

A Report of the House Tourism &
Recreational Development Committee
Pursuant to House Resolution 164 of 2007

DEVELOPMENT OF LODGING FACILITIES
ON STATE PARK LAND

September 24, 2008

- A. Overview
- B. Pennsylvania State Park System – Available Lodging Facilities
 - Prince Gallitzin State Park
- C. Bald Eagle State Park Nature Inn, Centre County
 - DCNR's Bureau of State Parks Presentation
- D. Lodge Facilities in Other States
 - National Conference of State Legislatures Research Memo
- E. Committee Visit to Stonewall Jackson State Park, West Virginia
 - Press Release from Benchmark Hospitality International
- F. Recommendations of the Committee
- G. Copy of House Resolution 164



OVERVIEW

On April 18, 2007, the Pennsylvania House of Representatives unanimously directed its Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to study the development of lodging on or adjacent to state park and state forest lands, under House Resolution 164 (P.N. 1068). The Committee previously studied this issue during the 1995-96 session, but no action was taken at that time.

With a goal of building modern lodging facilities at Glendale Lake and Prince Gallitzin State Park through a public-private partnership model, the resolution's prime sponsor, Representative Gary Haluska worked on this issue for several years. A brief summary of Prince Gallitzin is included in this report.

With the passage of HR 164, the Committee sought to re-examine the fiscal and recreational potential for the Commonwealth through development of certain state parks and to evaluate the available accommodations and amenities that are found today. Toward those goals, Chairman Thomas A. Tangretti and Rep. Gary Haluska met with Michael DiBerardinis, the Secretary of the Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DCNR) on several occasions to discuss these issues. The Secretary agrees that new and improved overnight accommodations are needed in our state parks; however, he does not believe that DCNR's mission is to be in the "resort business".

In September 2004, DCNR issued a 32-page report entitled "Shaping a Sustainable Pennsylvania – DCNR's Blueprint for Action" (www.dcnr.state.pa.us/info/shapefuture/actionplanfinal.pdf) that outlines four strategic goals of the Department, one of which is to "Create Outdoor Connections for Citizens and Visitors." It was concluded that expanding the range of overnight facilities in the park system is one way DCNR can create that connection.

To that end, DCNR is currently constructing the first nature inn at Bald Eagle State Park in Centre County. Information on the project is included within. Once the project is underway, the Committee plans to visit the facility to study the construction process and meet with stakeholders. As the inn is completed and more information becomes available, the Committee will continue to monitor the site.

It is important to note that Governor Edward G. Rendell feels so strongly about the need for the Commonwealth to reconnect our citizens with the state's natural resources that he brought together a range of experts to discuss the issue. In March 2007, the Governor's Outdoor Task Force issued a report that provides several recommendations for action by the General Assembly including improving access and amenities for outdoor users.

Many of Pennsylvania's bordering states have recognized the potential for wide-ranging economic growth through the creation of lodging facilities, and, in response they have permitted development of certain state and national parks. Information regarding other states is included within. In September of 2007, members of the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee, the Secretary of DCNR and the Community and Economic Development Deputy Secretary of Tourism, Mickey Rowley, visited Stonewall Resort in West Virginia. Details regarding the development of this facility, including its history and the unique public-private partnership arrangement, are enclosed.

PENNSYLVANIA STATE PARKS

With an estimated 35 million visitors annually, Pennsylvania's 117 parks are obviously a powerful attraction for travelers. But the limited overnight accommodations in our state parks simply do not meet the public's demand and present-day expectations, according to the most recent State Park Facility Inventory provided by Joe Graci, Legislative Liaison at DCNR (see statistics below).

With only 143 "modern" cabins -- those with running water -- available, visitors must book accommodations nearly a year in advance. John Norbeck, Director of State Parks, recently said that "[o]vernight accommodations in cabins, in particular, are at their peak. Cabins are 99.9 percent booked from spring through fall."

(Source: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cnrac/minutes/Jun272007.pdf)

In fact, DCNR's "Stay the Night" publication clearly warns prospective visitors, "Since many people use the cabins, it is advisable to make reservations well in advance."

Furthermore, all cabins must be rented for a one-week period during the peak summer season, which runs from the second Friday in June to the Thursday before the third Friday in August. This practice immediately eliminates the possibility of a weekend user.

STATE PARK FACILITY INVENTORY:

Family Campsites = 6,665 in 55 parks
Campsites with utilities = 2,997
Tent Only sites = 63 in 4 parks
Backpack Campsites = 120 in 3 parks
Cabins = 283 in 31 parks
Modern = 143
Rustic = 140
DCNR Lodges = 2
Camping cottages = 68 in 18 parks
Yurts = 30 in 13 parks
Walled tents = 5 in 3 parks
Group tenting sites = 170 in 33 parks
Group Cabin Camps = 13 in 5 parks

DCNR's "Stay the Night" brochure cites 134 "modern" cabins*, located as follows:

Pymatuning (<i>Great Lakes</i>)	25
Black Moshannon (<i>PA Wilds</i>)	6
Hills Creek (<i>PA Wilds</i>)	10
Ricketts Glen (<i>NE Mountains</i>)	10
French Creek (<i>Philly & Countryside</i>)	10
Nockamixon (<i>Philly & Countryside</i>)	10
Gifford Pinchot (<i>Dutch Country Roads</i>)	10
Blue Knob (<i>Alleghenies & Valleys</i>)	3
Canoe Creek (<i>Alleghenies & Valleys</i>)	8
Prince Gallitzin (<i>Alleghenies & Valleys</i>)	10
Keystone (<i>Pittsburgh & Countryside</i>)	11
Moraine (<i>Pittsburgh & Countryside</i>)	11
Raccoon Creek (<i>Pittsburgh & Countryside</i>)	10

* In verifying these statistics, Mr. Graci stated that when the "Stay the Night" brochure was prepared, DCNR had cabins that were being worked on, so they were not included.

PRINCE GALLITZIN STATE PARK

There have been several studies done to analyze the market and environmental conditions surrounding Prince Gallitzin State Park to establish the feasibility of building a rustic lodge and conference center on-site.

A May 2004 Market Study Report prepared by Horwath Horizon Hospitality Advisors, LLC, concluded that the overall surroundings of Prince Gallitzin State Park provide an excellent environment for a rustic lodge/conference center and provide the opportunity for improved recreational amenities. The park is the single-most-visited tourism site in northern Cambria County. The Park surrounds the 1,600-acre Glendale Lake, encompasses approximately 6,200 acres of property, and offers a wide variety of facilities and activities, including 10 cabins and 437 tent campsites, pavilions, a marina, fishing, boating, hunting, hiking trails, horseback riding trails, snowmobile trails, a retail center, and a Laundromat.

Prince Gallitzin was one of 16 state parks considered by DCNR as a possible location for a nature inn. The selection criteria includes existing infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, parking, utilities) eating establishments located nearby, a suitable view, and transportation access.

Potential benefits of establishing overnight accommodations in Prince Gallitzin and increasing visitation to the area include: economic development throughout the surrounding area, job creation, increased tax revenues for local and state governments, and expanded outdoor activities and opportunities. The committee plans to explore these benefits more closely during the 2009-10 session.

BALD EAGLE STATE PARK NATURE INN

DCNR is scheduled to have a ceremonial ground-breaking of the new Bald Eagle Nature Inn in mid-October 2008, with construction to begin in January 2009. Building the facility is expected to last approximately 11 months, so barring any unforeseen delays, the Nature Inn would be operational in the fourth quarter of 2009. According to Dave Sariano, Assistant Director of the Bureau of State Parks, and Jeffrey Johns, Section Chief, a Request for Proposal (RFP) is currently scheduled to be issued in January 2009. The Inn will be run by an innkeeper who will hire the staff he or she needs for operation of the Inn. DCNR will maintain the building with one full-time and one seasonal state employee.

Details specific to the Bald Eagle Nature Inn were difficult to obtain. However, DCNR's general concept of a nature inn has been discussed publicly and is described in the excerpts of recorded minutes from a June 27 Conservation and Natural Resources Advisory Council meeting, which are paraphrased below. (Source: www.dcnr.state.pa.us/cnrac/minutes/Jun272007.pdf) Also, attached is a copy of the Bureau of State Parks PowerPoint presentation, "*Creating Outdoor Connections -- Nature Inns*".

A nature inn is a building that is capable of providing overnight accommodations, consisting of 10-20 rooms with a breakfast space and a common area. The prime attraction is the natural resource based recreational opportunities. These facilities are to be used as a base camp for activities such as biking, bird-watching, kayaking, canoeing, hunting, or fishing. The inns are to be part of the local community and share local amenities and recreational opportunities. The nature inns are to blend with their surroundings and to look as if they have always been there.

The idea of lessening the environmental impact is paramount. The architecture is to be environmentally friendly by using sustainable resources that are found in the area – for example local stone and hardwoods. The facility is to be energy efficient in design and as close to carbon neutral as possible. A number of state park facilities are already heated and cooled by geothermal, and some state parks have wind turbines generating electricity.

DCNR's Bureau of Facility Design and Construction designed a conceptual drawing of a nature inn (see presentation) which consists of a two-story, 10 to 20 room structure that looks low and stays within the landscape, yet gives maximum use of space with a dormer-type roof.


Operationally, one of the selection criteria obviously has to be that the nature inn would be close to a number of eating establishments. Also, it has to have a suitable view and needs to be close to major transportation arteries. The activities at the state park also need to have a four-season draw. Even though there are 117 state parks, only a few state parks could actually meet these criteria.

The cost per night has been targeted at about \$100, but with possible premium pricing for peak seasons and maybe weekends. There will be no minimum stay requirement. The cost of construction for a nature inn is about \$4,500,000, about \$100,000 per room. The market research that has been done for nature inns clearly points to the potential for success in this new venture idea.

SEE ATTACHED DCNR POWERPOINT PRESENTATION ON NATURE INNS

**Creating Outdoor Connections
Pennsylvania State Parks
Nature Inns**


Secretary – Michael DiBerardinis
Pennsylvania Department of Conservation & Natural Resources



Outdoor Connections


Citizens with an appreciation of the outdoors and an understanding of our natural resources are more likely to make choices that will protect these resources.

DCNR is creating recreational and educational connections with the outdoors by improving visitor experiences and increasing awareness of what is available.





Why Nature Inns?

- **Changing Demographics**
 - Average age of citizens continues to climb
 - Trend toward ecotourism & diversified outdoor recreation
 - Demand for Outdoor Recreation & Places to Recreate Continue to Grow
- **Extend Enjoyment of PA Natural Resources**
 - Connect more people to the natural environment
 - Increase opportunities to provide environmental education
 - Help build a broader understanding of conservation and stewardship
 - Demonstrate/model responsible development & use of green technology
- **Increase Economic Opportunities for Local Communities**
 - Visitors use community goods and services
 - Brookings Institution – Natural resource connection to community economy and quality of life



Current Overnight Options


- Camping
 - Primitive
 - Motorized-Trailer Camping
 - Group
- Camping Cottages
- Yurts
- Rustic Cabins
- Modern Cabins
- Special Cabins
- *Hostelling International - American Youth Hostel*

What are Nature Inns?

Nature Inn – Building in a park capable of providing overnight accommodations (10-20 rooms) & breakfast space/common area

- Surrounding natural & recreational resources are the primary attractions
- Staff will share local amenities and recreational options with visitors



Make It Look Like It Grew There

- Less environmental impact
- Environmentally friendly architecture
- Energy efficient design, appliances, lighting and technology
- Stewardship interpretation features included in design
- Sustainably harvested woods
- Water efficient appliances and fixtures
- Alternative energy sources
- Landscaping emphasizes native plants
- LEED Gold Certification



Conceptual Nature Inn



A small-scale Nature Inn blends with its surroundings and offers visitors a personal experience with the natural resource.



Selection Criteria

- Existing Infrastructure (water, sewer, roads, parking, utilities) capable of supporting a Nature Inn
- Eating establishments nearby
- Suitable view
- Transportation access

Exclusionary Criteria

- Construction **Not** allowed in designated Natural Areas
- Viewsheds must be protected
- Areas of environmental sensitivity will be protected

Considered Sites

Possible locations of Nature Inns

Candidate Parks:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bald Eagle Black Moshannon Caledonia French Creek Gifford Pinchot Hickory Run Kinzua Bridge Laurel Hill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moraine Nockamixon Ohioople Parker Dam Prince Gallitzin Pymatuning Raccoon Creek Ricketts Glen
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Selected Sites

- Bald Eagle – Centre County
- Hickory Run – Carbon County
- Kinzua Bridge – McKean County
- Parker Dam – Clearfield County
- Pymatuning – Mercer/Crawford County

Operational Plans

- Breakfast catered/concession
- Linens/cleaning concession

Expectations

- Expands the base of State Park users
- Broaden public participation and support
- Creates recreational connections with the outdoors by improving visitor experiences
- Attracts additional revenue to parks and surrounding communities
- Connects more people to nature and conservation activities
- Opportunities for innovative partnerships

LODGE FACILITIES IN OTHER STATES

Information on other state park lodging was gathered from both the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL) and the National Association of State Park Directors (NASPD).

The information concluded that there are generally four different approaches to the management structure for lodging facilities in other state parks:

- 1) State park agency management, adopting the rules and regulations of the state;
- 2) Contract management, typically done with a local vendor;
- 3) Privatization, outsourcing to a commercial corporation focused on resort/hotel management; or
- 4) A combination public and private partnership.

Overnight accommodations in other states vary dramatically and range in size from small modern cabins to large-scale facilities able to accommodate several hundred people with full resort amenities. The attached report from NSCL analyst Douglas Shinkle provides more specifics on Alabama and our neighboring states, Ohio and West Virginia.

SEE ATTACHED NCSL MEMO STATE PARK LODGES



NATIONAL CONFERENCE of STATE LEGISLATURES

The Forum for America's Ideas

To: Michael Hillman, Research Analyst
From: Douglas Shinkle
Date: September 10, 2008
Subject: State Park Lodges

Donna D. Stone
State Representative
Delaware
President, NCSL

Sharon A. Crouch Steidel
Director, Information Systems
Virginia House of Delegates
Staff Chair, NCSL

William T. Pound
Executive Director

First off, this Power point, although dated slightly (1999), gives a good overview of state park lodging options and setting the scene for what occurs nationwide. I encourage you to look at this before reading further: <http://www.naspld.org/research/ldges/sld001.htm>

It is interesting that state park lodges are particularly popular in the Midwest and upper South, with states near Michigan, such as Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois, operating large numbers of rooms.

A few constants stood out in my discussion with other states regarding their lodging operations. One was to have a clear goal in mind of the lodging's purpose. Generate revenue for the state? Create an economic base for local communities? Create a new resort destination or provide needed lodging at an existing park or for a community?

Staffing issues obviously must be taken into account; a few states that contracted out their state lodges to concessionaires mentioned that being a union state negated some of the economic benefits of having the state directly operate the lodges. Some also mentioned the lack of expertise and knowledge necessary to run a large lodging venture.

Generally speaking, state-operated lodges are either run by the states themselves or contracted out to private concessionaires, with the state usually getting a pre-established percentage or amount of the revenue.

I've included a synopsis of insight and research compiled from conversations with a few different states.

Alabama

Alabama has 5 state park lodges, all of which are run by the state. In the 1970's, the Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources (DNR) did not want to be involved in the "hotel business", so they contracted out the operation of the lodges to private concessionaires. However, the DNR was unhappy with the upkeep and accounting by the private companies. Both guests and the DNR were disappointed in the quality of management and their were concerns money that was allocated by the state for maintenance purposes was being used for other purposes.

In 1987, operation of the state park lodges reverted to the state. Managers were hired from the concessionaires to ease the transition and many of the managers still work for DNR. The lodges

Denver
7700 East First Place
Denver, Colorado 80230-7143
Phone 303.364.7700 Fax 303.364.7800

Washington
444 North Capitol Street, N.W. Suite 515
Washington, D.C. 20001
Phone 202.624.5400 Fax 202.737.1069

Website www.ncsl.org

DATE

p. 2

now have a higher customer satisfaction rating than when ran by the private entities. The state park lodges and the state parks themselves, are basically self-sustaining, with no general fund money allocated for state park operations. All revenue derived from the lodges is deposited into a special revenue fund that is used by the state parks. In 2007, it was estimated that the lodges lost \$320,000 for the state, but much of this was due to reconstruction projects. In 2006, the estimated revenue generated from state park lodges was \$406,000, and \$110,000 in 2005.

Mr. Thomas Dunlap, Section Chief with the DNR, continually stressed that employees are key to the state park lodges operating smoothly and in the black. Mr. Dunlap was effusive in his praise for Alabama DNR employees and their role in ensuring the lodges are a well-run, successful venture.

Mr. Dunlap stressed that it is of paramount importance to consider what market you will be catering to. He suggested that other states may want to look at the model of using cabins as revenue generators, as they produce around \$2 million in revenue for the state and use existing infrastructure and personnel to run the cabins, thus cutting down on duplicative staffing. He also suggested combining cabins or other lodging with restaurant and meeting facilities to create a destination and more opportunities for weddings, business gatherings, etc.

I spoke with Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources Section Chief Thomas Dunlap. He was a wealth of knowledge on the topic and can be contacted at 334-242-3360 or Thomas.Dunlap@dcnr.alabama.gov. I also have attached two documents that give you a better sense of the lodging operations in Alabama.

West Virginia

West Virginia has a slightly different set-up, as they have nine state park lodges, seven of which are run by the state and two by private concessionaires. One of the two private run lodges is a ski area, which the state did not feel they had the expertise and capital to operate. The other privately run lodge was intended to be a public-private partnership, and things did not go as well as was hoped. I will quote verbatim from Mr. Doug Baker, Business Manager for the West Virginia State Parks,

"The other lodge that is not operated by the state, in addition to Canaan Valley, is Stonewall Jackson Resort State Park. This park is on a Corps of Engineers lake and the state did some development, but state and local officials envisioned a lodge, golf course, and cabins to make it into a major destination. This was to be a public-private partnership with the State providing \$10 million in seed money in hopes of attracting a private developer willing to raise private investment to complete the project. To make a long story short, the State issued a request for proposal for developers. The developer chosen had difficulty finding private investors, bank financing, or other types of investment. They eventually sold \$42 million in revenue bonds to finance the construction. The developer contracted with Benchmark Hospitality, Inc. of Houston, Texas to operate the facility. This facility generates sufficient revenues to meet operating expenses but not enough to meet all the debt service payments and various funding reserves. They are currently working with bond holders to address this matter. The contract with the developer includes very specific language that the State is not obligated to repay the debt for this development. All debt service revenue must come from the operation of this facility. Because this "project" does not meet all of its financial obligations the state does not receive any revenue. This is obviously a very short description of this project. Needless to say, I doubt you will see the State try this approach to develop state parks in the future."

The seven state-run lodges were run at one time by private entities, but have reverted back to state control. In fiscal year 2007, they made \$450,000 profit for the state. Mr. Baker noted that

DATE

p. 3

"Lodges/hotels with larger number of rooms have the potential for greater revenue production because the necessary infrastructure and staffing levels are in place. For example, front desk staffing for our 20 or 30 room lodges is the same for larger properties."

Three or four of the parks were created to be quite staff-intensive, using economic development funds in the 1960's to create a local employment base. However, staff has been reduced at least 15-20% in the last 30 years, because the state is demanding increased accountability and self-sufficiency from the state park system. West Virginia opened a new lodge property about one and a half years ago, and took a business oriented approach, including having experienced hotel management help with the opening. They strategically picked a location alongside a 4-lane road in an area lacking sufficient lodging, so they expect to draw visitors besides state park users. The new lodge also has a conference center, which is an added draw. All the people I spoke with reiterated that meeting facilities are essential to creating a marketable destination and drawing large groups to the lodges.

Doug Baker, the Business Manager for West Virginia State Parks, can be contacted at 304-558-2764, ext. 288 or at dougbaker@wvdnr.gov

Ohio

In Ohio, all state park lodges, with the exception of one run by a county, are contracted out. The bids are put out competitively every 10 years, and the state chooses the bid which guarantees the most return commission. Bids are based on the percentage of gross revenue that the state will receive. Ohio has looked at self-operating lodges, but pay rates for state employees make this prospect difficult, since Ohio is a labor state and state employees must be paid certain rates. Additionally, many of the lodges were built using tax-exempt bonds, which restricted the usage of money that could be spent on private businesses and limited the amount of profit that could be derived. All of these factors strengthened the decision to contract out the operation of the lodges. A study was done in 1992 on self-operating; the relevant passages from the study are attached to the email.

Generally speaking, some lodges in the state make money and some do not. Many of them do have a multiplier effect that circulates money to local businesses, but many parks are self-contained, limiting the strength of the multiplier effect. Ron Kus, Business Group Manager for Ohio State parks, stated that on the whole, the state park lodge system makes a bit of money or breaks even. One particular challenge is the patronage system. Oftentimes, the state is operating a lodge that may not make fiscal sense at the state level, but is a boon for the local economy. Therefore, quite a bit of political pressure may exist to continue the operation of a lodge, even if the state is taking a loss on the property.

NOTE: the above summarizes state law and is property of the National Conference of State Legislatures (NCSL). This information is intended for the sole use by state legislatures. NCSL makes no promises, express or implied, regarding the accuracy of this information.

COMMITTEE VISIT TO STONEWALL JACKSON STATE PARK

Members of the House Tourism and Recreational Development Committee, the Secretary of DCNR, and the Community and Economic Development Deputy Secretary of Tourism traveled to Roanoke, West Virginia on September 17, 2007, to visit Stonewall Resort. The General Manager of the Resort, Floyd R. Hunter, led the group on a detailed tour of the property which is located along the shores of Stonewall Jackson Lake, an impoundment on the West Fork River.

The lake itself was created in 1986 when the United State Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) dammed the West Fork River, covering in water what once was the flood-ravaged town of Roanoke, West Virginia. The park they built consisted of a campground, marina, multi-purpose building, and park offices. It was completed in 1990. Unfortunately, the revenues generated from park activities were not able to support the \$28 million debt owed to the USACE for construction. In order to help the state, U.S. Senator Robert C. Byrd passed federal legislation in 1995 that erased a dollar of debt for every dollar spent constructing facilities in the adjacent state park.

Stonewall Resort has an Adirondack-style lodge with 198 rooms, 10 fully furnished lakeside cottages, an Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course, 374 slip marina, 40 campsites, boat rentals, a full-service spa, fitness center, indoor/outdoor pools, mountain biking, hiking and access to the Stonewall Jackson Wildlife Management Area. The Resort also has three restaurants (Stillwaters, TJ Muskies, and Lightburns) and 20 conference rooms encompassing 14,000 square feet in total.

During the visit, members met with representatives from the West Virginia Department of Natural Resources, McCabe-Henley Properties, Benchmark Hospitality International, as well as the Director of Resort Facilities, Director of Operations, and the Park Superintendent for Stonewall Jackson State Park to discuss a host of issues involved with building the Resort.

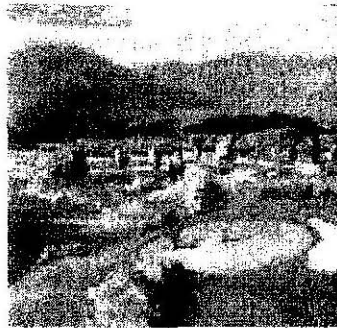
The state chose to venture with a private firm, McCabe-Henley Properties, to finance, plan, and construct the facility. The committee members had the opportunity to meet Rudy Henley, Senior Managing Director of NAI McCabe Henley LP, to learn how the project developed. The firm, through a bond-issuing agency, sold \$44 million in bonds to private markets and investors, and the state invested \$10 million to pay for construction of the resort. Benchmark Hospitality International was chosen to manage the property.

The overall message to the Committee was to focus on the big picture. According to Mr. Henley, often-times public officials and private parties get fixated in details and lose sight of the project goals. Mr. Henley stated that substantial state support and patience, along with a good plan (i.e. program for facilities, amenities, management, clear view of market, etc.) is what is truly needed for success.

SEE ATTACHED PRESS RELEASE FROM BENCHMARK HOSPITALITY INT.

Benchmark Opens the Stonewall Resort, a Joint Private/public Development in Weston, West Virginia

WESTON, WEST VIRGINIA, OCTOBER 7, 2002 ... The lodge at Stonewall Resort, West Virginia's newest vacation resort and conference center, opened today. Benchmark's Greg Parsons, general manager for Stonewall Resort, stated, "the opening of this lodge symbolizes the realization of a dream over 20 years in the making, and is a tribute to the efforts of many people, especially Senator Byrd. We are excited and ready to serve our guests." Senator Byrd, of West Virginia, was actively supportive of the joint private / public development project.



Visitors to the \$50 million Stonewall Resort will discover a state-of-the-art facility, which blends naturally into the scenery and surroundings. Upon entering the lodge, guests are greeted to a soaring lobby featuring stone and massive oak timbers, as well as 40-foot floor-to-ceiling windows, which offer striking views of Stonewall Jackson Lake.

Mr. Parsons continued, "the lodge, as well as the entire resort development, was created to set a new standard for the hospitality industry in the region. We believe we have accomplished this through the design of our facilities, the wide range of amenities offered, and the world-class service that our guests will experience."

The lodge opens with 104 guestrooms available. The remaining 94 guestrooms will come online over the course of the next few months. The spacious guestrooms and suites offer views of the lake and golf course, and come equipped with fine furnishings, large bathrooms, high-speed Internet access and multiple phone lines. Fitness facilities include indoor/outdoor pools, whirlpools, and a complete fitness center.

Stonewall Resort offers several dining options for guests. Stillwaters Restaurant and T.J. Muskies Lounge, the main dining venues, feature a casual atmosphere, and menus that showcase

ingredients indigenous to West Virginia.

The resort's 14,000-square-foot conference center is equipped with the latest in meeting technology. The conference center includes eight breakout rooms, three conference rooms, an executive boardroom, library, and a grand ballroom capable of seating 350 people.

"While meetings or conferences may be the catalyst for many of our guests to visit the resort, opportunities for relaxation and recreation are limited only by the imagination," continued Mr. Parsons. The resort's spa will be located off the first floor lobby, and is scheduled to open in November. The spa will offer manicures, pedicures, massage and salon services. The hotel's lower level houses the fitness center and indoor /outdoor pools and whirlpools. There is also an outdoor patio that stretches from the pool area to a fire pit, created for evening bonfires.

According to Greg Parsons, the opening of the lodge is the keystone to the entire resort development. "The lodge brings it all together. We can now provide guests with high quality overnight accommodations that will allow our patrons to further enjoy the amenities already in place at Stonewall Resort," stated Mr. Parsons.

An 18-hole Arnold Palmer Signature Golf Course opened to the public on June 1, 2002, and will remain open until weather conditions dictate otherwise. Ten deluxe cottages have been available for rental since August 2001. Stonewall Jackson Lake, West Virginia's second largest recreational lake, offers a 374-slip marina, marina store, public boat launch and watercraft available for rental, including four houseboats.

Stonewall Resort is located three miles from Exit 91 (Roanoke) of Interstate 79, within the Stonewall Jackson Lake State Park.

Stonewall Resort is managed by Benchmark Hospitality, an international hospitality management company based in The Woodlands, Texas.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FUTURE COMMITTEE ACTION

- Continue to study this issue and gather additional information during the upcoming 2009-2010 session.
- Visit the Bald Eagle State Park in Centre County during the construction and upon the completion of DCNR's Nature Inn project.
- Visit one or more of the Ohio State Parks for the opportunity to see what other states have to offer in the way of modern lodging facilities and learn what amenities were necessary in order to maximize income and maintain environmental integrity. Committee staff has already contacted the Director of Ohio State Parks to initiate the planning process.
- Conduct public hearings on this issue to bring together stakeholders, legislators, DCNR, and State Park personnel.
- Conduct informational meetings with resort and property management experts to explore the available financing and management options for construction and operation.
- Conduct an updated statewide survey to determine public opinion on the issue of lodge construction in Pennsylvania's State Parks. In June of 1996, the Committee authorized Mansfield University to conduct a comprehensive survey on this issue, and in 1988, the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Resources conducted a survey in an attempt to determine the need for modern lodging facilities on park property. (Copies of these reports are available upon request from the Tourism Committee staff.)

SEE ATTACHED COPY OF HOUSE RESOLUTION 164

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF PENNSYLVANIA

HOUSE RESOLUTION

No. 164

Session of
2007

INTRODUCED BY HALUSKA, TANGRETTI, NAILOR, CALTAGIRONE, CAUSER,
CLYMER, HANNA, HERSHEY, JAMES, KILLION, KOTIK, LONGIETTI,
MILLARD, PAYNE, PETRARCA, READSHAW, REICHLEY, SAINATO,
SCAVELLO, SIPTROTH, SOLOBAY, R. STEVENSON, THOMAS AND WALKO,
MARCH 23, 2007

REFERRED TO COMMITTEE ON TOURISM AND RECREATIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
MARCH 23, 2007

A RESOLUTION

1 Directing the Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to
2 study, evaluate and make recommendations regarding the
3 establishment of overnight facilities and associated
4 amenities on Commonwealth-owned lands.

5 WHEREAS, Tourism is this Commonwealth's number two industry,
6 supporting nearly 600,000 jobs and generating more than \$25
7 billion per year in direct and indirect traveler spending; and

8 WHEREAS, A large percentage of this job creation and traveler
9 spending has been centered in urban and suburban regions of this
10 Commonwealth to the exclusion of rural communities, many of
11 which possess abundant natural resources, including forest lands
12 and State parks; and

13 WHEREAS, Thirty-seven million travelers visit this
14 Commonwealth's State parks annually, providing the potential for
15 significant job creation and millions of dollars in new rural
16 spending; and

17 WHEREAS, Many of the current visitors to the State parks and

1 forests are not camping or tenting enthusiasts; and

2 WHEREAS, Many of our rural communities are unable to benefit
3 significantly from these Commonwealth-owned properties due to a
4 lack of lodging and other facilities necessary for overnight
5 stays; and

6 WHEREAS, As a direct result of this lack of infrastructure,
7 most visitors to Pennsylvania's State parks are day-trippers, a
8 fact which significantly lessens the economic impact of these
9 travelers on local economies; and

10 WHEREAS, Studies have indicated that a large percentage of
11 park visitors would stay overnight if provided the opportunity;
12 and

13 WHEREAS, This is especially true of senior citizens,
14 individuals with disabilities, urban residents and working
15 couples; and

16 WHEREAS, Many of our bordering states and the Federal
17 Government have recognized the potential for economic
18 development and job creation by creating such facilities and
19 have permitted limited development of certain state and national
20 parks; therefore be it

21 RESOLVED, That the House of Representatives direct the
22 Tourism and Recreational Development Committee to study,
23 evaluate and make recommendations regarding the establishment of
24 overnight facilities and associated amenities on Commonwealth-
25 owned lands and the impact of the same on tourism and the
26 economy; and be it further

27 RESOLVED, That the committee review the current status of
28 development in and around State park and forest land and the
29 economic impact such development may or may not cause; and be it
30 further

1 RESOLVED, That the committee study areas in proximity to
2 State parks and forests and make recommendations as to whether
3 any need for future development of overnight hospitality
4 facilities can best be accommodated by private development
5 offsite or onsite and that the study include other states which
6 have programs to prohibit, restrict, limit or permit private
7 development of park and forest lands; and be it further

8 RESOLVED, That the committee may conduct studies, hold
9 hearings and take testimony at such places as the committee
10 deems necessary and that each member of the committee shall have
11 power to administer oaths and affirmations to witnesses
12 appearing before the committee; and be it further

13 RESOLVED, That the expenses incurred by the committee in
14 carrying out its responsibilities, including, but not limited
15 to, per diem and travel expenses incurred by the members and
16 regular staff, stenographic charges and other incidental
17 expenses, be paid from appropriate accounts under control of the
18 Chief Clerk; and be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Tourism and Recreational Development
20 Committee make a report to the House of Representatives on its
21 activities, findings and recommendations on or before October 1,
22 2008, and issue interim reports to the House of Representatives
23 as the committee deems necessary.