



Connecticut Chapter APPALACHIAN MOUNTAIN CLUB

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Testimony Regarding Governor's FY 2014-15 Budget
Hearing before the Conservation & Development Appropriations Subcommittee
February 20, 2013

Honorable Members:

I am the chairman of the Connecticut Chapter of the Appalachian Mountain Club, the nation's oldest outdoor recreation and conservation organization. AMC promotes the protection, enjoyment and understanding of the mountains, forests, waters and trails of the Appalachian region. Our 16,000 volunteers, 450 full time and seasonal employees and 100,000 members, supporters and advocates, including 8,000 in the Connecticut chapter, are central to fulfilling the organization's mission. AMC offers a vast array of services to advance its goals, including educational programs, books and maps, lodging, trail maintenance, scientific research, and 8,000 trips per year, many led by volunteers like the leaders who so enjoy the Connecticut state parks.

Our Connecticut members participate in a variety of outdoor activities, including hiking, biking, paddling and climbing. Our Conservation Committee is working with students at one of the state universities on an alternative spring break program. Our nearly 200 state volunteers perform trail work and lead members and the public in the variety of activities that our committees offer. As a volunteer who leads family hikes, I know how important it is to get youth engaged with the natural world. They have fewer and fewer opportunities to do so.

It is against this backdrop I note that the 2011 study by UCONN's Connecticut Center for Economic Analysis (CCEA) concluded that outdoor recreation on state lands raises substantial funds for the state. More than \$1 billion per year is spent by state residents and visitors on a variety of outdoor activities including camping, boating, fishing and hunting.

The study also concluded that:

- For every dollar the state spends on the state park system, it receives an estimated \$38 in economic activity.
- Nearly 9,000 private sector jobs statewide result from the support of outdoor recreation pursuits.

In addition to the benefit of our state parks described in this study, if all the state parks are not adequately funded, recreational opportunities will be seriously diminished, giving citizens fewer places to enjoy nature, stay in shape and engage in low cost recreation and renewal with their friends or family members. I ask that you provide adequate funding so that all state parks will be open during the coming season. To do otherwise would be especially shortsighted during this milestone year, the 100th anniversary of the Connecticut state parks.

Janet Ainsworth, Chair
Connecticut Chapter, Appalachian Mountain Club

Appalachian Mountain Club Mission Statement

The Appalachian Mountain Club promotes the protection, enjoyment and stewardship of the mountains, forests, waters, and trails of the Appalachian region. We believe that mountains, forests, and waters have intrinsic worth and also provide recreational opportunities, spiritual renewal, and ecological and economic health for the region. Because successful conservation depends on active engagement with the outdoors, we encourage people to experience, learn about, appreciate, and understand the natural world.