

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA

SESSION 2017

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HOUSE BILL 353

Short Title: Authorize State Park System Expansion.-AB (Public)

Sponsors: Representatives Dobson, Brisson, Brenden Jones, and Hunter (Primary Sponsors).

For a complete list of sponsors, refer to the North Carolina General Assembly web site.

Referred to: State and Local Government II, if favorable, Appropriations

March 15, 2017

A BILL TO BE ENTITLED

AN ACT TO AUTHORIZE THE ADDITION OF BLACK RIVER STATE PARK, BOB'S POCKET STATE NATURAL AREA, WARWICK MILL BAY STATE NATURAL AREA, AND SALMON CREEK STATE NATURAL AREA TO THE STATE PARKS SYSTEM, AS RECOMMENDED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES.

Whereas, Section 5 of Article XIV of the North Carolina Constitution states that it shall be a proper function of the State of North Carolina to acquire and preserve park, recreational, and scenic areas and, in every other appropriate way, to preserve as a part of the common heritage of this State its open lands and places of beauty; and

Whereas, the General Assembly enacted the State Parks Act in 1987, declaring that the State of North Carolina offers unique archaeological, geological, biological, scenic, and recreational resources, and that such resources are part of the heritage of the people of the State to be preserved and managed by those people for their use and for the use of their visitors and descendants; and

Whereas, the Black River in Sampson, Bladen, and Pender counties is one of North Carolina's most important scenic landmarks and is nationally significant for excellent examples of blackwater wetland natural communities, for huge cypress trees more than 1,600 years old, which are some of the most ancient trees in the world with immense scientific value, and for outstanding opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

Whereas, the Bob's Pocket area in McDowell County is significant for its scenic beauty, high-quality natural communities, rare and unusual natural features, and opportunities for natural resource preservation, outdoor recreation, and regional trail connections; and

Whereas, Warwick Mill Bay in Robeson County is a large Carolina Bay with one of the State's largest inland heronries, providing habitat for herons, egrets, moorhens, anhingas, ibises, wood storks, alligators, and many other species of wildlife and plants, and preservation of Warwick Mill Bay would protect an important ecological and scientific resource for future North Carolinians; and

Whereas, the Salmon Creek area in Bertie County is ecologically significant for its high-quality natural communities and also contains important prehistoric and historic archaeological sites offering opportunities for important archaeological discoveries, including an Indian occupation site containing evidence of late 16th or early 17th century English presence;

Now, therefore,

The General Assembly of North Carolina enacts:



1 **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly authorizes the Department of Natural and
2 Cultural Resources to add Black River State Park, Bob's Pocket State Natural Area, Warwick Mill
3 Bay State Natural Area, and Salmon Creek State Natural Area to the State Parks System as
4 provided in G.S. 143B-135.54(b).

5 **SECTION 2.** The State may receive donations of appropriate land and may purchase
6 other needed lands for Black River State Park, Bob's Pocket State Natural Area, Warwick Mill
7 Bay State Natural Area, and Salmon Creek State Natural Area with existing funds in the Clean
8 Water Management Trust Fund, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the federal Land and Water
9 Trust Fund, and other available sources of funding.

10 **SECTION 3.** This act is effective when it becomes law.