



March 2, 2010

## Parks Talk!

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**Your Voice Needed Now!**  
**Arizonans cannot afford closed parks!**  
**Arizona State Parks are an Economic Engine worth \$290M to AZ**  
 2.3 million Arizonans and tourists visit our state parks annually and spend money in the parks and throughout communities that surround state parks creating \$290 million in positive economic impact to our state. That's jobs, taxes and rural development.

Tell your Legislators TODAY to support HCR2040 and help Save our State Parks!

Link to our website for talking points and contacts in the Arizona State [Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#).

### Upcoming Events

Arizona State Parks & Arizona State Parks Foundation present

**Civil War in the Southwest at Picacho Peak State Park**

**March 13-14**

Sponsored by Union Pacific Railroad



[Douglas Mansion at Jerome State Historic Park, Jerome, AZ](#)  
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## Legislative Action to Fund Arizona State Parks

[House Concurrent Resolution 2040](#) successfully passed the House Natural Resources & Rural Affairs Committee on Thursday, February 25th. Introduced by Representatives Jon Brown, Campbell, Chabin, Fleming, Konopnicki, Mason, McGuire, Young-Wright, Panca Deschene, Goodale, Heinz, McLain and Pratt, this measure now has amendments, but continues to be the best hope for sustained funding for the Arizona State Parks system. is expected to be added to the House Appropriations Committee agenda the week of March 8th.

HCR 2040 would be referred to state voters for their approval in the November general election. It now sets the annual fee at \$12.00 per non-commercial vehicle, dedicating \$9 Arizona State Parks and \$3 to ADOT. Vehicles displaying Arizona license plates would be provided free day-use access to Arizona State Parks.

Arizona State Parks Foundation urges you to contact your Legislative Representatives from the [House](#) and the [Senate](#) and encourage their support of HCR 2040. Visit the [Advocacy pages of our website](#) for more information.

### From the President...

To borrow a line from Thomas Paine, "These are the times that try men's souls." Especially if you care about the future of State Parks and the Heritage fund. Both are on life support at the State Capitol and the vultures of privatization are circling.

### Parks Funding

The Arizona State Parks system is nearly broke because the Legislature has raided every Parks funding source to nibble at the massive budget deficit. Thirteen parks are in the process of closing and 21 will be closed by June 30. But it could get worse.

If State Parks doesn't find some more operating money by June, it may have to close its doors, putting the remainder of the system in jeopardy. So, the immediate goal is to keep a semblance of the Parks system operating until a long-term funding solution can take effect.

There is a new, higher level of interest in the Parks dilemma at the Legislature, but it's unlikely that there will ever be enough votes to produce a permanent funding solution unless it is referred to Arizona voters. HCR 2040 would do that.

### The Heritage Fund

Approved by state voters 20 years ago, the Heritage Fund is also on the cusp of extinction. This fund claims \$20 million of yearly State Lottery income, divided equally between Arizona Game & Fish and Arizona State Parks. The Parks portion is further

**Mariachi Festival  
at Patagonia Lake State Park  
March 20**

For details, visit our [Events](#) webpage

divided between municipal historic preservation projects and Arizona State Parks site acquisitions.

After years of fending off Legislative raids, the Parks portion of the Heritage Fund this year has been obliterated and 2011 could be the end of the line. [Gov. Brewer's budget plan](#) calls for "redirecting" all of the Lottery beneficiaries' funds to the bottomless pit of the state General Fund.

The State Lottery has been renewed by statute for another 25 years with the current beneficiaries listed, including the Heritage Fund. Unfortunately, none of the beneficiaries are protected from Legislative raids. If the Heritage Fund is drained for the 2011 budget, that will be the end, in my opinion. So far, no bill has surfaced that would do that. When it does, the Heritage Fund beneficiaries must rise up and instill fear into the Legislature.

Meanwhile, if State Parks doesn't survive, the Parks portion of the Heritage Fund will have no home and the outcome is unclear.

### **Privatization**

The Privateers, as I call them, are circling. Any similarity between these vultures and the pirates that operated in 15th Century England is purely intentional. These guys are waiting for the Legislature to destroy the Arizona State Parks system so they can pick over the bones, choosing to bid on the parks that have positive cash flow.

For example, State Sen. Ron Gould (R-Havasupai) has sponsored a bill that would require the state to lease Lake Havasu State Park to the municipality for no more than \$50,000 per year, leaving millions of dollars on the table for Lake Havasu and whatever Privateer they would hire to run the park.

No matter what they tell the media, they will not save the State Park system. They will only operate parks that are profitable. We could not turn over Kartchner Caverns State Park to them. They would kill the cave by trying to make it profitable.

Privateers will leave most of the state parks to die.

**Arizona State Parks Foundation is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization founded in 2004 to serve as a key partner to Arizona State Parks. For more information on ASPF, visit:**  
[www.arizonastateparksfoundation.org](http://www.arizonastateparksfoundation.org)