

Virginia
Association *for* Parks

www.virginiaparks.org

3601 Burton Road
Bumpass, VA
23024

*"Supporting the Commonwealth's parks,
natural resources, and historic sites"*

Phone: (540) 895-5061
Fax: (540) 895-0025
Email: johnny_finch@yahoo.com

**POINT SHEET – STATE PARK SYSTEM FUNDING
2010 GENERAL ASSEMBLY SESSION**

- **While the Commonwealth remains in an economic crisis, the Virginia State Park System continues to be a strong economic stimulator for state and local economies by producing a double digit return on appropriation investment.**
- **Thus, it is essential that decision-makers consider the fact that some state operations actually stimulate the state and local economies and significant cuts to these budgets can worsen the overall economic picture.**
- **Virginia's State Park System has regularly been the most frugally funded state park in the nation, ranking 50th --dead last-- among the states in proportion of state budget dedicated to parks. The outgoing Governor's budget continues cuts to the system.**
- **Yet, even with these significant funding constraints, the annual economic return the system provides to the Commonwealth and surrounding park localities is staggering. For example, in 2009:**
 - **Virginia state parks entertained 7.5 million visitors, an historical record.**
 - **Total revenues were up 11% over 2008.**
 - **Visitation was up 4% over 2008.**
 - **Camping was up 8% over 2008.**
 - **Total economic impact on the state and local economies exceeded \$175 million (more than 10 times the \$15 million General Fund appropriation for park operations).**
- **Appropriations for the park system are thus sound financial investments that while stimulating the state and local economies also provide significant intangible benefits such as:**
 - **Improved mental and physical health of those who use the parks to exercise, recreate, and relax.**
 - **Participation in the Commonwealth's efforts to provide environmental education that meets the standards of learning criteria.**
 - **Protection and stewardship of many of the Commonwealth's natural, historic, scenic, and cultural resources.**
- **Simply put, Virginia needs to make adequate investments in its State Park System by providing the requisite appropriations.**