

STATE OF OKLAHOMA

1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

SENATE
RESOLUTION 8

By: Stanley

AS INTRODUCED

A Resolution emphasizing the value of Oklahoma's great outdoors to the state's economy, recreation, heritage and quality of life; and supporting efforts that boost this critical part of the state's economy.

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

WHEREAS, properties under the management of the Oklahoma Tourism and Recreation Department, Department of Wildlife Conservation, U.S. Forest Service and other agencies constitute just over 6% of the land in Oklahoma; and

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

WHEREAS, these lands are essential to the quality of life for everyone in Oklahoma providing public recreational opportunity for

1 hunting, fishing, kayaking, riding all-terrain vehicles, wildlife
2 viewing, photography, backpacking, cycling, sightseeing and numerous
3 other outdoor recreational activities; and

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

8 WHEREAS, Oklahoma's agriculture industry includes upwards of 50
9 different ranching lessees who depend on grazing on federal and
10 state properties to sustain their operations; and

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

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

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

22 WHEREAS, federal and state money to fund firefighting costs and
23 other management practices is essential including prescribed burning
24 and wetland restoration to protect communities and public

1 infrastructure including municipal watersheds, particularly in dry
2 or flood years; and

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

11 WHEREAS, Americans from throughout the country value these
12 places as a part of our national heritage.

13 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE 1ST SESSION
14 OF THE 58TH OKLAHOMA LEGISLATURE:

15 THAT the Oklahoma State Senate supports efforts that highlight
16 the importance of the great outdoors to Oklahomans.

17 THAT the Oklahoma State Senate recognizes the benefits these
18 places have as a critical part of the state's economy.

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