

## **Solutions that would Generate Revenues for State Parks**

### **Passport to the Parks**

A \$10 charge added to 2-year DMV Vehicle Registrations would generate \$14.3 million/year in new revenues for State Parks, and offset the proposal to eliminate seasonal workers and seasonal operating costs, and help stabilize the level of service provided by Parks. For \$5 per year, all residents with Connecticut vehicle registrations would get unlimited access to the State Parks and Forests. For comparison, one visit to a shoreline Park is \$13, and a season's pass to the State Parks is \$67. This would reduce traffic backups entering parks, and help CT DEEP redistribute more seasonal workers to managing land, wildlife, and water resources for the public since fewer seasonals would be needed to staff entry gates.

### **Dedicated Conservation Account**

If State Parks and Campgrounds were able to use the \$6 million they generate to maintain and improve Parks, they would be incentivized to be more entrepreneurial and provide additional or improved services to the public. A dedicated conservation account (which existed before it was swept in 2009) funded by revenues generated by the Parks and Campgrounds would also help CT DEEP plan further ahead in hiring seasonal workers and meeting ongoing operations and maintenance needs that bridge fiscal years. Other revenues, including \$4 million from fishing activities; new revenues, such as rental fees for the new cabins built for the State Parks 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary; and other relevant sources should also be directed to the Conservation Fund.

There are additional proposals to generate revenues such as installing "iron rangers" in State Parks (similar to parking machines that many municipalities currently use), adding new gates, foregoing "free passes" to the Parks, and others.

This is also not a new issue. There have been concept bills on generating and dedicating revenues for State Parks raised in the Environment Committee over the past 2 years, and this issue was also the subject of a terrific [report on State Park and Forest Funding released by the General Assembly's Program Review and Investigations Committee in January, 2014](#).