

Labbadia, Bonnie

From: Christopher Callahan <ccallaha@gdeb.com>
Sent: Tuesday, March 11, 2014 8:58 AM
To: Program Review and Investigation
Subject: Bill 5370

Dear PRI Committee,

We write to you today in support of Raised Bill 5370.

Due to the chronic underfunding of our State Parks we are now in a dangerous situation; at the present time the park system has only 17 park supervisors and 53 maintainers !!

Even if the present practice of filling 1 in 5 positions is continued, the already skeleton staff will be reduced, due to impending retirements, to 4 supervisors and 29 maintainers to service park patrons, by 2020.

Volunteers and Friends groups at CT State Parks should not to be considered as substitutes for trained and skilled park staff.

WE MUST begin immediately to reverse this plummet by capturing our revenues to hire workers !!

State Parks that are properly staffed are parks that are well maintained, safe, and support the health of their local economies.

The returning of park revenues and fees directly to the parks *Should* be used to Supplement and *Not* Replace the budget allotment State Parks currently receive.

This revenue would be used to address the dangerously low staffing levels and offset dramatically increasing operational costs such as fuel, trash removal, and equipment.

We strongly urge this committee to recommend returning no less than 50% of park revenues and fees directly back to the Parks rather than to the General Fund.

Sincerely,

Chris and Kelly Callahan
Over 20 years of volunteering as Friends of Harkness Memorial State Park, Waterford, CT