

House Concurrent Resolution on State Management of Federal Public Lands

2026 GENERAL SESSION

STATE OF UTAH

Chief Sponsor: Steve Eliason

Senate Sponsor:

LONG TITLE**General Description:**

This resolution urges the federal government and state entities to identify public lands for the state to manage for outdoor recreation.

Highlighted Provisions:

This resolution:

- ▶ highlights the need to develop and maintain state parks, monuments, and campgrounds to provide the people of Utah with outdoor recreational opportunities;
 - ▶ suggests land that the Division of State Parks (division) may consider for a potential state park, state monument, or state campground;
 - ▶ encourages the division to work with federal agencies to acquire, lease, or manage properties considered suitable for use as a state park, monument, or campground;
 - ▶ urges Congress to establish a framework for state operation of federal public lands, under a joint management agreement, to improve public land management and reduce federal expenditures;
 - ▶ requests that the division petition the Bureau of Land Management to transfer land to the state for the creation of the Little Sahara State Park;
 - ▶ requests that the division negotiate with the United States Forest Service to transfer the Antelope Flat Campground to the state for the creation of the Flaming Gorge State Park;
- and
- ▶ requests that the division update the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment Interim Committee on the division's study regarding new state parks and state campgrounds.

Money Appropriated in this Bill:

None

Other Special Clauses:

None

31 *Be it resolved by the Legislature of the state of Utah, the Governor concurring therein:*

32 WHEREAS, the Legislature is committed to protecting and enhancing the state's
33 recreational opportunities, experiences, and facilities for the people of Utah;

34 WHEREAS, state parks, state monuments, and state campgrounds provide valuable outdoor
35 recreational opportunities and play a critical role in preserving the state's distinctive natural
36 and cultural resources;

37 WHEREAS, the state's growing population and vibrant tourism industry will require the
38 state to develop new outdoor recreational opportunities and maintain existing state parks, state
39 monuments, and state campgrounds;

40 WHEREAS, the Monte Cristo area located in Cache, Rich, and Weber counties offers
41 unique recreational opportunities that the Division of State Parks (division) may evaluate for
42 designation as a state park, state monument, or state campground;

43 WHEREAS, Mueller Park Canyon located in Davis County offers unique recreational
44 opportunities that the division may evaluate for designation as a state park;

45 WHEREAS, Pineview Reservoir located in Weber County offers unique recreational
46 opportunities that the division may evaluate for designation as a state park;

47 WHEREAS, various school and institutional trust lands, including trust lands in the San
48 Rafael Swell area, may present opportunities for public recreation while generating revenue for
49 trust beneficiaries;

50 WHEREAS, the state has experience and capability in effectively managing state parks and
51 other public lands;

52 WHEREAS, state management has the potential to enhance economic opportunities while
53 ensuring continued public access and resource protection;

54 WHEREAS, the state is well positioned to understand and respond to local needs and
55 conditions affecting public lands within the state;

56 WHEREAS, the federal government manages numerous public lands within the state, many
57 of which face significant maintenance backlogs and operational challenges that impact visitor
58 experiences and resource conservation;

59 WHEREAS, the United States Forest Service has decommissioned campgrounds in the
60 state due to the degradation of campground infrastructure, including the Sunset Campground
61 in Farmington Canyon;

62 WHEREAS, there are several scenic public lands managed by federal agencies, including
63 the Little Sahara Recreation Area, the Antelope Flat Campground near Flaming Gorge
64 Reservoir, and land near Farmington Canyon and Skyline Drive in Bountiful, that could be

65 managed by the state for public recreation;

66 WHEREAS, the division has attempted in the past to enter into an agreement for the
67 management of the Little Sahara Recreation Area as a state park, an area that receives 300,000
68 visitors annually;

69 WHEREAS, in accordance with Utah Code Section 79-4-606, the division may enter into
70 an agreement with the United States Bureau of Land Management (BLM) for the use of the
71 Little Sahara Recreation Area as a state park;

72 WHEREAS, in accordance with Utah Code Subsection 79-4-203(4), the division may
73 acquire property in the name of the state by legal and proper means;

74 WHEREAS, if a land transfer agreement is not possible, the division may seek to purchase
75 or lease the land from the BLM under the Recreation and Public Purposes Act, 43 U.S.C. Sec.
76 869;

77 WHEREAS, state public lands and federally managed public lands could be enhanced and
78 reclaimed for recreation and conservation purposes if cooperatively managed by the state;

79 WHEREAS, a voluntary framework for state operation of federally managed public lands
80 could help address maintenance backlogs while preserving federal obligations and
81 environmental protections;

82 **Ĥ→ WHEREAS, the Governor and the Chief of the United States Forest Service signed a**
82a **cooperative agreement on January 8, 2026, to promote more effective and efficient**
82b **management of federally managed public lands;**

82c **←Ĥ** WHEREAS, Utah's congressional delegation is uniquely positioned to understand the
83 state's capacity and desire to manage public lands within the state; and

84 WHEREAS, leadership from Utah's congressional delegation on this issue could establish a
85 model framework benefiting all states:

86 NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of the state of Utah, the
87 Governor concurring therein, urges Utah's congressional delegation to lead the effort in
88 Congress to establish a framework that allows the state to voluntarily assume operational
89 responsibility, under a joint management agreement, for federally managed public lands within
90 the state.

91 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the
92 division to once again petition the BLM to transfer title to the state of Utah all land necessary
93 for the creation of the Little Sahara State Park.

94 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the
95 division to negotiate with the United States Forest Service to transfer **Ĥ→ management of ←Ĥ**

95a the Antelope Flat
96 Campground to the **↔** [state] division **↔** for the creation of Flaming Gorge State Park.

97 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the
98 division to **↔** [work] enter into agreements **↔** with federal agencies to acquire, **↔**
98a exchange, **↔** lease, or manage any other properties
99 considered suitable for a state park, state monument, or state campground.

100 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor urge the division to
101 evaluate recreational and scenic locations in the state, including the Monte Cristo area and
102 trust lands in the San Rafael Swell, for designation as new state parks, state monuments, and
103 state campgrounds.

104 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor encourage the
105 division to study the feasibility of a potential state park or state campground near Skyline
106 Drive in Davis County, including the Buckland Flats Campground, the Bountiful Peak
107 Campground, and the former Farmington Canyon Sunset Campground areas.

108 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Legislature and the Governor request that the
109 division submit an annual report to the Natural Resources, Agriculture, and Environment
110 Interim Committee regarding the progress and status of the division's study before the
111 November interim meetings in 2026, 2027, and 2028.