



# HOUSE BILL 353: Authorize State Park System Expansion.

2017-2018 General Assembly

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**Committee:** House State and Local Government II. If **Date:** April 5, 2017  
favorable, re-refer to Appropriations

**Introduced by:** Reps. Dobson, Brisson, Brenden Jones, **Prepared by:** Nicholas Giddings  
Hunter Committee Counsel

**Analysis of:** First Edition

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**OVERVIEW:** House Bill 353 would authorize the North Carolina State Parks System to be able to accept the transfer of four properties and to preserve the lands as part of the State Parks System. The properties to be transferred are as follows:

- Black River State Park.
- Bob's Pocket State Natural Area.
- Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area.
- Salmon Creek State Natural Area.

**CURRENT LAW:** The State Parks Act requires General Assembly authorization before the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources can add or remove a park from the State Parks System. All additions must be accompanied by adequate authorization and appropriations for land acquisition, development and operations.

**BILL ANALYSIS:** House Bill 353 would authorize the State Parks System to add Black River State Park, Bob's Pocket State Natural Area, Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area, and Salmon Creek State Natural Area. All of the sites are being acquired with the help of private conservation organizations and additional funds requested from the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund or other grants. No appropriations for land acquisition or operating funds are requested in this bill.

Additionally, the bill authorizes the State to receive donations of land and to purchase other needed lands for the four transferred sites with existing funds from the Clean Water Management Trust Fund, the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund, the federal Land and Water Trust Fund, and other available sources of funding.

**EFFECTIVE DATE:** This act is effective when it becomes law.

**BACKGROUND:** Bob's Pocket State Natural Area and Salmon Creek State Natural Area would be operated with existing staff at nearby state parks. Warwick Mill Bay State Natural Area would be managed by Audubon NC at no cost to the state. Black River State Park would be independently operated and would need staff after land is acquired and public facilities are open. Approximately \$200,000 in annual operating costs would be requested in the 2019-21 Biennium for Black River.

A State Natural Area is part of the State Parks System, but differs from a State Park. A State Park protects important natural resources, but also includes the development of recreational facilities. A State Natural Area is focused on preserving and protecting areas of scientific and ecological value, with more limited recreation, although trails, educational activities, and low-impact recreation can be accommodated.

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