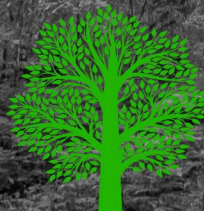


SB270 HB4182

Commercial Logging in WV State Parks



#SOSPARKS
Save Our State Parks

WV State Parks

These **tiny green dots** on the map are our state parks. They represent just 0.5% of WV.

Our state parks are priceless. They're special places that deserve to be protected, just as they have been for over 80 years, for the inherent and timeless value that they provide for ALL West Virginians and visitors.

Our state parks are the iconic places that both unite us and help define our very identity as a state. They are the “wild and wonderful” and the “almost heaven” in our West Virginia.

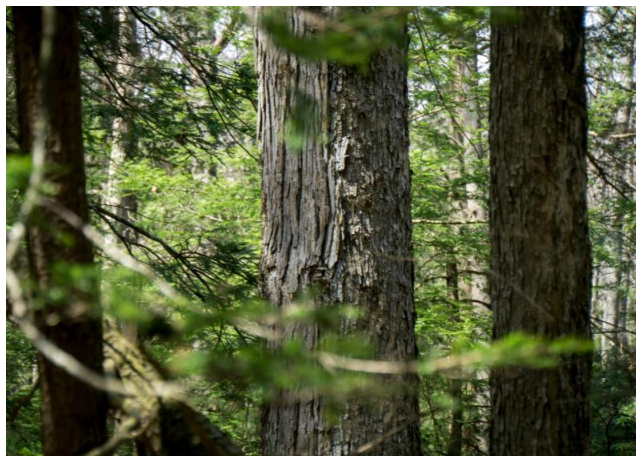
Are our state parks unhealthy?

- Appalachian forests evolved as successful and healthy ecosystems for millions of years before human management. Our state parks now contain some of the healthiest forests in the state precisely because they've been protected from development and logging and allowed to naturally recover into mature forest ecosystems. **The most critical help we can provide is to keep our state parks protected.**
- “Over-mature trees” and “under-managed forests” aren't forest health terms, they're forest harvest terms that, while appropriate for commercial timber lands, are **incompatible with the mission and purpose of state parks.**
- Commercial timbering is expressly prohibited in state parks because **parks are the only state lands specifically dedicated to “preserving and protecting natural areas of unique or exceptional scenic, scientific, cultural, archaeological or historic significance and to provide outdoor recreational opportunities for the citizens of this state and its visitors”**(§20-5-3)
- **Legitimate forest health issues can already be addressed in our parks under current law.** The park system currently works with the WV Dept. of Agriculture to employ control measures for forest insects and diseases. The WVDNR can even mill felled trees to use on park projects and as firewood. The only thing they can't do is sell the trees, and that's been a very good thing for the health of our parks for over 80 years.

Our parks are the crown jewels of the state and should remain our showpieces as we work to attract new entrepreneurs and prosperity here.

Bottom line?

These forests aren't broken. Let's not "fix" them.



Self-managed mature forest on WV state parks



WVDNR-managed commercial timber sale, Snake Hill Wildlife Management Area (WMA) adjacent to Coopers Rock State Forest.

Save Our State Parks Frequently Asked Questions:

- **Why does the Governor want to log state parks?**

House Bill 4182 and Senate Bill 270 do not explain the goals of "sound silvicultural management". **Forest health, wildlife, clean water, and recreation are not mentioned as requirements of the management plan in the bill.** As explained in meetings with WVDNR, the agency wants to allow commercial logging in state parks to finance a 20-year, \$50 million bond.

- **What about forest health?**

The Justice administration is describing SB270 (HB4182) as a "forest health" bill. This is a dangerous and disingenuous mischaracterization. SB270 is not a forest health bill, it is a dubious revenue bill. Conflating commercial logging with forest health on our state parks opens the door wide to abuse and corruption. **Real threats to forest health like invasive species, disease, and pests can already be addressed by WVDNR under existing law.**

The much-touted "only four trees per acre" talking point is misleading. Four trees per acre isn't a hard limit, it's an average over an entire tract. **The bill allows up to half of the trees in any given area to be cut at any given time.** And there's nothing in the bill preventing the other half from being cut down anytime the WVDNR decides it needs more money. The harvest limits in this bill are so vague and poorly written as to be essentially meaningless and unenforceable.

- **What about wildlife?**

Different species have different habitat requirements. While some prefer younger early successional forest, **it's equally true that other species do not benefit from early successional forest and need large tracts of un-fragmented mature timber to thrive.** We need to preserve habitat for those species as well, and mature forest habitat is increasingly rare. **Including state parks, only 4% of all West Virginia forestland is off-limits to logging.** Under existing law, WVDNR already manages for early successional forest in wildlife management areas, which at 390,000 acres represent five times the acreage of our state parks.

- **What about fire?**

In the Appalachians, most fires occur in the leaf litter along the forest floor. **Mature temperate forests like those found in state parks offer conditions less likely to burn into severe wildfires:** with less undergrowth the fire can't leap into the forest crown as easily; with thicker bark mature trees resist fire damage; with more shading and woody debris the forest floor stays cooler and wetter. Logging doesn't necessarily reduce wildfires and in some instances can even raise wildfire risk. **The best and most efficient strategy for protecting the public against wildfire is by creating defensible space around our homes and structures.**

- **If we don't log will good timber go to waste?**

Forests don't waste resources. Dead trees are a normal and healthy part of a forest. Standing dead snags are rich sources of food and habitat for many species. Woody debris from fallen trees and limbs breaks down into soil, fertilizing the forest floor with stored nutrients for the next generation of trees and maintaining long-term forest health. **Under existing law, the WVDNR can already cut storm-damaged, dead or dying trees for firewood or to be milled for park construction projects.**

- **What about recreational access to parks?**

WV State parks already have an extensive network of trails, and the WVDNR is already authorized to create new trails under existing law. There are no "unused" or "inaccessible" areas of our parks. Indeed, many park visitors seek out the quiet and peaceful areas of our parks that would be most impacted by logging.

- **What is the best way to support our state parks?**

There is widespread public agreement that our state parks need adequate funding and that **liquidating the very forests that make our parks so special is not the way to get it.** The Save Our State Parks Coalition will continue to bring alternative revenue ideas to the Governor and lawmakers for further discussion and encourage a thorough and thoughtful approach to funding that is consistent with the long-standing mission and purpose of our state park system.

- **We don't need to log state parks for “forest health”.**

WVDNR can and does manage forest health issues in our state parks and can even cut and utilize storm-damaged, diseased, dead, or dying trees under existing law.

- **We don't need to log state parks to expand recreational areas.**

State Parks already have extensive trail networks and WVDNR can construct additional trails at any time under existing law.

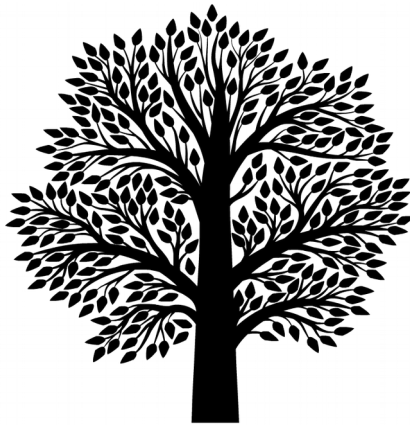
- **We don't need to log state parks for wildlife.**

The WVDNR and WVDOP already manage for game species on State Forests and Wildlife Management Areas under existing law. State Parks are critical habitat for many non-game species.

SB270/HB4182 isn't about forest health, recreation, or wildlife. It's about logging.

Protect our State Parks

Say “NO” to SB270 and HB4182



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Save Our State Parks