

HOUSE BILL 1358

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4lr2169
CF 4lr2668

By: **Delegates Ruff, Attar, Addison, Amprey, Boyce, Clippinger, Conaway,
Edelson, Embry, R. Lewis, J. Long, Rosenberg, Smith, and Young**

Introduced and read first time: February 9, 2024

Assigned to: Environment and Transportation and Appropriations

A BILL ENTITLED

1 AN ACT concerning

2 **Natural Resources – Establishment of Gwynns Falls State Park**

3 FOR the purpose of requiring the Department of Natural Resources to establish Gwynns
4 Falls State Park as a partnership park between the Department and Baltimore City;
5 requiring that Gwynns Falls State Park consist of certain properties in Baltimore
6 City and include certain landscapes and facilities; requiring the Department and
7 Baltimore City to take certain surveys, convene certain focus group meetings on
8 certain subjects, and establish a certain advisory committee and develop a list of
9 priority needs and associated costs for park improvements; and generally relating to
10 the establishment of Gwynns Falls State Park.

11 BY repealing and reenacting, without amendments,
12 Article – Natural Resources
13 Section 5–1012(a) and (b)
14 Annotated Code of Maryland
15 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

16 BY adding to
17 Article – Natural Resources
18 Section 5–1012(f–1)
19 Annotated Code of Maryland
20 (2023 Replacement Volume and 2023 Supplement)

21 SECTION 1. BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF MARYLAND,
22 That the Laws of Maryland read as follows:

23 **Article – Natural Resources**

24 5–1012.

EXPLANATION: CAPITALS INDICATE MATTER ADDED TO EXISTING LAW.

[Brackets] indicate matter deleted from existing law.



(a) In this section, “partnership park” means a unit of the State park system managed by the Department in partnership with a local government, a bicounty agency, or a nonprofit organization.

(b) The Department may enter into:

(1) A memorandum of understanding with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to establish a partnership park in the State; or

(2) A partnership agreement with a local government, bicounty agency, or nonprofit organization to manage a partnership park in the State.

(F-1) (1) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK AS A PARTNERSHIP PARK BETWEEN THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY THAT SEEKS TO PROVIDE VISITORS WITH ACCESSIBLE OUTDOOR, NATURE-BASED RECREATION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES.

(2) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL BE HELD BY THE STATE AS A STATE PARK UNDER THE PROTECTION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE DEPARTMENT.

(3) (I) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL CONSIST OF PROPERTIES THAT ARE:

1. OWNED BY THE STATE AND DESIGNATED BY THE DEPARTMENT TO BE ADMINISTERED AS PART OF THE STATE PARK; OR

2. A. OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT ORGANIZATION; AND

B. DESIGNATED AS PART OF THE PARK BY A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE OWNER OF THE PROPERTY AND THE DEPARTMENT.

(II) GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL, AT A MINIMUM, INCLUDE:

1. LEAKIN PARK;

2. THE GWYNNS FALLS TRAIL;

3. WINANS MEADOW/CARDIN PAVILION; AND

4. THE CRIMEA SECTION.

1 **(4) THE MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING ESTABLISHING THE**
2 **GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK SHALL DEFINE:**

3 **(I) THE ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES, INCLUDING FINANCIAL**
4 **RESPONSIBILITIES, OF THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY IN MAINTAINING**
5 **AND OPERATING THE STATE PARK; AND**

6 **(II) A PARTNERSHIP ROLE FOR THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS**
7 **FALLS/LEAKIN PARK IN SUPPORT OF THE STATE PARK'S MISSION AND**
8 **VOLUNTEERS.**

9 **(5) THE DEPARTMENT SHALL ESTABLISH A SUMMER CONSERVATION**
10 **JOBS CORPS PROGRAM FOR HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS AT GWYNNS FALLS STATE**
11 **PARK.**

12 **(6) THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY SHALL:**

13 **(I) 1. TAKE A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF BALTIMORE**
14 **CITY RESIDENTS REGARDING THEIR ATTITUDES TOWARD:**

15 **A. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GWYNNS FALLS STATE**
16 **PARK; AND**

17 **B. OUTDOOR RECREATION IN GENERAL, INCLUDING**
18 **THEIR INTERESTS IN AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR OUTDOOR RECREATION AND**
19 **BARRIERS TO OUTDOOR RECREATION; AND**

20 **2. CONVENE FOCUS GROUP MEETINGS ON THE**
21 **ESTABLISHMENT OF THE STATE PARK WITH COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND**
22 **STAKEHOLDERS THAT RESIDE OR OPERATE IN THE VICINITY OF THE PROPOSED**
23 **STATE PARK;**

24 **(II) DEVELOP A LIST OF PRIORITY NEEDS AND ASSOCIATED**
25 **COST ASSESSMENTS FOR PARK OPERATIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS, INCLUDING:**

26 **1. CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS;**

27 **2. CRITICAL MAINTENANCE;**

28 **3. ENHANCED NATURAL RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AND**
29 **RESTORATION, INCLUDING IMPLEMENTATION OF A BIOHABITATS STUDY;**

4. HISTORIC SITE RESTORATION;

5. ENHANCED OUTDOOR RECREATION AMENITIES,
INCLUDING TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS; AND

6. ADDING PARK STAFF AND PROCURING EQUIPMENT
AND SUPPLIES; AND

(III) ESTABLISH A STAKEHOLDER ADVISORY COMMITTEE TO
ADVISE THE DEPARTMENT AND BALTIMORE CITY ON THE SCOPE AND MANAGEMENT
OF GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK THAT CONSISTS OF:

1. A REPRESENTATIVE OF THE FRIENDS OF GWYNNS
FALLS/LEAKIN PARK;

2. AT LEAST THREE REPRESENTATIVES OF
NEIGHBORHOOD ORGANIZATIONS FROM NEIGHBORHOODS THAT BORDER THE
STATE PARK;

3. AT LEAST TWO REPRESENTATIVES OF
ENVIRONMENTAL ORGANIZATIONS IN BALTIMORE CITY;

4. AT LEAST ONE REPRESENTATIVE OF A HISTORIC
PRESERVATION ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY; AND

5. ANY OTHER MEMBERS AS DETERMINED BY THE
DEPARTMENT.

(7) ON OR BEFORE DECEMBER 1, 2024, THE DEPARTMENT SHALL
SUBMIT A REPORT TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY, IN ACCORDANCE WITH § 2-1257 OF
THE STATE GOVERNMENT ARTICLE, ON:

(I) PROPERTY OWNED BY THE STATE IN BALTIMORE CITY
THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK;

(II) PROPERTY OWNED BY BALTIMORE CITY OR A NONPROFIT
ORGANIZATION IN BALTIMORE CITY THAT IS SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN GWYNNS
FALLS STATE PARK AND FOR WHICH THE LANDOWNERS ARE WILLING TO ENTER
INTO A PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT; AND

(III) THE FUNDING NEEDED TO ESTABLISH AND PROMOTE
GWYNNS FALLS STATE PARK.

1 SECTION 2. AND BE IT FURTHER ENACTED, That this Act shall take effect June
2 1, 2024.