

HOUSE BILL 1871

By McDaniel

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68,
relative to the creation of the forum on
Tennessee's great outdoors.

WHEREAS, it is imperative that the elected representatives of this state act to ensure the adequate provision of our state's natural resources now and for generations to come, and to provide sufficient stewardship of these resources upon which our economy depends; and

WHEREAS, in order to ensure the provision of these natural resources, we must periodically assess their status, the challenges impacting them, and solutions to address these challenges to ensure their conservation and long-term sustainability; and

WHEREAS, in 1985, President Ronald Reagan requested then-governor Lamar Alexander to chair the President's Commission on Americans Outdoors, and challenged the Commission to assess the status of our natural resources and the availability of outdoor recreational pursuits for the next generation of Americans and make recommendations to ensure the continued availability of such pursuits; and

WHEREAS, while many of the Commission's recommendations have been implemented, much has changed in America since the release of its 1987 report. During that time, there has been great social and economic change caused in part by a population increase of 64 million people and by changes in how people live, work, and play, all of which have had a profound effect on our natural resources and outdoor recreation needs; and

WHEREAS, as the population continues to grow, to age, and to become more diverse, each of these changes increases the demand for recreation opportunities, all while more people consume more space for housing, commercial and industrial facilities, schools, and other infrastructure, thus placing unprecedented pressures on our natural resources; and

WHEREAS, our relationship with the outdoors has changed from one in which we used natural resources out of pure necessity to one in which we voluntarily engage in outdoor activities for leisure, enjoyment, and adventure; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of this state would benefit greatly from periodic assessments of the state of our natural resources and outdoor recreation to ensure the adequate provision of these resources now and for generations to come, and to provide sufficient stewardship of the natural resources on which such activities depend; and

WHEREAS, a new, comprehensive review of the health and status of our state's natural resources and our outdoor recreation needs and opportunities will help to determine how best to maintain our traditional ties with the outdoors, foster the economic benefits of outdoor recreation activities, and protect our streams, forests, grasslands, shorelines, wildlife, and urban parks for the enjoyment of future generations; now, therefore,

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 68, is amended by adding the following language as a new chapter:

68-204-101.

(a) There is created a forum on Tennessee's great outdoors, to be composed of twelve (12) members. Four (4) members shall be appointed by the governor, four (4) members shall be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives, and four (4) members shall be appointed by the speaker of the senate. The twelve (12) members of the forum shall represent the following interests:

(1) One (1) member of the house of representatives who has a proven interest in natural resources and their conservation, to be appointed by the speaker of the house of representatives;

(2) One (1) member of the senate who has a proven interest in natural resources and their conservation, to be appointed by the lieutenant governor;

(3) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about outdoor recreation;

(4) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about natural resource conservation;

(5) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about Tennessee forests;

(6) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about Tennessee history, historic sites, and historic preservation;

(7) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about Tennessee's rivers, lakes, and streams;

(8) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about fish and wildlife;

(9) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about sustainable agriculture;

(10) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about parks;

(11) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about public lands and land management; and

(12) One (1) public member who is knowledgeable about natural resource-based tourism.

(b) The appointing authorities shall consult with each other prior to appointing members to the forum to ensure that appointments are made in accordance with subsection (a).

(c) Appointments shall be made within sixty (60) days after the effective date of this act. The governor shall designate the chair of the forum, who shall set the date of the first meeting, and a secretary shall be elected from the forum's membership at such meeting.

(d) In making appointments to the forum, the appointing authorities shall strive to ensure that the forum is composed of persons who are diverse in professional or educational background, ethnicity, race, gender, geographic residency, heritage, perspective, and experience.

68-24-102. Members of the forum on Tennessee's great outdoors are volunteers and shall serve without pay, except that nonlegislative members may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with travel regulations promulgated by the commissioner of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter. Members of the general assembly shall be compensated in accordance with the provisions of § 3-1-106.

68-24-103. The forum on Tennessee's great outdoors shall be assisted by a twelve-member technical advisory committee composed of two (2) representatives from each of the following departments, to be appointed by the respective commissioners or executive directors:

- (1) The department of agriculture, division of forestry;
- (2) The department of economic and community development;
- (3) The department of environment and conservation;
- (4) The Tennessee wildlife resources agency;
- (5) The department of tourist development; and
- (6) The Tennessee historical commission.

68-24-104. The forum on Tennessee's great outdoors shall:

- (1) Evaluate and compile a list of five (5) major challenges to Tennessee's natural resources;
- (2) Evaluate and compile a list of recommended solutions aimed at addressing the five (5) major challenges facing Tennessee's natural resources;
- (3) Examine the status, quality, and needs of Tennessee's natural resources, including, but not limited to, private and public lands in this state, surface waters, fish and wildlife, forests, grasslands, wetlands, scenic resources, and ground water supplies;
- (4) Examine trend data and information concerning population, leisure, transportation, and other factors as they relate to the status of Tennessee's natural resources, including conducting an inventory of outdoor recreation resources and opportunities; and
- (5) Examine factors affecting the current and anticipated future supply and demand of outdoor recreation opportunities, including issues related to available land and facilities; outdoor recreation-related policies at the federal, state, and local levels; and funding available for the purchase of new, and maintenance of existing, land and facilities, for adequate staffing, for the development and implementation of recreation programs, and for the enforcement of recreation-related laws and regulations.

68-24-105.

- (a) The forum on Tennessee's great outdoors shall meet at least twice per quarter, and is authorized to conduct meetings throughout the state to receive input from the public relative to outdoor recreation and natural resources.
- (b)

(1) Any member who misses more than fifty percent (50%) of the scheduled meetings in a six-month period shall be removed as a member of the forum.

(2) The chair of the forum shall promptly notify the appointing authority of any member who fails to satisfy the attendance requirement as prescribed in subdivision (b)(1).

68-24-106. The forum may solicit and receive information from private organizations, individuals, and academic institutions for the purpose of meeting the requirements of this chapter.

68-24-107. The forum on Tennessee's great outdoors shall submit a detailed report of its findings and recommendations, including, but not limited to, future natural resources and outdoor recreation needs and any suggested legislation, to the general assembly and the governor no later than December 30, 2017.

68-24-108. This chapter shall be repealed on December 30, 2017.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.