

Chapter 965

(House Bill 1358)

AN ACT concerning

Natural Resources – ~~Establishment of Gwynns Falls State Park~~ – Focus Group, Advisory Committee, and Report

FOR the purpose of ~~requiring the Department of Natural Resources to establish Gwynns Falls State Park as a partnership park between the Department and Baltimore City; requiring that Gwynns Falls State Park consist of certain properties in Baltimore City and include certain landscapes and facilities;~~ requiring the Department of Natural Resources and Baltimore City to ~~take certain surveys,~~ convene certain focus group meetings on certain subjects, ~~and~~ establish a certain advisory committee, and develop a list of priority needs and associated costs for park improvements; and generally relating to the ~~establishment of Gwynns Falls State Park.~~

BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
Article – Natural Resources
Section 5–1012(a) and (b)
Annotated Code of Maryland
(2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

BY adding to
Article – Natural Resources
Section 5–1012(f–1)
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

5–1012.

(a) In this section, “partnership park” means a unit of the State park system managed by the Department in partnership with a local government, a bicounty agency, or a nonprofit organization.

(b) The Department may enter into:

(1) A memorandum of understanding with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to establish a partnership park in the State; or

(2) A partnership agreement with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to manage a partnership park in the State.

~~(F-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK AS A PARTNERSHIP PARK BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE VISITORS WITH ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR, NATURE-BASED RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.~~

~~(2) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL BE HELD BY THE STATE AS A STATE PARK UNDER THE PROTECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT.~~

~~(3) (i) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL CONSIST OF PROPERTIES THAT ARE:~~

~~1. OWNED BY THE STATE AND DESIGNATED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO BE ADMINISTERED AS PART OF THE STATE PARK; OR~~

~~2. A. OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; AND~~

~~B. DESIGNATED AS PART OF THE PARK BY A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY AND THE DEPARTMENT.~~

~~(ii) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL, AT A MINIMUM, INCLUDE:~~

~~1. LEAKIN PARK;~~

~~2. THE GWYNNS FALLS TRAIL;~~

~~3. WINANS MEADOW/CARDIN PAVILION; AND~~

~~4. THE CRIMEA SECTION.~~

~~(4) THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHING THE GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL DEFINE:~~

~~(i) THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES, OF THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY IN MAINTAINING AND OPERATING THE STATE PARK; AND~~

~~(H) A PARTNERSHIP ROLE FOR THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK IN SUPPORT OF THE STATE PARK'S MISSION AND VOLUNTEERS.~~

~~(5) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A SUMMER CONSERVATION JOBS CORPS PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT GWYNNNS FALLS STATE PARK.~~

~~(6) (F-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY SHALL:~~

~~(i) 1. TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BALTIMORE CITY RESIDENTS REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD:~~

~~A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GWYNNNS FALLS STATE PARK; AND~~

~~B. OUTDOOR RECREATION IN GENERAL, INCLUDING THEIR INTERESTS IN AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION; AND~~

~~2. (I) CONVENE FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS ON THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GWYNNNS FALLS STATE ~~PARK~~ PARK WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND STAKEHOLDERS THAT RESIDE OR OPERATE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED STATE PARK;~~

~~(II) DEVELOP A LIST OF PRIORITY NEEDS AND ASSOCIATED COST ASSESSMENTS FOR PARK OPERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING:~~

- ~~1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS;~~
- ~~2. CRITICAL MAINTENANCE;~~
- ~~3. ENHANCED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND RESTORATION, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF A BIOHABITATS STUDY;~~
- ~~4. HISTORIC SITE RESTORATION;~~
- ~~5. ENHANCED OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES, INCLUDING TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS; AND~~
- ~~6. ADDING PARK STAFF AND PROCURING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES; AND~~
- ~~7. LAW ENFORCEMENT AND PUBLIC SAFETY; AND~~

(III) ESTABLISH A STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY ON THE SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT OF GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK THAT CONSISTS OF:

~~1. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK;~~

~~2. AT LEAST THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS THAT BORDER THE STATE PARK;~~

~~3. AT LEAST TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BALTIMORE CITY;~~

~~4. AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY; AND~~

~~5. ANY OTHER MEMBERS AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT.~~

1. AT LEAST ONE MEMBER OF THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS FALLS/LEAKIN PARK;

2. AT LEAST SIX MEMBERS REPRESENTING LOCAL PARK ADVOCACY ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS, LOCAL HISTORIC PRESERVATION ORGANIZATIONS, NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS THAT BORDER THE FUTURE GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SITE; AND

3. ANY ADDITIONAL MEMBERS AS DETERMINED BY THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY.

~~(7) (2)~~ ON OR BEFORE ~~DECEMBER 1, 2024~~ DECEMBER 1, 2025, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON:

(I) PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE IN BALTIMORE CITY THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK;

(II) PROPERTY OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS

FALLS STATE PARK AND FOR WHICH THE LANDOWNERS ARE WILLING TO ENTER INTO A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT; AND

(III) THE FUNDING NEEDED TO ESTABLISH AND PROMOTE GWYNNNS FALLS STATE PARK.

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

Approved by the Governor, May 16, 2024.