

Comment Report

HF 647

A bill for an act creating a restore the outdoors program to support vertical infrastructure projects by the department of natural resources, and making appropriations.(See HF 749.)

Subcommittee Members: Siegrist-CH, Jacoby, Jeneary

Date: 03/01/2021

Time: 01:00 PM

Location: House Lounge

Name: Bill Whittaker

Comment: I think the Restore the Outdoors program is an excellent opportunity for the State to support outdoor recreation by repairing and rebuilding infrastructure on State Park lands. This would also support rural construction firms, and provide an economic boost to communities near State Parks by keeping the parks vibrant and attractive to visitors.

Name: Cynthia Peterson

Comment: I deeply support passage of this important legislation, HF 647. In the time of Covid, it is patently clear that restoring the outdoors program will serve Iowans well, protecting places that help maintain our physical and mental health. Financing our DNR infrastructure insures that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect, restore ourselves, and exercisestate parks, preserves, trails, etc.will remain in good condition for public use now and for decades to come. I urge you to move HR 647 forward with all enthusiasm.

Name: Leah Rogers

Comment: I support passage of this important piece of legislation, HF 647. The Restore the Outdoors program will serve Iowans well, particularly in the restrictive times were are experiencing right now by protecting places that contribute to our physical and mental health. Financing Iowa DNR infrastructure ensures that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect, restore ourselves, and exercisestate parks, preserves, trails, etc.will remain in good condition for public use now and to benefit generations to come.I urge you to move HR 647 forward with full support.

Name: Michael Perry

Comment: HF 647 is an excellent idea for developing and maintaining Iowa's important natural and cultural heritage under the care of the Iowa DNR, and I urge its passage without hesitation.

Name: Mr. Sandy Stevens

Comment: As President of the Friends of Fairport Fish Hatchery, I am strongly in support of House Bill 647. Any program that supports the restoration and use of Iowa's State Parks and other DNR facilities is worthy of legislators support and confirmation. Our Friends Group is a 501(c)(3) organization within the Muscatine County Historic Preservation Commission. During the last year we have been working with DNR staff to develop an educational pavilion and interpretive trail through the 60acre facility located on the Mississippi River a few miles downriver from Wild Cat Den State Park. The purpose of the educational pavilion and interpretive trail is to commemorate the importance of the Fairport Fish Hatchery to the internationally acclaimed pearl button industry located in Muscatine from ca. 18901960. We are currently planning to build the pavilion in a shape and design that closely resembles

the National Register eligible pump house at the hatchery. DNR intends to demolish the pump house this summer not because it is in a bad state of repair, but because it lies in the floodway of the river, as it has for its entire 110 year history. In partial compensation for the demolition of the pump house, DNR is providing a small percentage of the funds necessary to construct the pavilion. However, our Friends Group is left to raise over \$100,000 to construct the educational pavilion and the interpretive trail. Passing this bill could assist our group in raising some, or all, of the funds needed to achieve our goals. I strongly urge the state legislators to support this bill and allow this wonderful program to be resurrected and help all Iowans.

Name: Daniel Higginbottom

Comment: I deeply support passage of this important legislation, HF 647. In the time of Covid, it is patently clear that the Restore the Outdoors program will serve Iowans well, protecting places that help maintain our physical and mental health. Financing our DNR infrastructure ensures that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect, restore ourselves, and exercise state parks, preserves, trails, etc. will remain in good condition for public use now and for decades to come. I urge you to move HR 647 forward with all enthusiasm.

Name: Loren Peterson

Comment: As an Iowan I would like to ask for your support of HF 647. My wife and I visited Gull Point State Park in 2019. It is a beautiful park and it is an example of some of the things that were accomplished during times that were not too prosperous. I read that much of the building was done in the mid 1930's and it is still a great asset today. It is available for use by all of us. If HF 647 makes funds available to preserve our heritage, then I would urge your support of it. I have used many of the trails that are maintained by the DNR and I appreciate them. So your support of HF 647 will not go unnoticed. And perhaps future Iowans will also notice your contribution.

Name: Kathy Gourley

Comment: I urge you to support HF 647 the bill establishing the Restore the Outdoors program. A similar program was in place in the late 1990s into the early 2000s. So many important historic structures were repaired under the program. But the work is not done! Last year marked the centennial of Iowa's first State Parks. It is a fitting time to establish a new Restore the Outdoors program. Rehabilitating iconic structures in Iowa's State Parks and Preserves will protect these important resources and provide an economic boost to nearby communities while improving the quality of life for park visitors. It represents an important investment.

Name: Rebecca Conard

Comment: I support HF 647. Although it provides only a fraction of the additional funding IDNR needs to repair and renovate state park infrastructure, it is a step in the right direction. Iowa's state parks have experienced unusually high visitation this past year because of the pandemic, and this bill will help IDNR keep up with infrastructure maintenance in the short term.

Name: Christy Rickers

Comment: This bill will promote improvements and preservation at our state parks, preserves, trails, etc. It is important to preserve our history and to improve access to outdoor recreation for the benefit of all Iowans.

Name: Ann Raisch

Comment: I am writing in support of the bill HF 647 to appropriate funding for infrastructure in Iowa State Parks. I am a lifetime user and supporter of Iowa's State Parks. In addition to my leadership roles of Friends of Pine Lake, former board member Iowa Parks Foundation, and Iowa State Parks Centennial Committee, I'm also a major supporter. Along with my husband we have donated \$168,000 to Iowa's State Parks. So many times I've seen instances of our parks infrastructure needing repairs.

Since there is so little money the little repairs don't happen until they become big repairs, or the structure needs to be replaced totally. In 2020 Iowans flooded to our state parks. They now realize how much these natural places soothed their nerves. In addition they provide places for exercise and promote health. They are the places Iowans have celebrated time with friends and family. Following the stresses of 2020, Iowans now see the importance of these places. I'm thankful to see your committee is ready to step and get the money appropriated that is so badly needed. Thank you for helping our parks.

Name: Jovis Shoemaker

Comment: What a wonderful idea this bill proposes! As the current president of the Friends of Pine Lake State Park Nonprofit organization, I feel that an opportunity such as this would allow for our organization to gain adequate funds for needed updates to Pine Lake's 654 acres of historic buildings and trails. We currently work to fund many of our projects through charitable matching with local organizations. That being, a private organization(s) match funds that we as an organization generate through fundraising to reach goals of large projects. The generosity of these private entities have helped our organization achieve goals in the past, but hold a flaw that I think this bill fills wonderfully. In terms of private entities matching what we raise for a given large project, they are hesitant to donate said money until the agreed upon project is ready to commence. This, in the past, has led to donation agreements made but not being executed for years. Sometimes, even being cancelled all together. This is due to the total funding for a certain project not being met. In time, these entities forget or lose faith in these projects. This bill could allow for our longstanding nonprofit to gain the funding to act on expansive but necessary projects for our historic park infrastructure. Such as our beach tunnel, which is by modern standards, in a state of disrepair. When making your decision on this bill, think of the groups struggling to find the quick single source funding that could make all the difference in large projects. As working with multiple donors on a larger scale often causes some to back away from projects that take time to complete total funding. Thank you so much for your time and consideration! Best,

Name: Branden Scott

Comment: Our state parks are a resource that I regularly use. The parks provide my family and I with wonderful opportunities to experience nature. Early on, Iowa State Parks did a wonderful job of integrating park infrastructure/architecture with the surrounding landscape and this has greatly added to visitor experiences. I have personally noted that some of this infrastructure is being neglected, and probably not intentionally. One of the greatest draws is the CCC buildings that dot our parks. These buildings have remarkable beauty and a valuable addition to these areas. I fully support this initiative. Any funding allotted to rebuilding/enhancing park infrastructure is a good idea. Thanks for pursuing this legislation.

Name: Angela Collins

Comment: I support and urge all legislators to support passage of HF 647. Financing our DNR infrastructure ensures that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect, restore ourselves, and exercise state parks, preserves, trails, etc. will remain in good condition for public use now and for decades to come. Especially now, in the time of the COVID pandemic, it is clear that the Restore the Outdoors program is needed to protect the places that help maintain Iowan's physical and mental health.

Name: Maria Schroeder

Comment: Please support this bill. Protecting and maintaining our natural resources gives Iowa a better public face. I love showing our state off to visitors and enhancing our resources makes it easier to be proud.

Name: Jennifer Mack

Comment: I fully support passage of this important legislation, HF 647. In the time of Covid, it is clear that the Restore the Outdoors program will serve Iowans well, protecting places that help maintain our physical and mental health. Financing our DNR infrastructure ensures that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect, restore ourselves, and exercise state parks, preserves, trails, etc. will remain in good condition for public use now and for decades to come. I urge you to move HR 647 forward with all enthusiasm. Jennifer E. Mack

Name: Dustin Clarke

Comment: I support the passage of HF 647. The Restore the Outdoors program will serve Iowans well, financing our DNR infrastructure to ensure that some of the most important places we can visit to reflect will remain in good condition for public use now and in the future.