

Labbadia, Bonnine

From: pdurham1@juno.com
Sent: Friday, March 07, 2014 6:48 PM
To: Program Review and Investigation
Cc: Mark.Darin@ct.gov; eileengrant@comcast.net
Subject: state park bills

To: PRI Committee 3/7/2014

Re: HB 5370 and HB 5369

I have been involved with Harkness Memorial State Park for almost 20 years as a volunteer gardener and as a 10-year seasonal employee. I support the proposed bills to retain park gate and rental monies for the individual and collective state park system in addition to the operating budgets. There currently is so little money to work with.

When I first came there were four or five fulltime maintainers. There are two now. When people leave, the positions are not filled. Two people cannot adequately maintain two hundred acres of land, gardens, buildings, litter and public lavatory cleanup, and help with special events such as weddings and concerts. There are not enough seasonal employees for the summer months and not enough maintainers to supervise the ones we have. There are virtually no seasonal employees for the crucial spring preparations and fall cleanups.

Money is also needed to provide enough tools, vehicles, cleaning supplies and even toilet paper for the public. The operating budget is not enough. Buildings such as the public bathrooms, the Support Complex and staff buildings are all in bad condition.

The state of Connecticut publicizes what a showplace Harkness Park is and encourages people to come and enjoy it. They do, by the thousands. Those of us who work or volunteer at Harkness love the place with extraordinary passion. At the same time, we are aware of the problems and how much better it could be if it were well-funded and staffed. Keeping the money collected at the park - for the park - would help.

Please pass the bills HB 5370 and 5369.

Thank you,
Patricia Durham
Niantic, CT