

1                   **HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES - FLOOR VERSION**

2                               STATE OF OKLAHOMA

3                               1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

4   HOUSE  
5   RESOLUTION 1002

By: Talley

6  
7                               AS INTRODUCED

8           A Resolution relating to the importance of public  
9           lands; making findings; expressing support;  
10          recognizing benefits.

11  
12          WHEREAS, Oklahoma has some of the most beautiful landscapes on  
13          earth that are incredibly rich in wildlife, including the prairies  
14          of the Osage Hills, the playa lakes and wetlands of the Southern  
15          High Plains, the Ouachita Mountains, the Ozark Highlands, the Red  
16          Hills, the floodplain of the Red River, and the Arbuckle Plains; and

17          WHEREAS, public land under the management of the Oklahoma  
18          Department of Tourism and Recreation, Oklahoma Department of  
19          Wildlife Conservation, U.S. Forest Service, and other state/federal  
20          agencies constitutes just over six percent (6%) of the land in  
21          Oklahoma; and

22          WHEREAS, the COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the essential  
23          role of nature, recreation and outdoor spaces in the physical and  
24          mental health of Oklahomans; and

1 WHEREAS, these state and federally owned lands are essential to  
2 the quality of life in Oklahoma for every economic class, providing  
3 public recreational opportunity for hunting, fishing, kayaking,  
4 riding all-terrain vehicles, wildlife viewing, photography,  
5 backpacking, cycling, sightseeing, and numerous other outdoor  
6 recreational activities; and

7 WHEREAS, outdoor recreation is a major economic driver in  
8 Oklahoma, generating an estimated \$10.6 billion in consumer spending  
9 and supporting more than 97,000 jobs in the state according to a  
10 study conducted by the Outdoor Industry Association; and

11 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's agriculture industry includes upwards of 50  
12 different ranching lessees who depend on grazing on federal and  
13 state public land to sustain their operations; and

14 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's timber industry is dependent on federal land  
15 for a part of its timber supply, while supporting more than 19,000  
16 jobs and contributing \$3.3 billion in revenue to Oklahoma; and

17 WHEREAS, agencies that manage these lands employ hundreds of  
18 Oklahomans who pay taxes and contribute to their communities; and

19 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's prairies, playas, and forests are naturally  
20 prone to fire and other disturbances, including periodic large-scale  
21 fires and seasonal wet-dry cycles, as part of the ecosystems in  
22 which they have existed for ages, although increasing occurrences of  
23 wildfires and drought are due to fire suppression over many decades;  
24 and

1 WHEREAS, federal and state money to fund firefighting costs and  
2 other management practices is essential, including prescribed  
3 burning and wetland restoration, to protect communities and public  
4 infrastructure, including municipal watersheds, particularly in dry  
5 or flood years; and

6 WHEREAS, in 2020, the U.S. Congress enacted the Great American  
7 Outdoors Act which prioritizes maintaining and improving existing  
8 public lands and parks; and also enacted America's Conservation  
9 Enhancement Act, authorizing the North American Wetlands  
10 Conservation Act, which supports voluntary wetland conservation  
11 projects that benefit migratory birds and waterfowl; and supports  
12 outdoor recreation on Oklahoma's public lands like Hackberry Flat  
13 and Drummond Flat Wildlife Management Areas; and

14 WHEREAS, Americans from throughout the country value these  
15 public lands as a part of our national heritage.

16 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
17 OF THE 1ST SESSION OF THE 58TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

18 THAT the Oklahoma House of Representatives supports efforts that  
19 highlight the importance of public lands to Oklahomans as well as  
20 recognizes the benefits public lands have as a critical part of the  
21 state's economy.

22  
23 DIRECT TO CALENDAR.  
24