2026 Special Session I

Budget Bill - HB30 (Introduced)

Department of Conservation and Recreation

Item 363

	First Year - FY2027	Second Year - FY2028
Leisure and Recreation Services (50400)	**$107,506,363**	**$107,584,095**
Preservation of Open Space Lands (50401)	$26,137,669	$26,137,669
Design and Construction of Outdoor Recreational Facilities (50403)	$1,833,283	$1,833,283
State Park Management and Operations (50404)	$71,553,749	$71,631,481
Natural Outdoor Recreational and Open Space Resource Research, Planning, and Technical Assistance (50406)	$7,981,662	$7,981,662
Fund Sources:		
General	$58,832,912	$58,832,912
Special	$38,646,551	$38,674,933
Dedicated Special Revenue	$1,807,124	$1,807,124
Federal Trust	$8,219,776	$8,269,126

Authority: Title 10.1, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4, 4.1, and 17; Title 18.2, Chapters 1 and 5; Title 19.2, Chapters 1, 5, and 7, Code of Virginia.

A.1. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is $16,000,000 the first year and $16,000,000 the second year from the general fund to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund, § 10.1-1020, Code of Virginia. No less than 50 percent of the appropriations remaining after the transfer to the Virginia Outdoors Foundation's Open-Space Lands Preservation Trust fund has been satisfied are to be used for grants for fee simple acquisitions with public access or acquisitions of easements with public access. This appropriation shall be deemed sufficient to meet the provisions of § 2.2-1509.4, Code of Virginia.

2. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open Space Lands is $1,500,000 the first year and $1,500,000 the second year from nongeneral funds to be deposited into the Virginia Land Conservation Fund to be distributed by the Virginia Land Conservation Foundation pursuant to the provisions of § 58.1-513, Code of Virginia.

B. Included in the amounts for Preservation of Open-Space Lands is $1,752,750 the first year and $1,752,750 the second year from the general fund and $1,900,000 the first year and $1,900,000 the second year from nongeneral funds for the operating expenses of the Virginia Outdoors Foundation (Title 10.1, Chapter 18, Code of Virginia).

C.1. Out of the amounts appropriated for State Parks Management and Operations, up to $560,000 the first year and $560,000 the second year from the general fund shall be paid for the operation and maintenance of Breaks Interstate Park.

2. The Breaks Interstate Park Commission shall submit an annual audit of a fiscal and compliance nature of its

accounts and transactions to the Auditor of Public Accounts, the Director, Department of Conservation and Recreation, and the Director, Department of Planning and Budget.

3. The Breaks Interstate Park Commission shall, following the modernization of the Breaks Interstate Park electrical system, enter into negotiations to transfer control of the electrical system serving the park to a local regional electric utility.

D. Notwithstanding the provisions of § 10.1-202, Code of Virginia, amounts deposited to the State Park Conservation Resources Fund may be used for a program of in-state travel advertising. Such travel advertising shall feature Virginia State Parks and the localities or regions in which the parks are located. To the extent possible the department shall enter into cooperative advertising agreements with the Virginia Tourism Authority and local entities to maximize the effectiveness of expenditures for advertising. The department is further authorized to enter into a cooperative advertising agreement with the Virginia Association of Broadcasters.

E. Notwithstanding any other provision of the Code of Virginia, as a condition of the expenditure of all amounts included in this Item, the department shall not initiate or accept by gift, transfer or purchase with nongeneral funds any new lands for use as a State Park without a specific appropriation for such purpose by the General Assembly. However, the department is authorized to acquire land as expressly set out in Items C-27 and C-27.10, Chapter 854, 2019 Acts of Assembly, as well as in-holdings or lands contiguous to an existing State Park as expressly set out in Item C-25, Chapter 725 Acts of Assembly, and as provided for in Section 4-2.01 a.1. of this act provided further that acquisitions authorized in Item C-25, Chapter 725 Acts of Assembly will not cause the department to incur additional operating expenses. It is not the intent of these provisions to prohibit any acquisitions resulting from mitigation settlements or to prohibit any additional operating expenses resulting from such acquisitions.

F.1. Included in the amounts for State Park Management and Operations is $590,944 the first year and $590,944 the second year and six positions from the general fund for the initial start-up and ongoing operational costs for Phase I of Widewater State Park in Stafford County. It is the intent of the General Assembly that, as soon as practicable upon completion of Phase 1A, that the Department shall provide public access and proceed to regular revenue generating operations at the Park.

2. The Department of Conservation and Recreation shall collaborate with Stafford County Public Schools, the Friends of Widewater State Park and other interested stakeholders regarding the Science and Environmental Center at Widewater State Park planned to be constructed as part of Phase III in order to ensure the facility is adequate to meet the needs of the community, curriculum collaboration opportunities with local schools, and other needs; determine whether any design changes would further community environmental education goals; determine the availability of any grant, charitable or co-funding opportunities with Stafford County and/or Virginia higher educational institutions; determine the feasibility and costs of any design changes or the necessity of any Master Plan changes; and produce recommendations, if any, relating to such objectives.

G. Included in the amount for this Item is $150,000 the first year and $150,000 the second year from the nongeneral fund amounts appropriated in Item 442 A. for recreational access which shall be used to fabricate and install Supplemental Guide Signs for Virginia State Parks.

H. The department is hereby authorized to enter into an agreement with the United States Forest Service that owns the Longdale Day Use Area to operate the facility as the Green Pastures Unit of Douthat State Park, an extension of Douthat State Park.

I. Out of the amounts appropriated in this Item, $250,000 the first year and $250,000 the second year from the general fund is provided to the department to support two additional staff positions and related expenses for invasive species management.

J. Notwithstanding § 2.2-1156, Code of Virginia, or any other provision of law, the department is authorized to transfer an amount of $2,375,000 received from proceeds of the sale of property located at 6061 Elko Tract Road, Henrico, Virginia, from the State Park Acquisition and Development Fund to the Natural Area Preserve Fund. The department shall ensure that these funds are used solely for the acquisition, stewardship, and management of natural area preserves in accordance with § 10.1-209 through § 10.1-217, Code of Virginia.