



## 2022 Legislative Priorities

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### ✓ VAFP Supports a Dedicated Funding Stream from the General Fund for Virginia State Parks

#### *The Issue:*

- Virginia State Parks do NOT have a dedicated source of funding (sustainable funding).

#### *The Cause:*

- Virginia State Parks need \$158.7 million per year to operate.
- The average annual operating budget is \$47 million per year, of which the General Fund contributes only \$19 million.
- Funding allotments from the General Fund vary from year to year and funding is NOT guaranteed.

#### *The Effect:*

- **Virginia State Parks face a \$111.4 million annual shortfall.**
- The annual operation and maintenance needs of our parks have been underfunded and understaffed for decades.
- Entrance fees continue to rise, making our parks inaccessible to some Virginians.
- Long-term operational planning is hindered, which makes hiring staff and completing projects difficult.
- The visitor experience is negatively impacted. Examples: Reduced hours for visitor centers, out-of-order restrooms, outdated bathhouses, closed swimming pools, unstaffed contact stations, education centers being used for storage, crumbling roads, aging cabins, etc.

#### *The Solution:*

- **The Virginia General Assembly needs to include a dedicated funding source in the annual budget.**

*Additional Information:*

- Virginia is one of only 14 states that does not have a source of dedicated funding for their parks.
- Virginia State Parks have received record visitation the last two years. Virginians want and need access to parks.
- Entrance fees create a barrier that prevent some people from accessing parks. This is an issue of environmental justice. All Virginians should have access to parks.
- Investing in parks is an investment in the future of Virginia.

✓ **VAFP Supports Using ARPA Funds to Eliminate the Deferred Maintenance Backlog for Virginia State Parks**

*The Issue:*

- Virginia State Parks have a deferred maintenance backlog of over \$270 million.

*The Cause:*

- Virginia State Parks oversees over \$1.2 billion in infrastructure.
- The estimated cost of routine maintenance and repair of park infrastructure is between \$38.8 and \$51.3 million per year.
- Current operational budgets fall well below this need.

*The Effect:*

- Many facilities and amenities are inoperable or inaccessible to visitors.
- Aging facilities and infrastructure continue to erode.
- The visitor experience is negatively impacted. Examples: out-of-order restrooms, outdated bathhouses, closed swimming pools, education centers being used for storage, crumbling roads, aging cabins, etc.

*The Solution:*

- **Budget Amendment - SB30.** This amendment dedicates \$240.6 million in federal American Rescue Plan Act funds to the Department of Conservation and Recreation to eliminate the deferred maintenance backlog at all State Parks.