of outdoor pursuits available. It is also important that these pursuits are available to the widest possible audience both in terms of accessibility and diversity," she said.

The Foundation, founded in 1993 as Friends of Florida State Parks and renamed in 2018, is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation whose mission is to support and help sustain the Florida Park Service, its 175 award-winning parks and trails, local Friends groups and more than 20,000 park volunteers.

It does this through programs that preserve and protect state parks, educate visitors about the value of state parks, encourage community engagement and active use of state parks, and advocacy.

The volunteer Board of Directors represents private and public sectors as well as local and statewide interests.

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