

Department of Conservation & Recreation

Briefing for the Senate Finance Committee

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Overview of Today's Briefing

- 1. DCR Organization**
- 2. Key Recent Achievements**
- 3. Key Issues**
 1. Current Capital Projects
 2. Deferred Maintenance in State Parks
 3. ARPA Capital Projects
 4. State Park Revenue and Revenue Optimization Study
 5. Soil & Water District Dam Projects



Organization



Administration & Finance

- Finance
- Human Resources
- Procurement
- Risk Management
- Information Technology



Operations

- State Parks
- Natural Heritage / Natural Area Preserves
- Planning and Recreation Resources
- Office of Land Conservation
- Real Property Office



Dam Safety, Soil & Water, Floodplain Management

- Dam Safety
- Floodplain Management
- Coastal Resilience
- Soil and Water

Key Recent Achievements

Conserve

- **Agricultural Cost-Share Program**
 - Largest state-funded agricultural conservation program in the U.S.
 - FY2025: **48,000 BMPs, 2,497 producers**, \$125.6M in cost-share funding.
- **Public Lands**
 - Two new Natural Area Preserves: **Eastern Divide** and **Brocks Gap**.
 - Expanded **Caledon State Park**
- **Land Conservation Grants**
 - **\$15.5M awarded** by Virginia Land Conservation Foundation.
 - Key projects: Rappahannock Tribe ancestral lands, James River Park expansion, Caledon State Park addition.
- **Clean Water Farm Awards**
 - **10 farms honored** for outstanding conservation practices.

Key Recent Achievements

Protect

- **Dam Safety**
 - Continued reduction of dams with unknown hazard classification and condition.
- **Flood Resilience**
 - **5,700 sq. miles** added to flood vulnerability maps using Fathom data.
 - **Virginia Flood Protection Master Plan** developed with 400+ engagements from 100 organizations.
- **Flood Resilience Assistance**
 - **Round 5:** \$67M in grants and loans awarded
 - **Round 6:** \$110M available
 - **Resilient Virginia Loan Fund:** \$10M for Southwest Virginia



Key Recent Achievements

Protect

- **Special Biological Areas**
 - **Good Neighbor Agreement** with U.S. Forest Service: \$5M over 10 years for biological inventories and NEPA support.
- **Coastal Conservation Planning**
 - New **GIS layer** identifies unconserved lands adjacent to protected areas to guide future inventory efforts.



Key Recent Achievements

Enjoy

- **New State Park**
 - **Hayfields State Park** opened Oct. 20, expanding the system to **44 parks**.
 - 1,034 acres preserved for future generations;
- **Increasing Public Access**
 - Culpeper Battlefields Phase 2 acquisition underway.
 - Natural Bridge Caverns added to **Natural Bridge State Park**.
 - **High Bridge Station visitor center** opened at High Bridge Trail State Park.
 - New canoe/kayak launch for **Clinch River State Park**; trail building at multiple preserves.



Key Recent Achievements

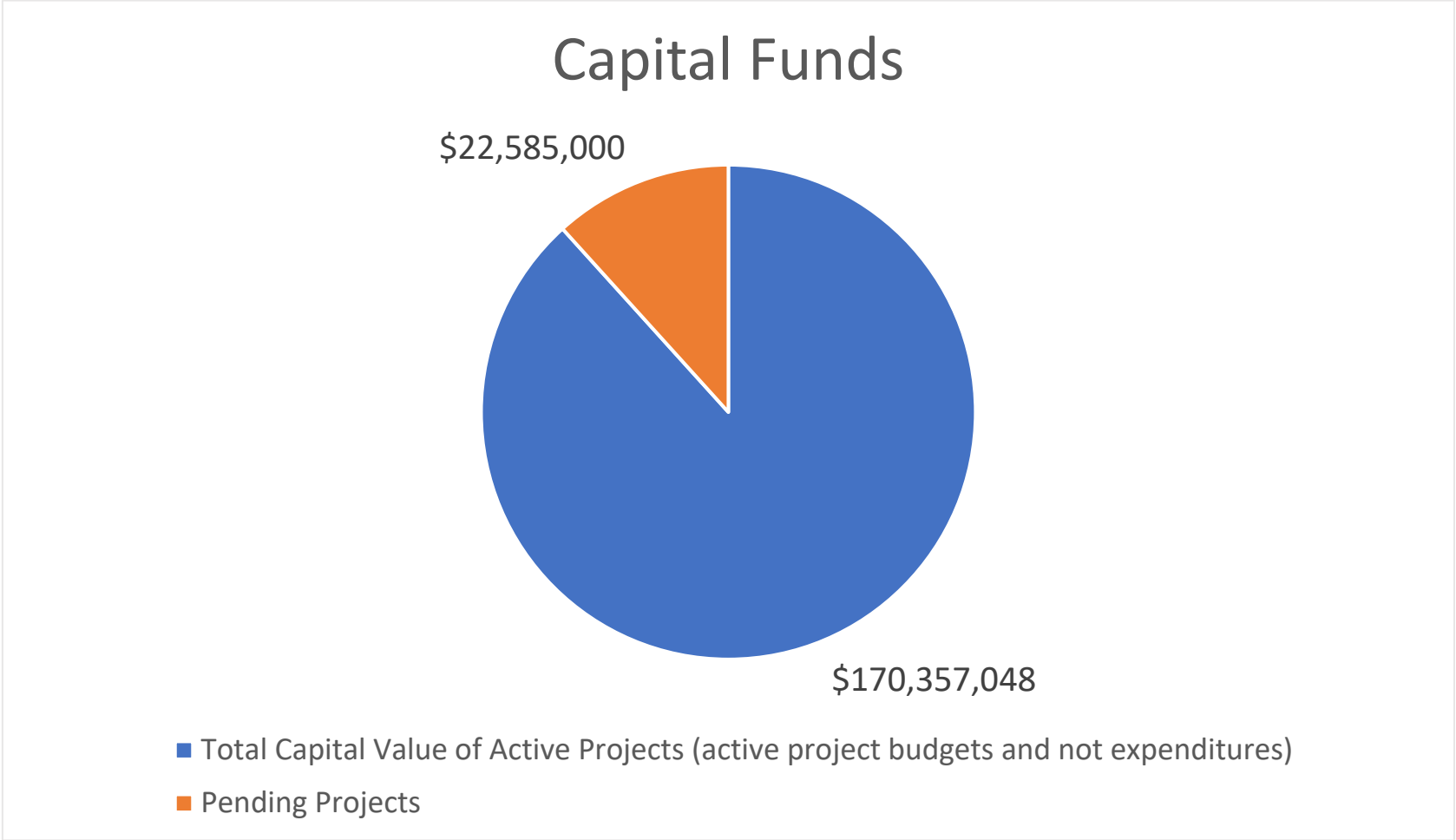
Enjoy

- **Preserving History & Updating Amenities**
 - Renovated **CCC-era Douthat Lodge**; construction started on 30+ cabins at Westmoreland & First Landing.
 - **Lake Anna State Park master plan** approved; Machicomoco State Park to be submitted next week for review.
- **Other Achievements**
 - **Environmental Education:** Launched **iseeVA** resource; hosted 3 K-12 educator trainings.
 - **Virginia PR Award:** Recognized for nationwide promotion of **EnChroma viewfinders** at state parks.



Current Capital Projects

Capital Funds



Current Capital Projects

Areas of Investment - Overnight

What have we done?

- Completed renovation of 25 cabins at Fairystone State Park
- Completed renovation of 30 cabins at Douthat State Park
- Completed restoration of historic Douthat Lodge at Douthat State Park
- Completed campground improvements at Claytor Lake and Westmoreland State Parks

What are we doing?

- Improving utilities, improving campground facilities, and improving ADA access at Bear Creek Lake, Fairystone, First Landing, Westmoreland, and Grayson Highlands State Park.
- Renovation of 26 cabins at Westmoreland State Park
- Renovation of 10 cabins at First Landing State Park

What is needed?

- Restoration of cabins at Hungry Mother State Park
- Continued campground improvements

Current Capital Projects

Areas of Investment – Key Maintenance

Critical System and Building Maintenance

- \$7.1 M in roof replacements in five contracts impacting nearly every park in the system.
- Multiple HVAC (\$1M) and paving (\$1.8) projects.
- \$6.5 M in housing replacements.
- \$3.1M in utility infrastructure repairs.

Shoreline Stabilization and Resilience

- \$14.8M at Westmoreland State Park
- \$1M at Widewater State Park
- \$2.2M at Belle Isle State Park in a joint project with USACE

Current Capital Projects

Areas of Investment – Historic Preservation & Visitor Services

Historic Site Improvements

- \$4M in repairs and restoration at the historic pre-1800 Belle Isle Manor (joint NPS / DCR funding)

Visitor Facilities

- \$4 M in repairs to the pool at Natural Tunnel State Park
- \$6M in Visitor Center Upgrades (EDA Grant)
- Replacement of the Boat Ramp at Kiptopeke State Park
- Design and development of a Visitor Center at Twin Lakes State Park

Current Capital Projects

Pending Projects - \$22.6M

Repair Lake Edmonds Dam
Staunton River State Park
\$1.9M

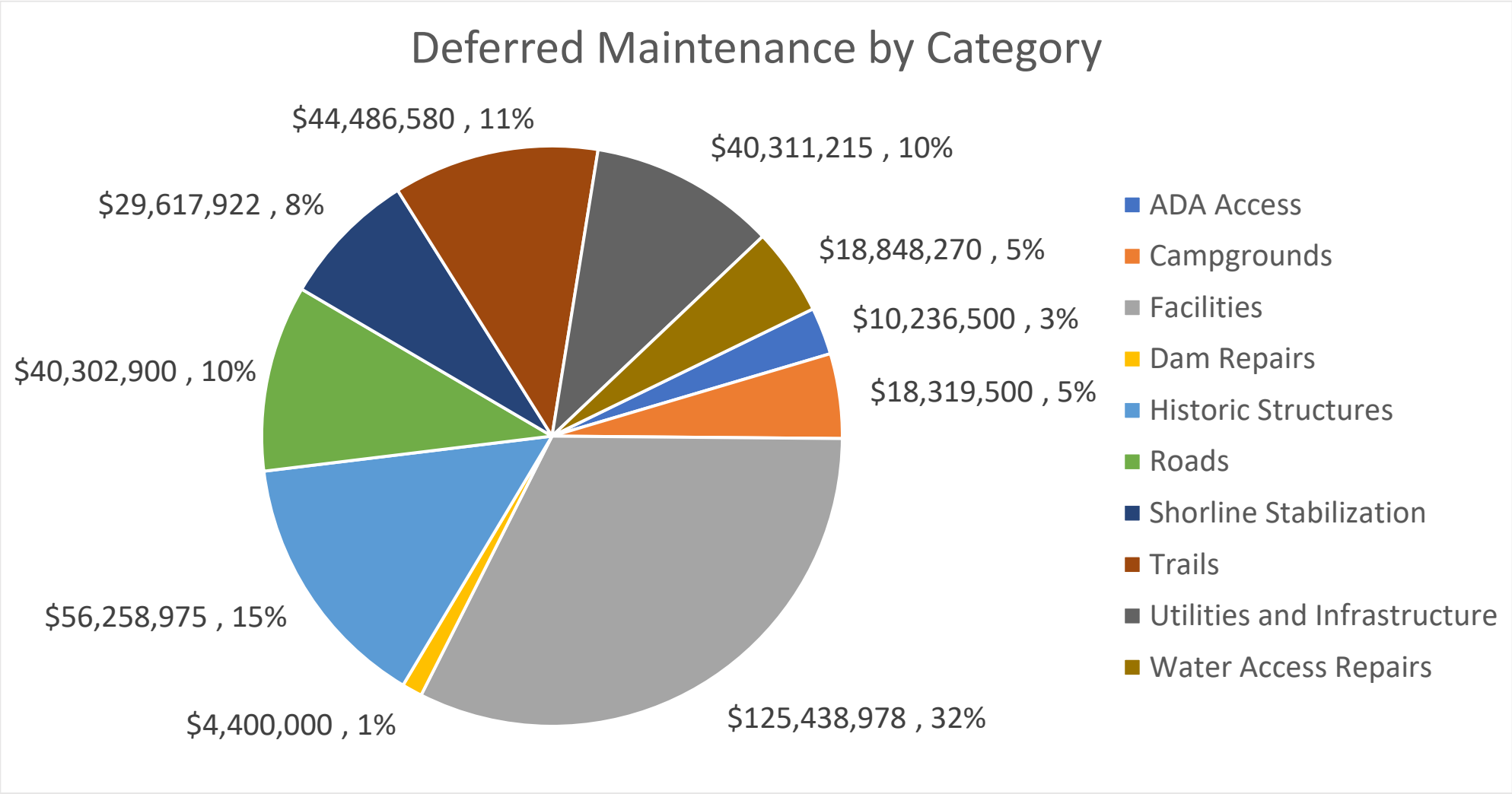
Restoration and
Improvements at Green
Pastures Recreation Area
Douthat State Park
\$5M

Maintenance Facility,
Residential Repairs, Paving,
and other Improvements
Machicomico State Park
\$2.66M

Replace Underground
Storage Tanks - Phase I
Multiple Parks
\$3M

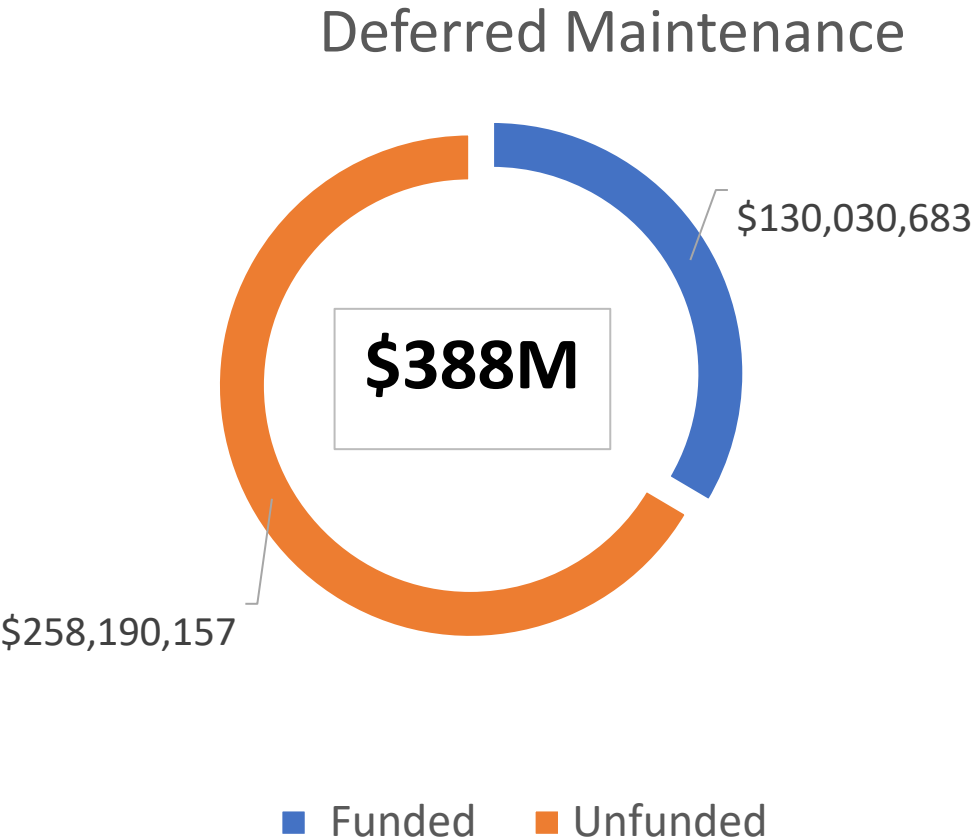
Phase II Development
Widewater State Park
\$10M

Deferred Maintenance Known Needs



Deferred Maintenance

Addressing Needs



Funding Allocations	
Capital Project 18490	\$16,158,000
FY23 Budget	\$96,061,350
FY25 Budget	\$ 7,200,000
FY25 MR	\$ 9,761,333
Note: FY23 includes a pool fund estimate	
Note: Not all MR is allocated to the DML	

Deferred Maintenance

Addressing Needs

Making Progress

- \$45M either expended or obligated
- 5 key projects to complete in 2027 - \$23M

Limiting Factors

- The capital process can be lengthy
- DCR projects are often smaller and geographically spread out
- DCR has limited project management staff

ARPA Capital Projects

State Parks Supplemental - \$18.1M

- Trail Bridge Rehabilitation - New River Trail SP
- Cabin renovation - Douthat SP and Fairystone SP
- Lodge restoration - Douthat SP
- Pool demolition - Westmoreland SP
- Campground improvements - Bear Creek Lake SP, Claytor Lake SP, Fairystone SP, First Landing SP, Garyson Highlands SP, and Westmoreland SP.
- Visitor Center - High Bridge Trail SP

Natural Area Preserve Access - \$6.9M

- New trails and parking - Crow's Nest NAP* and Bald Knob NAP
- New public access -The Cedars NAP*
- Restoration of public access -North Landing River NAP*

ARPA Capital Projects

New River Trail State Park



ARPA Capital Projects

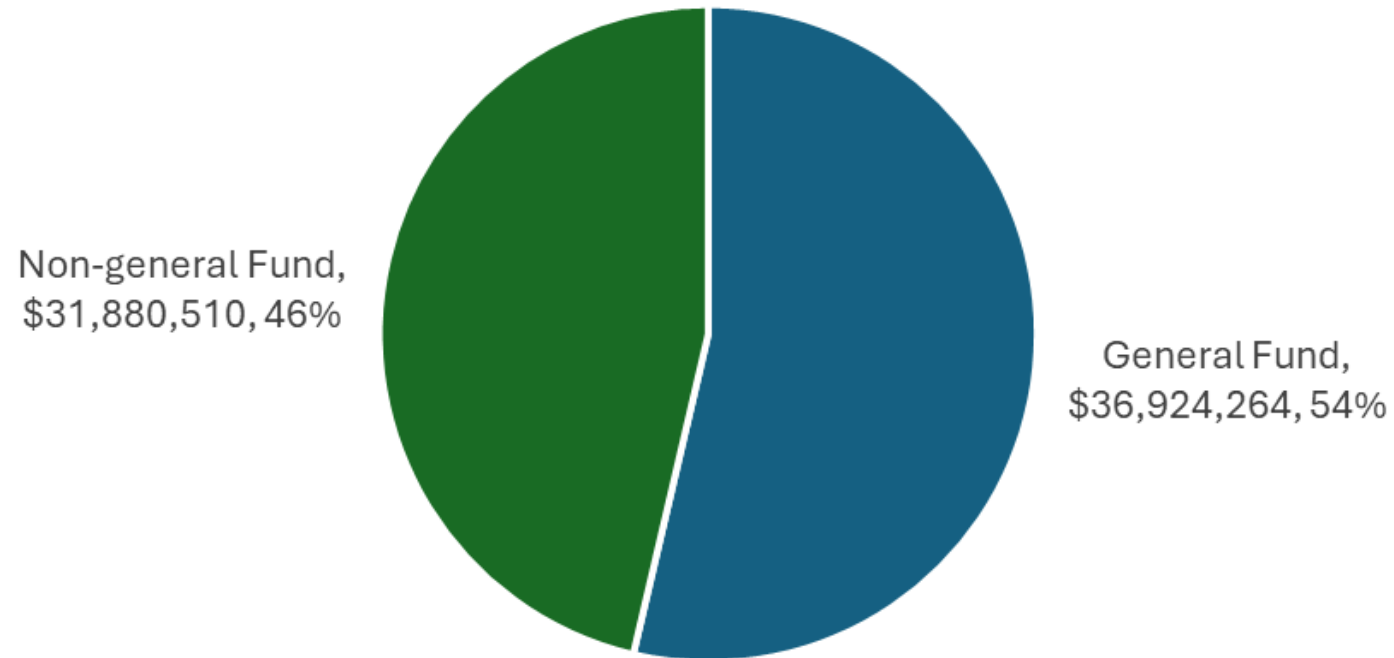
High Bridge Trail Visitors Center



State Park Revenue & Revenue Optimization

Funding Sources

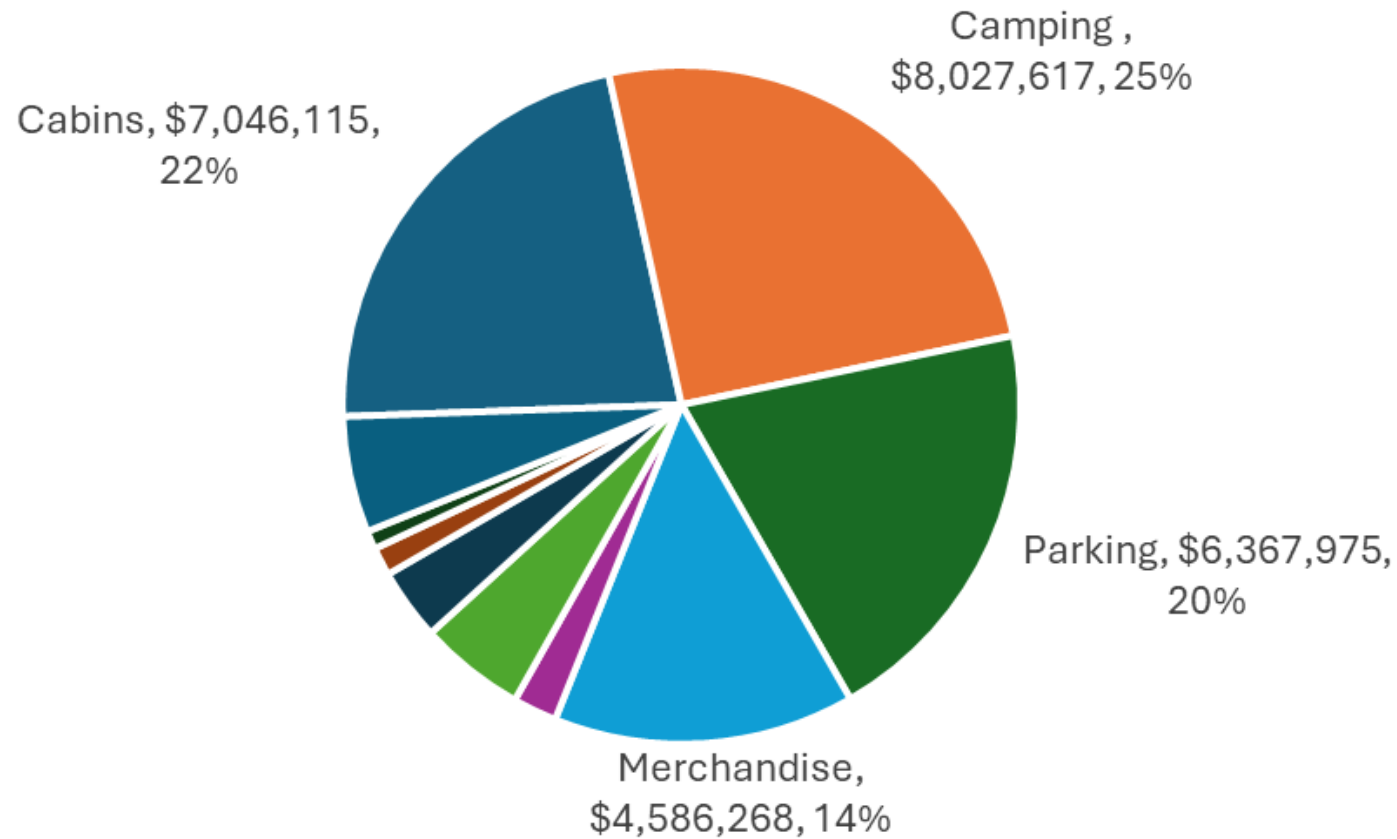
Division of State Parks - Operating Funding



State Park Revenue & Revenue Optimization

NGF Sources

Division of State Parks - Operating Funding



State Park Revenue & Revenue Optimization

NGF Sources

General Fund	Amount	% of Total Budget	% of GF Budget
	\$36,924,264	54%	100%

Non-general Funds	Amount	% of Total Budget	% of GF Budget
Cabins	\$7,046,115	10%	22%
Camping	\$8,027,617	12%	25%
Parking	\$6,367,975	9%	20%
Merchandise	\$4,586,268	7%	14%
Swimming	\$669,918	1%	2%
Admission	\$1,614,516	2%	5%
Reservation Fees	\$1,090,341	2%	3%
Food & Bev	\$430,572	1%	1%
Rentals	\$281,597	0%	1%
Other	\$1,765,591	3%	6%
Total NGF	\$31,880,510	46%	100%

Total Budget	\$68,804,774
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State Park Revenue and Revenue Optimization

Merchandise Maximization



- 60 Retail Establishments in 44 State Parks
- \$4.6M in retail sales
 - covers 7% of the state parks operating budget
- **Retail Goals:**
 - Maximize revenue generation from retail sales
 - Appropriate operation to balance customer need and regional impact
 - Utilize retail sales to support educational mission components

State Park Revenue and Revenue Optimization

Merchandise Maximization

- **Planograms & Merchandising:** Visual merchandising training (March 17, 2026) will include KPMG recommendations; planograms for each park will be developed with Retail Coordinator support.
- **Optimized SKUs:** Eliminating low sellers and reinvesting in top performers improves results; process will expand systemwide use KPMG insights
- **Online Store:** Planned 2026 launch with shirts, stickers, ornaments, and gift cards; QR code signage will direct visitors.
- **Dashboards & Training:** Inventory and sales dashboards created; additional district-wide training planned for Winter / Spring 2026
- **Tiered Procurement:** Moving towards centralized purchasing to expand statewide merchandise lines, leverage discounts, and reduce ranger workload.

Soil & Water Maintenance Projects

Priority Ranking	Dam Name	District	Estimated Cost for Rehabilitation	Current stage
1	South River Dam #19	Headwaters	\$2,900,000.00	Substantial completed
2	Leatherwood Creek Dam #5	Blue Ridge	\$14,000,000.00	Construction (summer of 2026)
3	Johns Creek Dam # 1	Mountain Castles	\$9,400,000.00	Design
4	Johns Creek Dam # 2	Mountain Castles	\$7,400,000.00	Planning
5	Leatherwood Creek Dam #2A	Blue Ridge	\$6,300,000.00	Planning (nearly complete)
6	Leatherwood Creek Dam #3	Blue Ridge	\$8,300,000.00	Planning (nearly complete)
7	Buffalo Creek Dam # 4	Piedmont	\$7,700,000.00	
8	Bush River Dam # 4B	Piedmont	\$7,500,000.00	
Subtotal			\$63,500,000.00	



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