

1 STATE OF OKLAHOMA

2 1st Session of the 58th Legislature (2021)

3 SENATE
4 RESOLUTION 3

By: Stanley

5
6 AS INTRODUCED

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

10
11 WHEREAS, Oklahoma has some of the most beautiful landscapes on
12 earth that are incredibly rich in wildlife including the prairies of
13 the Osage Hills, the playa lakes and wetlands of the Southern High
14 Plains, the Ouachita Mountains, the Ozark Highlands, the Red Hills,
15 the floodplain of the Red River and the Arbuckle Plains; and

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

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

23 WHEREAS, these state and federally owned lands are essential to
24 the quality of life in Oklahoma for every economic class, providing

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

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

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

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

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

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

23 WHEREAS, federal and state money to fund firefighting costs and
24 other management practices is essential including prescribed burning

1 and wetland restoration, to protect communities and public
2 infrastructure including municipal watersheds, particularly in dry
3 or flood years; and

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

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

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

16 THAT the Oklahoma State Senate supports efforts that highlight
17 the importance of public lands to Oklahomans as well as recognizes
18 the benefits public lands have as a critical part of the state's
19 economy.

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