



STATE OF TENNESSEE
PROCLAMATION

BY THE GOVERNOR

WHEREAS, in 1937 the Tennessee General Assembly established the Tennessee State Park system; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is home to 61 Tennessee State Parks, 6 lodges, 36 campgrounds, 373 cabins, and 80+ waterfalls for Tennesseans and visitors to enjoy; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee parks directly employ nearly 2,000 people in jobs, providing fulfilling careers, serving Tennesseans and protecting our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has made strong investments to preserve our state's rich resources and natural beauty, including \$400 million in investments in Fiscal Year 2024 to improve and expand three additional state natural areas, rebuild two new park lodges, complete four more outdoor trails and establish four new state parks; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee continues to invest in a conservation strategy to create a brighter future for every Tennessean and contribute to our state's economic success, dedicating nearly \$190 million in Fiscal Year 2025 to create four additional state parks and invest in blueway trail development, water regionalization, the Bill Dance Signature Lakes initiative, park accessibility and highway beautification; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee has one of only seven state park systems in the nation that is free to access for all, and every Tennessean lives within an hour's drive of at least one state park; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee continues to prioritize park accessibility for all park visitors; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee is home to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in the United States and a World Heritage Site; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee's professionally-managed state park system is consistently ranked among the top state park systems by the National Recreation and Park Association; and

WHEREAS, the parks across our state help build strong communities, protecting natural, cultural, and scenic resources and providing opportunities for exploration, recreation, and restoration; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee State Parks will offer free golf and camping for all Veterans on all six of the armed service branch birthdays for next two years, commemorating the 250th birthday of the United States of America; and

WHEREAS, Tennessee State Parks are forever and for everyone.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Lee, Governor of the State of Tennessee, do hereby proclaim April 20-28, 2024, as

State and National Park Week

in Tennessee and encourage all citizens to join me in this worthy observance.



IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the official seal of the State of Tennessee to be affixed at Nashville on this twentieth day of April 2024.

Bill Lee

Governor

Ju Dargatz

Secretary of State