

Chapter 402

(House Bill 228)

AN ACT concerning

Natural Resources – Maryland State Parks – Funds and Plan Alterations

FOR the purpose of extending the date by which the Park System Critical Maintenance Fund must be expended; authorizing the Department of Natural Resources to expend up to a certain amount from the Park System Critical Maintenance Fund under certain circumstances; authorizing the Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund to be used for State projects on lands managed by the Department of Natural Resources for public purposes; altering the allowable uses of funds for the initial allocation to the Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund; authorizing the Great Maryland Outdoors Fund to be used for promoting outdoor environmental education in the State; ~~requiring the Department to report on certain matters at each meeting of the Parks and Recreation Commission~~; requiring the Department to report certain expenditures to the Parks and Recreation Commission at certain meetings; extending the date by which the Department is required to develop and publish a Comprehensive Long-Range Strategic Plan; and generally relating to the State park system.

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,

Article – Natural Resources

Section 5–220(a) through (c) and (g), 5–221(a) and (b), ~~and~~ 5–222(a) and (b), and
5–2A–03(a)(1)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY repealing and reenacting, with amendments,

Article – Natural Resources

Section 5–220(k), 5–221(c), (g), (j), and (l), 5–222(c), (g), and (k), 5–2A–03(e), and
5–2A–05(a)

Annotated Code of Maryland

(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding toArticle – Natural ResourcesSection 5–220(l)Annotated Code of Maryland(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

Article – Natural Resources

5–220.

(a) In this section, “Fund” means the Park System Critical Maintenance Fund.

(b) There is a Park System Critical Maintenance Fund.

(c) The purpose of the Fund is to provide funding for completing State projects that address critical maintenance concerns on lands managed by the Department for public purposes.

(g) The Fund may be used only for State park projects that address critical maintenance concerns on lands managed by the Department for public purposes.

(k) (1) For fiscal year 2024 only, the Governor shall include in the annual budget bill a General Fund appropriation in the amount of \$70,000,000 to the Fund for State projects that address critical maintenance concerns on lands managed by the Department for public purposes.

(2) The Department shall expend the funds allocated under this subsection before July 1, [2026] **2029**.

(L) NOTWITHSTANDING § 13–109 OF THE STATE FINANCE AND PROCUREMENT ARTICLE, THE DEPARTMENT MAY EXPEND UP TO \$400,000 FOR A PROJECT THAT ADDRESSES CRITICAL MAINTENANCE CONCERNS FROM THE FUND WITHOUT PRIOR APPROVAL OF THE DEPARTMENT OF GENERAL SERVICES.

5–221.

(a) In this section, “Fund” means the Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund.

(b) There is a Park System Capital Improvements and Acquisition Fund.

(c) The purpose of the Fund is to provide funding for:

(1) Completing State [park] projects related to capital improvements on lands managed by the Department for public purposes; and

(2) Acquiring land to be managed by the Department for public purposes [as a State park].

(g) The Fund may be used only for:

(1) Completing State [park] projects related to capital improvements on lands managed by the Department for public purposes; and

(2) Acquiring land to be managed by the Department for public purposes [as a State park].

(j) Money expended from the Fund for capital improvements [in the State's parks] **FOR STATE PROJECTS ON LANDS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES** ~~is supplemental~~ **IS:**

(1) SUPPLEMENTAL to and is not intended to take the place of funding that otherwise would be appropriated for capital improvements [in the State's parks] **FOR STATE PROJECTS ON LANDS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC PURPOSES** and the acquisition of land by the Department that will be managed for public purposes; **AND**

(2) INTENDED TO:

(I) EXPAND PUBLIC ACCESS ON LANDS MANAGED BY THE DEPARTMENT; AND

(II) ALLEVIATE OVERCAPACITY WITHIN THE STATE PARK SYSTEM.

(l) The first \$70,000,000 received by the Fund may be used only as follows:

(1) **AT LEAST** \$5,000,000 for infrastructure projects that mitigate the effects of climate change, including:

- (i) Flood barriers;
- (ii) Forest buffers;
- (iii) Green spaces;
- (iv) Building elevation;
- (v) Stormwater infrastructure;
- (vi) Wetlands restoration; and
- (vii) Addressing environmental justice concerns;

(2) **AT LEAST** \$5,000,000 for historic preservation, in accordance with subsection (m) of this section;

- (3) **AT LEAST** \$20,000,000 for transportation improvements, including:
 - (i) Improving bike lanes and trails, increasing walkability, and expanding parking availability; and
 - (ii) Targeting transportation investments to avoid capacity shutdowns;
- (4) **AT LEAST** \$10,000,000 for increasing water access, including kayak and boat launches and areas for picnicking near water and swimming; and
- (5) **UP TO** \$30,000,000 for land acquisition, including:
 - (i) Areas in the central and southern regions of the State that will:
 - 1. Relieve overcrowding at existing State parks; and
 - 2. Expand public access to State parks and outdoor recreation;
 - (ii) Sites of significance to the history of African American, Asian, Indigenous or Native American, and Hispanic or Latino populations in the State; and
 - (iii) Beachfront or waterfront property for public access.

5-222.

- (a) In this section, “Fund” means the Great Maryland Outdoors Fund.
- (b) There is a Great Maryland Outdoors Fund in the Department.
- (c) The purpose of the Fund is to:
 - (1) Support the Office of Outdoor Recreation in the Department;
 - (2) Provide resources to improve existing and create new outdoor recreation **AND OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION** opportunities; [and]
 - (3) Implement the recommendations of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission to promote and grow the outdoor recreation sector in the State; **AND**
 - (4) **PROMOTE AND GROW OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION IN THE STATE.**

(g) The Fund may be used only for:

(1) Implementing the recommendations of the Maryland Outdoor Recreation Economic Commission[, including establishing and supporting an Office of Outdoor Recreation in the Department];

(2) Department projects and programs that provide, promote, and enhance outdoor recreation **OR OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION** opportunities in the State; and

(3) Awarding grants to destination marketing organizations for the purpose of promoting and marketing State parks.

(k) Money expended from the Fund for existing programs in the Department that provide, promote, and enhance outdoor recreation **OR OUTDOOR ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION** opportunities is supplemental to and is not intended to take the place of funding that otherwise would be appropriated for those programs.

5-2A-03.

(a) (1) There is a Parks and Recreation Commission in the Department.

(e) (1) The Commission shall meet quarterly to review the status of the Park Service.

(2) AT EACH MEETING, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL REPORT TO THE COMMISSION ON EXPENDITURES FROM THE PARK SYSTEM CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS AND ACQUISITION FUND.

5-2A-05.

(a) The Department shall:

(1) Develop and publish a Comprehensive Long-Range Strategic Plan by December 1, [2023] **2024**;

(2) Update the Comprehensive Long-Range Strategic Plan every 5 years to reflect major goals and progress toward meeting those goals; and

(3) Submit to the General Assembly, in accordance with § 2-1257 of the State Government Article, the Comprehensive Long-Range Strategic Plan and any updates to the plan.

SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect October 1, 2024.

Approved by the Governor, April 25, 2024.