

# State Parks Nationwide Report Record Number of Visitors During COVID

*State parks provided a safe, healthy and enjoyable way to experience the great outdoors*

LONGWOOD, FLORIDA, USA, May 21, 2021 /EINPresswire.com/ -- While much of the nation was shut down last year due to COVID 19, state parks and forests provided a safe haven for tens of millions of people, the National Association of State Park Foundations said today.

“

Nature is actually good for our health and well-being and state parks are the ideal place to commune with nature, reduce stress levels and unwind”

*Gil Ziffer*

“Many state park systems reported record visitation - in some cases up more than 50 percent over the previous year,” said NASPF chair Marci Mowery, who is also president of the Pennsylvania Parks and Forests Foundation.

“Some state park systems closed down for a short time,

but many others stayed open and saw huge increases in visitation. Minnesota for instance saw a 50 percent increase in visitors last March over the same month in 2019. In Pennsylvania, the number of visitors over the year was 23% higher than the previous year, and it was a similar story in states nationwide.”

In January 2021, North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper, speaking about the record numbers, said, “our outdoor spaces hold even greater value than we could have imagined before the challenges of last year.”

People realized that state parks provided a safe, healthy, and enjoyable way to experience the great outdoors,” said Mowery. “The more than 6,500 state parks nationwide offer thousands of miles of biking, hiking, nature, fitness, and paddling trails allowing people to get out and enjoy the great outdoors in a safe environment,” she added.

“Numerous studies have shown that nature is actually good for our health and well-being and state parks are the ideal place to commune with nature, reduce stress levels, and unwind,” said Gil Ziffer, President of the Florida State Parks Foundation. “And by being vigilant in practicing social distancing, our parks also provided a safe outlet for so many.”

Being stuck indoors tends to reduce exercise levels while visiting a state park allows you to walk, jog, cycle, canoe, and maybe swim – all activities that improve health and well-being.

Another benefit is that you become more relaxed. According to research, it only takes five minutes to experience the relaxing effects of nature. Your concentration also improves. Studies show that spending time outside can also improve creative thinking, he said.

The National Association for State Park Foundations provides a national voice as advocates for all state parks. There are more than 8,500 state parks and forests covering 18.6 million acres with 52,600 miles of trails. In 2019-20, state parks attracted more than 800 million visitors. On average nationwide, state parks' expenditure is less than 1 percent of their annual state's budget, yet they generate billions of dollars to their respective state economies and create hundreds of thousands of jobs.

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