

**HOUSE SUMMARY OF SENATE AMENDMENTS****HB 762****2022 Regular Session****Zeringue**

CONSERVATION: Creates and provides for the Louisiana Outdoors Forever Program

**Synopsis of Senate Amendments**

1. Makes technical changes.
2. Exempts Caddo and Bossier Parish parks from size requirements for state parks.
3. Adds an effective date.

**Digest of Bill as Finally Passed by Senate**

Present law provides for the offices and agencies within the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Proposed law adds the La. Outdoors Forever Program to the list of agencies within the department.

Proposed law creates a special account known as the La. Outdoors Forever Fund within the Conservation Fund for the purpose of funding the La. Outdoors Forever Program.

Proposed law creates a La. Outdoors Forever Program, which will be governed by a project selection board and advised by a technical advisory board.

Proposed law provides that the project selection board will make all final decisions about which projects will be selected for funding and will have the following subject matter members:

- (1) The governor or his designee.
- (2) The executive assistant to the governor for coastal activities or his designee.
- (3) The lieutenant governor or his designee from the office of state parks.
- (4) The commissioner of the Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry or his designee.
- (5) The secretary of the Dept. of Environmental Quality or his designee.
- (6) The secretary of the Dept. of Natural Resources or his designee.
- (7) The secretary of the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries or his designee.
- (8) The speaker of the House of Representatives or his designee. (nonvoting)
- (9) The president of the Senate or his designee. (nonvoting)

Proposed law provides that the technical advisory board will evaluate applications submitted under the program and provide recommendations to the project selection board. Specifies that the technical advisory board will consist of up to three representatives from nonprofit conservation groups in the state and subject matter representatives from:

- (1) The office of the governor.
- (2) The division of administration.

- (3) The office of coastal activities.
- (4) The office of state parks.
- (5) The Dept. of Agriculture and Forestry.
- (6) The Dept. of Environmental Quality.
- (7) The Dept. of Natural Resources.
- (8) The Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Proposed law provides that eligible applicants for program funding are state and local government entities as well as nongovernmental organizations working in coordination with public agencies.

Proposed law provides that the program is voluntary and does not invoke eminent domain.

Proposed law provides that certain types of conservation projects are eligible for funding under the program, including:

- (1) Land conservation of important natural areas, including fish and wildlife habitat.
- (2) Water quality projects related to land conservation or land management, including those lands that protect drinking water supplies.
- (3) Working land, farms, and forested land.
- (4) Recreational properties related to important natural areas and public use.
- (5) Historic properties adjacent to or integral to habitat restoration or enhancement.

Proposed law requires that projects be evaluated and selected based on a clear, defensible, science-based process, which will be detailed in rules promulgated by the Dept. of Wildlife and Fisheries.

Proposed law requires that applications and information about applying be provided online.

Proposed law specifies that the program and all board activities will be subject to public meetings, public records, and ethics code requirements.

Proposed law specifies that the program will sunset on July 1, 2033.

Present law provides categories of classification of state parks, including, in pertinent part, size. Present law exempts state parks currently within the system from the size requirements.

Proposed law exempts Caddo and Bossier Parish parks from the size requirements for state parks.

Effective upon governor's signature.

(Amends R.S. 56:1684(D); Adds R.S. 36:610(B)(13) and R.S. 56:10(B)(17) and 1931-1936)