

GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA
SESSION 2009
RATIFIED BILL

RESOLUTION 2009-11
HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 637

A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE
GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains are among the oldest mountains in the world and among the tallest of the Appalachian chain forming a boundary between North Carolina and Tennessee; and

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains, named for their smoke-like haze, were originally inhabited by the Cherokee people and later settled by Europeans; and

Whereas, as logging increased in the Great Smoky Mountains, a movement began to preserve the remaining pristine forest as a national park; and

Whereas, in order for the Great Smoky Mountains to become a national park, the land had to be purchased from timber companies and hundreds of families and deeded to the federal government, which occurred over a number of years through private donations and public appropriations; and

Whereas, in 1930, the Governors of North Carolina and Tennessee, along with other representatives of both states, traveled to Washington, DC, to present the deeds for 158,876.5 acres of land to the federal government, allowing the land to obtain the basic protection of the National Park Service; and

Whereas, Congress passed legislation on June 15, 1934, which stated that the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, "be established as a completed national park for administration, protection and maintenance"; and

Whereas, today, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has over 521,085 acres, with over 244,741 acres located in North Carolina; and

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has over 800 miles of trails, 2,100 miles of streams, 66 species of mammals, 200 varieties of birds, 50 native fish species, and 80 types of reptiles and amphibians; and

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park consistently has some of the highest visitation rates of any of the 58 national parks, attracting 9,000,000 visitors in 2008; and

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park generates an economic impact of over \$718 million for surrounding tourist communities; and

Whereas, during 2009, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be celebrating its 75th anniversary during a number of public events; and

Whereas, many individuals have been credited with helping to establish the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, including Horace Kephart, a librarian, who was born in 1862 in Pennsylvania and spent much of his early life in the West and Midwest; and

Whereas, Horace Kephart moved to western North Carolina in 1904, and soon after became immersed in the region's natural environment and interested in the history and culture of the people who lived there; and

Whereas, Horace Kephart became a respected authority on the region, writing numerous articles and two well-known books, "The Book of Camping and Woodcraft" published in 1906 and "Our Southern Highlanders" published in 1913; and

Whereas, during the 1920s, Horace Kephart joined the movement to preserve the Great Smoky Mountains as a national park and once said, "Here today is the last stand of primeval American forest at its best. If saved—and if saved at all it must be done at once—it will be a joy and a wonder to our people for all time. The nation is summoned by a solemn duty to preserve it." (as quoted in Dykeman and Stokely, Highland Homeland 1978 at p. 144); and



Whereas, a few months before his death in 1931, Horace Kephart was honored by the United States Geological Board when the Board named a peak in the Great Smoky Mountains as Mount Kephart; and

Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's 75th anniversary and the people who helped establish the Park are worthy of recognition and celebration; Now, therefore,

Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

SECTION 1. The General Assembly recognizes the 75th anniversary of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park and encourages the citizens of this State to participate in activities planned to celebrate the Park's historic anniversary.

SECTION 2. The General Assembly honors the life and memory of Horace Kephart and expresses its appreciation for his contributions to the preservation of the history and culture of western North Carolina.

SECTION 3. The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this resolution to the Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

SECTION 4. This resolution is effective upon ratification.

In the General Assembly read three times and ratified this the 21st day of April, 2009.

Walter H. Dalton
President of the Senate

Joe Hackney
Speaker of the House of Representatives