
From: Corey Sipe <corey_neil_sipe@me.com>
Sent: Tuesday, February 19, 2013 11:27 AM
To: AppropriationTestimony
Subject: Keep State Parks Open to Benefit Connecticut

Dear Ladies and Gentlemen,

This is my written testimony supporting keeping state parks open by hiring adequate staff to maintain them. 15 of 74 field staff that manage 107 state parks are eligible to retire in July 2013. As a result, several parks will not open or have reduced services since the Governor's proposed budget would cut funding for seasonal workers to keep park buildings and grounds safe for visitors. A 2011 Economic Study by UCONN has shown an annual contribution of over \$1 billion and 9,000 private sector jobs to Connecticut from State Parks. Every \$1 spent on the state parks returns \$38 to Connecticut's coffers. These economic values will be lost if we do not invest in our parks. Let's work hard to promote tourism in Connecticut, we are MUCH more than just casinos! In fact, about 8 million people visit the state parks each year while the state's population is only 3.5 million. It is the most dominant member of Connecticut's tourism network. The value of properties adjacent to or overlooking state parks is an average of 13% higher than properties that do not. Also, do not forget that parks open spaces and trained staff are used in times of civic emergency. Hammonasset State Park and Sherwood Island State Park were critical staging locations during Storm Sandy and the 9/11 tragedy.

In closing, please work hard in ensuring that our beautiful state parks are properly maintained.

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