

*Virginia*  
Association *for* Parks

www.virginiaparks.org

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

19 January 2018

**To:** VAFP Advocacy Committee  
Members of Friends Groups

**Cc:** VAFP Board of Directors

**Subject: VAFP Advocacy Chair's General Assembly Update**

Happy New Year everyone!! The General Assembly is back in session and the Virginia Association for Parks is hard at work preparing the Budget Amendments that will dramatically Improve our VA State Park system. We need your help to show our support of the Budget Amendments presented to our Virginia State Legislators. All the budget amendments are include in House Bill 30 (HB 30) and Senate Bill 30 (SB 30). We can support this legislation by contacting our local State Delegates and Senators, and tell them you want their vote in support the budget amendment bills presented them from Virginia State Parks.

The specific budget amendments are as follows:

**1) Request of \$ 2,140,866 for unmet operational and maintenance needs.** The Virginia State Park System maintains over 1,250 buildings, many of which are 51 - 81 years in age; 600 miles of hiking, biking, equestrian and multi-use trails, over 2000 campsites, 345 overnight facilities including cabins, lodges, and yurts, 5 swimming pools, 11 swimming beaches, 24 boat launches, concessions, conference and meetings facilities, all within 37 park sites encompassing over 71,000 acres. There is a backlog of funding needs for routine maintenance of buildings and grounds, equipment as well as operations that are not able to be addressed through other means such as maintenance reserve or capital outlay projects. The inadequate resources are causing these items to fall into disrepair and causing operational inefficiencies. Without an increase in funding, critical repairs may become necessary at a greater expense.

**2) Request of \$ 167,548 for limited operation of Seven Bends State Park** to include minimal staffing and recreational facilities such as hiking trails, gravel parking areas, signage, and two water access points for visitors that will have hand launch facilities for canoes/kayaks. General Assembly funding received in FY 2015 of \$2.2 million will be utilized for the removal of several dilapidated buildings, construction of parking areas, recreational areas, and river access capabilities. This activity will begin in FY 18 and continue through FY 19-20. Expected outcomes will include Seven Bends State Park being available for use by the public on a limited basis until additional funding becomes available to fully develop the area into a state park as outlined in the park masterplan.

This funding opens this property for public use as a State Park. Not funding this request would require the park remaining closed to the public.

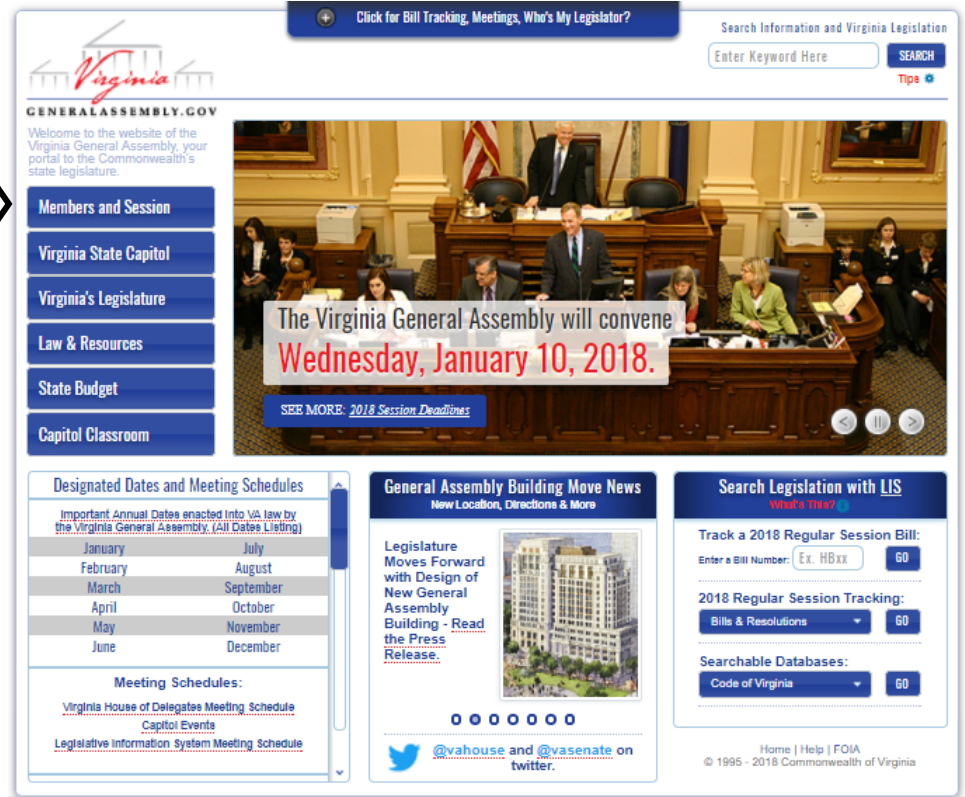
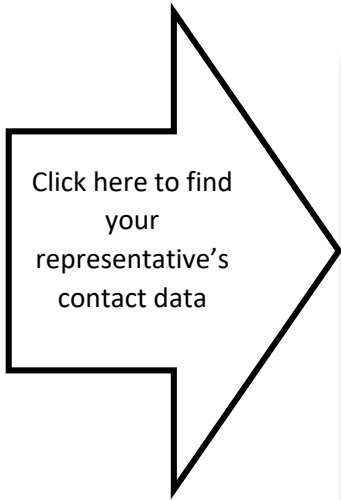
**3) State Parks is requesting funding to fill 63 park positions** necessary to manage essential operations within existing State Parks at a cost of \$ 2,841,017. This will provide a minimum level of staffing for the provision of services, programs, and facility maintenance at existing State Parks. This request is to “take care of what we have “and addresses severe staffing short falls within the existing system of Virginia State Parks. State Park Masterplans, approved by the Virginia General Assembly and DCR Board of Conservation and Recreation, identify a total 480 positions as being essential to operate our existing 37 State Parks. This number far exceeds the actual 274 positions that currently exist.

**4) Request of \$590,944 funding for development and construction of Widewater State Park** that was provided in previous General Assembly sessions. The first phase (1A) of construction is projected to be complete in March 2018. This phase includes day-use areas with picnic areas and picnic shelters, a trail system, fisherman’s access to the Potomac River, visitor center, contact station, support infrastructure, and a car top boat launch that will provide access to the Potomac River and Aquia Creek . Phase (1B) is also funded and planning is underway to enhance the amenities provided in the first phase including a motorized boat launch facility and additional day-use areas. Initial start-up and operational money has not been provided to open the park to the public upon completion of construction. The fiscal 2019 request includes one-time start-up costs for items such as vehicles, tractors, highway signage, mowers, and other power and non-power tools.

**5) Request of \$612,537 to establish funding for 25 Youth Conservation Corps programs** that will serve all 37 State Parks each summer. This request will also establish staffing and funding to manage the AmeriCorps program for State Parks. Virginia State Parks has significant success engaging youth from teams to young adults in natural resource projects in our parks and this action supports the Governor’s initiatives relating to developing a workforce prepared to meet the growing economic dependence on outdoor recreation in rural communities, protecting natural resources and encouraging the health of children and families. The Youth Corps is beneficial to State Parks as well as the citizens of the State of Virginia as a whole. The youth perform necessary work in the parks that often would go undone or would be much delayed. Beyond that significant value, a service learning program for youth is provided that gets them outdoors and helps them learn personal responsibility, citizenship, leadership experience, team building skills, and how to be self-sufficient. The YCC experience provides an extraordinary experience in diversity for participants and assists in breaking down traditional social and economic barriers.

As you can see from the above, we have a lot of work to do in the effort to support our State Parks. Please get involved and contact your State Delegate and Senator to show them that “WE CARE” about the continued success of Virginia State Parks and Vote ‘AYE’ to these critical budget amendments.

To find their address, phone contact, and email contacts by visiting the General Assembly website: <https://virginiageneralassembly.gov/>



Important Annual Dates enacted into VA law by the Virginia General Assembly. (All Dates Listing)	
January	July
February	August
March	September
April	October
May	November
June	December

<a href="#">Virginia House of Delegates Meeting Schedule</a>
<a href="#">Capitol Events</a>
<a href="#">Legislative Information System Meeting Schedule</a>

It is important the you tell your representatives that we have the support of the Virginia Municipal League (VML) and the Virginia Association for Counties (VaCo). These are the advocacy groups representing local governments across the Commonwealth.

Thank you for your support of VA State Parks and the VAFP!

**TIM KENNEL**  
VAFP Advocacy Chair

Tel: 804-840-2985  
E-mail: [nostinknthinkn@aol.com](mailto:nostinknthinkn@aol.com)