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Parks Talk!

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Your Voice Needed Now!

Tell your Arizona Legislators TODAY that budgetary cuts to Arizona State Parks will hurt Arizona's communities and economy.

Link here to [talking points](#), [sample letters](#) and contacts in the Arizona [Senate](#) and [House of Representatives](#).

Open Parks Support Local Economies
For every \$1 in tax funds the Legislature directs to Arizona State Parks for operations, the park system generates \$3.72 in state and local tax revenue.

According to the recent **"Arizona State Parks Economic Impact Study"** conducted by NAU, our state parks pump \$266 million of tourism money into AZ local economies annually.

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



[Douglas Mansion at Jerome State Historic Park, Jerome, AZ](#)

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Arizona State Parks; A System on the Verge of Closure

Without the Legislature's help in securing immediate additional revenues for Arizona State Parks, the current FY10 budget will force closure of virtually all state parks, shutting a system that serves more than two million visitors annually, while depriving local communities of some \$266 million a year in parks-related income.

During a public workshop last week, State Parks Director Renee Bahl explained that legislative sweeps of parks funds, including \$3 million in entry fee income, have left State Parks with only \$8.4 million in operating revenues for the fiscal year. This compares to \$30 million needed for bare bones operations, excluding any capital fund for repair of badly deteriorating historic buildings, unsafe sewer park systems and eroding lakefront facilities. Such scant operational money is not enough to even close fence and guard Arizona's treasured array of 30 parks, recreation areas and historic sites, Bahl noted.

To avoid this disaster, somewhere between \$18 million and \$22 million must be restored to State Parks – an amount accounting for about 1/10th percent of the state's overall budget and less than a half percent of its current \$4 billion deficit. Not to provide such modest funding will effectively wipe out more than 50 years of taxpayer investment in buying, building and opening such heavily-visited places as Kartchner Caverns; Havasu and Alamo lakes and on the state's west side; Slide Rock, Red Rock and Dead Horse Ranch state parks in northern Arizona; and Catalina, Oracle and Patagonia Lake state parks in southeast Arizona to name a few.

The Legislature's strategy of granting State Parks limited authority to "backfill" its losses by skimming funds from voter-approved Heritage Fund monies, State Lake Improvement Funds and other special sources is no solution. None of these can provide what is needed to sustain Arizona's parks, some of which could revert to the federal government or original private owners if they are closed or not used.

If past Legislatures could keep parks open to Arizonans through 50 years of prior downturns, wars, gas crises and political turmoil, surely current lawmakers can find the revenues to do so – especially given the great economic value, popularity and intrinsic worth of our state parks.

