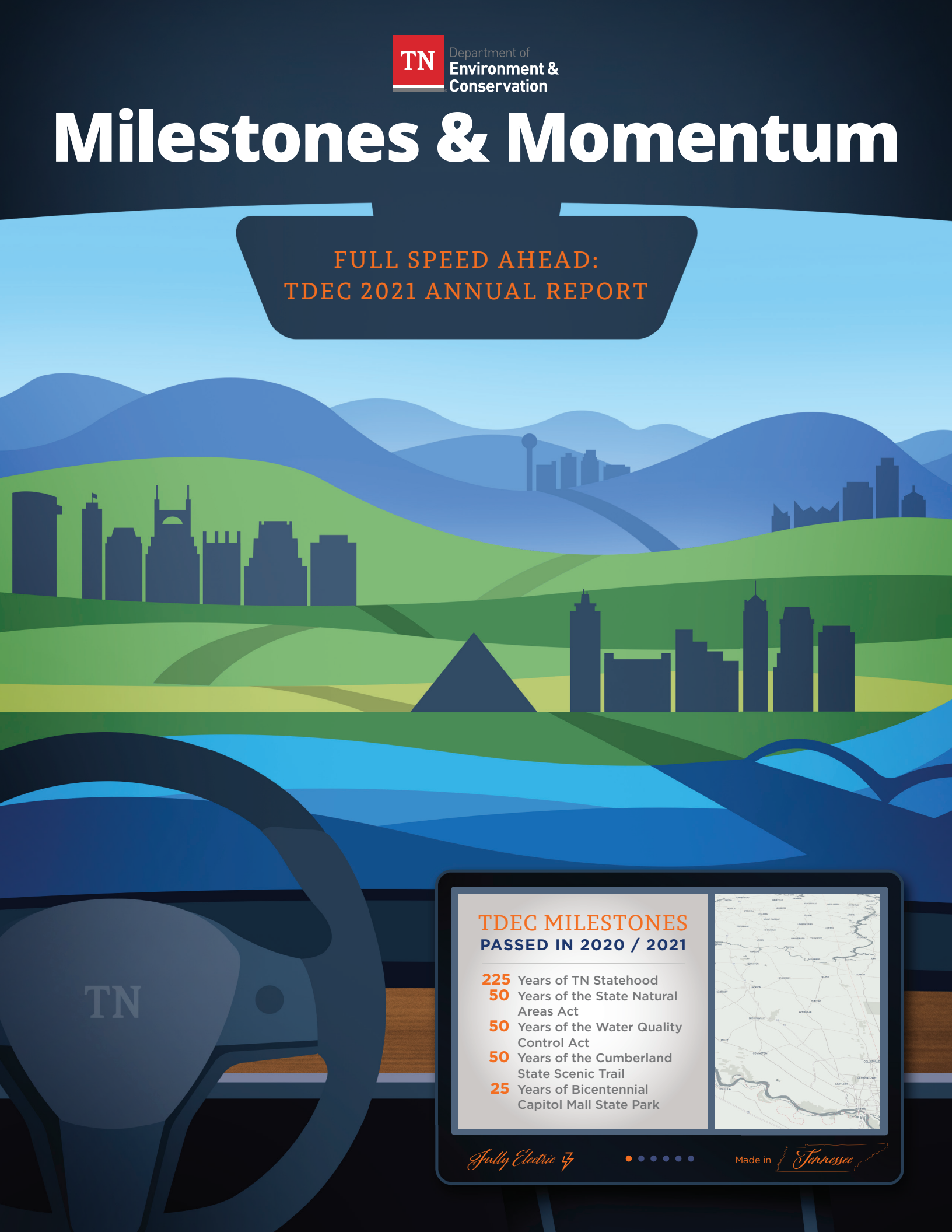


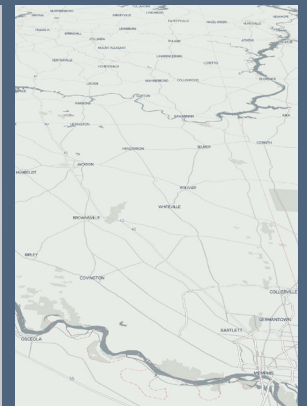
# Milestones & Momentum

FULL SPEED AHEAD:  
TDEC 2021 ANNUAL REPORT



## TDEC MILESTONES PASSED IN 2020 / 2021

- 225** Years of TN Statehood
- 50** Years of the State Natural Areas Act
- 50** Years of the Water Quality Control Act
- 50** Years of the Cumberland State Scenic Trail
- 25** Years of Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park



# TDEC by the Numbers for FY21

**E**nvironment and Conservation is one of the most dynamic departments in state government. Our responsibilities and results are reflected in the following list of workload statistics for Fiscal Year 2020-21. Our work makes a positive impact for the environment, outdoor recreation and quality of life enjoyed by Tennesseans. This year, many of our outcomes have either set records or significantly increased year over year.

## DEPARTMENT WIDE

**94** Percentage of **TDEC customers satisfied or extremely satisfied** with their interactions with the department based on survey

**2,656** Budgeted positions (FT & PT) [Reflects **5% reduction** in positions since FY15]  
 • 1,510 in Parks & Conservation  
 • 1,146 in environmental protection programs and Central Office

## BUREAU OF PARKS AND CONSERVATION

**56** State Parks

**84** State Natural Areas

**236,789** Total acres managed by TDEC

**517,986** Campsite nights sold **[up 60%]**

**75,055** Cabin room nights sold **[up 50%]**

**38,479,000** Visits to TN State Parks **[up 10%]**

## BUREAU OF ENVIRONMENT

**55,298** Permit reviews and decisions made **[up 13%]**

**18,319** New and repair permits issued for septic systems **[Up 38%; a 2x increase since FY14]**

**1,860** Acres released for reuse or redevelopment on 45 different sites through TDEC's Voluntary Brownfield Program **[up 28%]**

**100** % of Tennesseans who live in areas meeting federal air quality standards

**99.7** % of TDEC permit application decisions made within regulatory time limits

**93.2** % of non-compliant facilities returning to compliance within specified terms

# Commissioner's Letter

**I have been part of TDEC for a number of years, including the last three years as commissioner.**

We've made a lot of progress as a department over that period. We run effective programs and a nationally recognized park system, but we are also innovative, creative, and always seeking to improve. We have expanded our outreach, education and assistance for citizens, communities and regulated entities so they can be more aware and involved in environmental protection and natural resource conservation. As Deputy Commissioner Greg Young is fond of saying, "TDEC is now seen as a vital resource, not just a regulator."

The results you will see in this Annual Report provide evidence of this advancement and demonstrate our heightened level of responsiveness to and partnership with stakeholders. I'm pleased to note that TDEC is not just doing more with less, it's doing better with less.

Much of this success is due to a fresh approach that stresses cooperation and collaboration with partners across communities. This new way of thinking allows us to meet our mission while continually looking for ways to improve service, modernize operations, and ensure Tennessee seizes the advantage in emerging areas ranging from advanced manufacturing to once-in-a-generation infrastructure investment.

This Annual Report reflects my belief that the quality of life we enjoy in Tennessee is a direct result of both our clean environment and vibrant economy. In fact, I believe that the economic growth we are experiencing today would not be possible without our clean environment. Our department is a

national example of how this harmony can be reached. I thank each citizen and every stakeholder for helping us make this happen today, so we have even brighter tomorrows.



David W. Salyers, P.E.



TDEC's Executive Leadership Team from left to right: Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Parks and Conservation Jim Bryson, General Counsel Jenny Howard, Commissioner David W. Salyers, Chief of Staff Karen S. Simo, and Deputy Commissioner for the Bureau of Environment Greg T. Young



# Underground Storage Tank Fees Suspended for Five Years

One aspect of TDEC's mission that may not get the attention it deserves – because so much of the regulated activity is literally unseen – is the outstanding work of the Division of Underground Storage Tanks.

The division has managed the number of cleanups from storage tank leaks in Tennessee so well that the state ranks first in the nation in completion of cleanup projects. The division has also managed the fund that covers cleanups so well, that the board governing the process has suspended fees from tank owners for the next five years. This will save those tank owners \$10 million.

Thanks to this management, the Division of Underground Storage Tanks is running a program where:

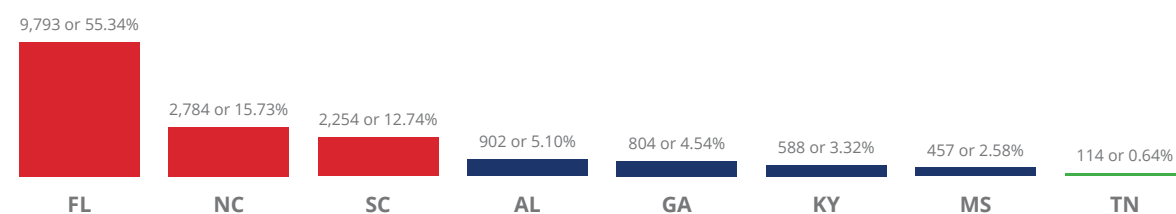
- Tennessee has the highest percentage of completed cleanups in the nation at 99.25 percent.
- The state has the best ratio in the nation of active tanks to cleanup projects, with 135.5 active tanks for every cleanup.
- The state has the lowest backlog of cleanups among its counterparts in Region IV of the Environmental Protection Agency, which includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina and South Carolina.
- Tennessee has the eighth lowest backlog of cleanups in the nation, but that's even better than it looks, because no state with an equal or greater number of tanks has a lower backlog than Tennessee.

The division manages the Petroleum Underground Storage Tank Fund as a financial assurance mechanism to pay for cleanups, working like an environmental insurance plan. In 2004, the fund had become insolvent. Tank owners agreed to a one-time fee that raised nearly \$9.5 million to match \$10 million from the state, and the result was a long course of progress that has made the fund actuarially sound, leading to the suspension of the annual \$125 per compartment fee.

The board expanded the fund to cover more underground storage tank sites and lowered deductibles for sites with the best compliance records. It also implemented a sliding deductible scale for sites that were found to have violations at the time of a product release. These sites would have previously lost fund coverage.

These accomplishments are the result of diligent management and a partnership between TDEC and tank owners to work together. As a result, the system protects human health and the environment, preventing underground petroleum leaks and remediating contamination, serving all Tennesseans.

Region IV States Total Cleanup Backlog and % of Region IV Backlog • September 30, 2020



**5**  
Tank fees are suspended for 5 years.

**10**  
Tank owners will save \$10 million.

**99.25%**  
Tennessee has the highest percentage of completed cleanups in the nation at 99.25%.

**#1**  
Tennessee has the lowest backlog of cleanups among the EPA Region IV states.



"The members of the Tennessee Fuel & Convenience Store Association (TFCA) would like to thank all the staff who work with tank owners in Tennessee. Over the years, the industry and the division have formed a terrific working relationship. This has resulted in tough, but fair rules that are in line with federal requirements.

TFCA is glad that the division has always been forward thinking and has welcomed new technology and innovation in tank management. The division's management has been key in reducing cost of cleanup. TFCA welcomed the practical and business-friendly decision by the division and the UST/Solid Waste Board to move for a temporary waiver of tank fees. With additional funds available, it makes sense to do the absolute best possible for the environment that all Tennesseans benefit from."

- Emily LeRoy, Executive Director of the Tennessee Fuel & Convenience Store Association



# Team Tennessee Lands Blue Oval City at the Memphis Regional Megasite

**T**DEC played a pivotal role in bringing Ford Motor Company and SK Innovation to the Memphis Regional Megasite to build one of the largest battery and vehicle manufacturing plants in the country: Blue Oval City.

From the outset of discussions with Ford and SK, a team of TDEC professionals, representing the Divisions of Water Resources and Air Pollution Control, worked alongside the Tennessee Department of Economic and Community Development (TNECD) to ensure the recruitment process was as thorough, timely and seamless as possible. TDEC’s commitment to advancing economic development, through a responsible environmental regulatory system focused on protection and promotion of human health and safety, was highlighted by TNECD as a major selling point. TDEC’s willingness to engage with complex permitting processes and deliver firm timelines gave Ford and SK the confidence they needed to locate their \$5.6 billion production facility in Tennessee.

“Ford’s decision to locate as the first tenant at the Memphis Regional Megasite will change the landscape in West Tennessee and further strengthen our state’s automotive ecosystem,” TNECD Commissioner Bob Rolfe said. “This project would not have been possible without the support of our partners, including TDEC who played a valuable role from the early conversations with Ford’s leadership and engineering teams. Having them at the table gave Ford and SK Innovation the assurance that they could achieve their goal of manufacturing high-quality electric vehicles in Tennessee while also focusing on their sustainability efforts.”

TDEC is no stranger to collaborating with the automotive industry, having previously worked to bring Nissan, Volkswagen, and GM to the state, and has a unique understanding of how to develop solid and sustainable infrastructure to contribute to the long-term success of these companies.

## Closed Loop Manufacturing Ecosystem

An ecosystem where materials can be reused at the end of a vehicle’s life to make more new vehicles



The timeliness and expertise of the Division of Water Resources kept the discussions on track and its high level of confidence in permitting capabilities and timelines was instrumental in the success of the deal. Now that the project is moving to its next stage, the Division of Water Resources is ready to make the permitting process for the Megasite a top priority.

The Division of Air Pollution Control contributed by responding to inquiries about Tennessee’s air quality, permitting and modeling requirements for complex automotive development. Despite a heavy workload in other areas due to the industry Tennessee continues to attract, the division provided experts to inform and assist throughout the recruitment process.

Blue Oval City will be located on a 3,600-acre campus near the southwest corner of Tennessee. It will be Ford’s first closed loop manufacturing ecosystem. The company defines this as an ecosystem where materials can be reused at the end of a vehicle’s life to make new vehicles. Ford and SK Innovation will employ strategies such as battery recycling, water reuse and recycling, zero waste to landfill and renewable energy to close the loop.

Beginning in 2025, this facility, the largest and most advanced of Ford’s production plants, will produce all-electric F-Series trucks, including the Ford F-150 Lightning. Blue Oval City is expected to provide over 5,800 jobs, and an additional 27,000 to the surrounding area.

Gov. Bill Lee said Ford’s decision to call Tennessee home was a “watershed moment” for the state. This decision is one of many examples of how TDEC continues to successfully protect the land, air, and water for the benefit of all Tennesseans while helping position the state as an attractive location for the world’s largest businesses.



Ronné Adkins and Kathryn Schulte from TDEC’s Office of External Affairs attended the announcement with Governor Lee.



# Tennessee Accelerates as the Nation's Electric Vehicle Epicenter

Tennessee is at the forefront of a game-changing shift in transportation – the acceleration of electric vehicles (EVs) – and TDEC sits in the front seat in embracing the change.

TDEC announced a partnership in 2021 with the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) to install fast-charging stations for EVs every 50 miles along the state's major highways. It didn't stop there. The department reached an agreement with automaker Rivian to install charging stations at Tennessee State Parks, with a goal of having stations at all 56 parks. That will help remove range anxiety for park visitors who are concerned about access in remote locations, and at no cost to taxpayers.

These agreements demonstrate TDEC's recognition of a shift toward a new mode of transportation and the role the state can play in meeting demand. The distinct advantage is that these steps will benefit both the environment and the economy. The ready availability of the charging stations will keep EVs moving and reduce carbon emissions. The tie to Tennessee State Parks means the communities near the parks will enjoy an economic boost, and the convenience adds to the appeal of state parks to potential visitors.

Tennessee is No. 1 in the Southeast for EV manufacturing, with more than 16,000 EVs produced in the state each year. The state is a major hub, with Nissan, Volkswagen and General Motors already either making or planning to make EVs in the state. Gov. Bill Lee in September announced the Ford Motor Company has selected the Memphis Regional Megasite for one of the largest battery and vehicle manufacturing campuses in the United States. Large EVs for some communities in Tennessee are being funded by Tennessee's Volkswagen Diesel Settlement Environmental Mitigation Trust allocation. TDEC administers those funds for the state.

According to Drive Electric Tennessee, a broad team of stakeholders from both government and the private sector, as of June 2021, Tennessee had 13,811 EVs registered. The group anticipates having 200,000 EVs on the road in the state by 2028.

TDEC's participation in the early stages of EVs show its determination to capitalize on all the benefits of new technology. The partnerships with TVA and Rivian show not only that TDEC sees the potential of EVs, but that others are confident in the relationship with TDEC. The department helps keep the state on the cutting edge of this exciting facet of modern transportation.

**\$11.9 BILLION**  
in capital investment announcements for EV projects since 2017

**#1 STATE**  
in the Southeast for EV manufacturing

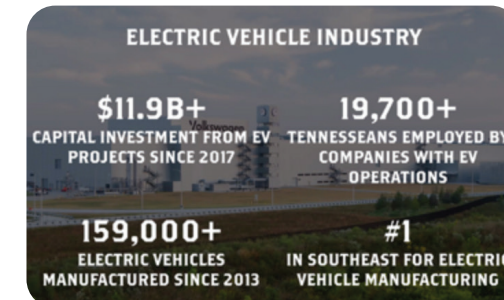
**19,700 TENNESSEANS**  
currently employed by companies with EV operations

**50 MILES**  
maximum distance between TV fast-charging stations planned on major highways

**56 STATE PARKS**  
are targeted for Rivian charging stations

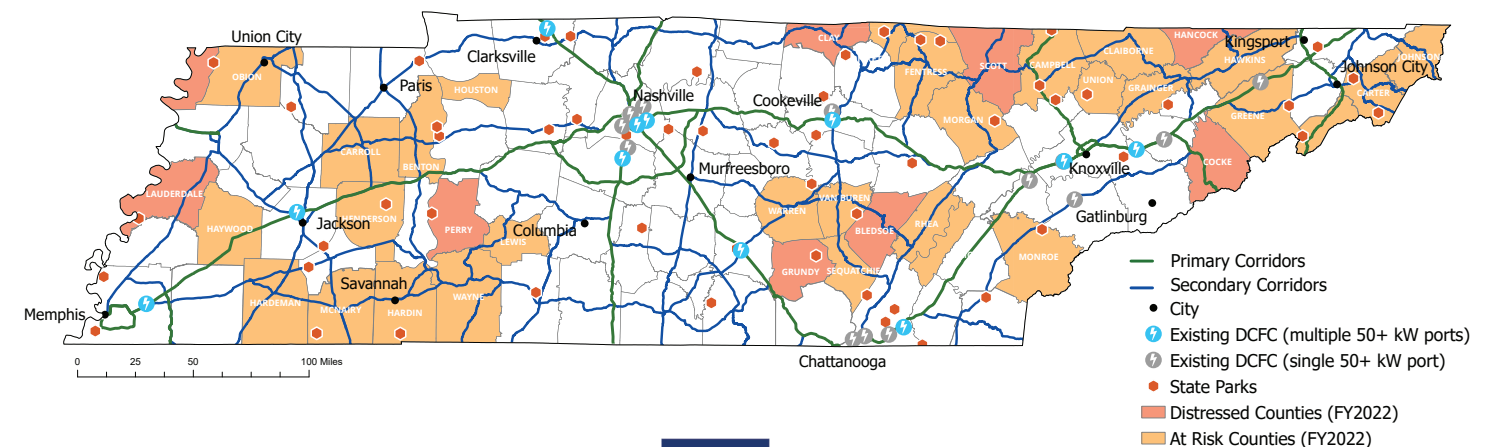


Leaders from TDEC and Rivian Automotive cut the ribbon on the first Rivian charging station at Radnor Lake State Park on Oct. 1, 2021. TN State Parks' first EV, a Nissan Leaf, is among the first to receive a charge.



## Tennessee Electric Vehicle Charging Opportunity Map

Primary & Secondary Corridors With State Parks + Distressed & At Risk Counties (July 2021)





# State Parks Contribute \$2.1 Billion to Tennessee Economy in 2021

**T**ennessee State Parks are boosting the economy for communities across the state. A study of parks activity in 2021 showed state parks had an economic impact of \$2.1 billion in Tennessee. The robust financial picture reflected 38.5 million visits to the parks.

The success was underscored by a desire to get outdoors during the COVID-19 pandemic. The circumstance created a demand, and the parks met it. Tennesseans showed their reliance on the parks, and the parks proved worthy of expectations. This helped local communities with their bottom line at a time business across the state was severely challenged. The parks remain primed for more of the same.

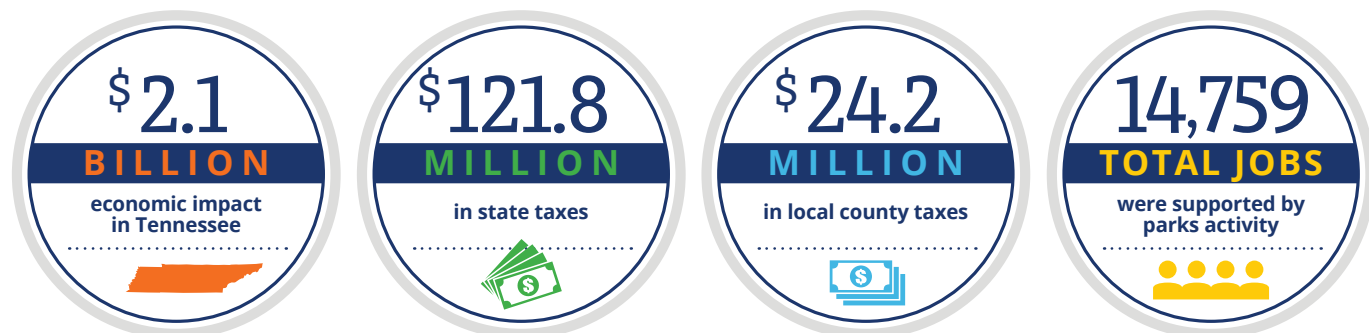
The economic impact report, conducted by consulting firm Impact DataSource, found \$2.1 billion in economic impact from operations and visitor spending, along with \$144.7 million from capital projects, and \$31.8 million from facilities and land management maintenance projects.

**The report also found:**

- 14,759 total jobs were supported by parks activity.
- \$121.8 million in state taxes were reflected in parks activity, which is more than double what the state general fund contributes to state parks.
- \$24.4 million in local county taxes were generated from parks activity.

Yet the story doesn't end there. Significant optimism surrounds the expectation of even more success with major capital projects representing \$184 million in investments beginning to come online. The world-class Lodge at Fall Creek Falls State Park opened in January 2022, and the Lodge at Paris Landing State Park is not far behind. Last year, parks opened several facilities including the Lodge at Montgomery Bell State Park, a renovation of the Lodge at Pickwick Landing State Park, and visitors centers at Fall Creek Falls and Cummins Falls state parks. TDEC will unveil a new visitors center and restaurant at Henry Horton State Park in the spring of 2022. All these projects are made possible by the support of the Tennessee General Assembly.

The parks have been not only a source of escape for Tennesseans but a business generator for neighbors of the parks, all of which makes the parks and the communities nearby thrive.



**TENNESSEE STATE PARKS ECONOMIC IMPACT**  
Your visits, and our investments benefited this beautiful State!

**IN 2021 ALONE ...**

- \$2.1 BILLION** STATEWIDE IMPACT into the Tennessee Economy that grew adventure, livelihoods, and jobs
- 38.5 MILLION VISITORS** up 5% from 2020 - to 56 State Parks - fueling, shopping and lodging in your communities along the way
- \$176 MILLION INVESTMENTS IMPACT** Maintenance and Capital Improvement Projects from TN State Parks invested in TN communities
- \$36 MILLION GRANTS IMPACT** From Tennessee State Parks went directly to Counties in need

**RECREATION THAT BUILDS ECONOMIES**  
Start Your Visit at [TNStateParks.com](https://www.tnstateparks.com)

Figures used in this article represent activities during Fiscal Year 2020-2021.





# Customers View TDEC as a Resource, Not Just a Regulator

**Brett Sago – Senior HSES Director, Eastman Chemical Company**

Eastman Chemical Company has had a positive, collaborative relationship with TDEC for many years. As TDEC continues its mission of protecting the environment and public health through its well-established regulatory programs, it also recognizes the importance of supporting a growing Tennessee economy. With that mission in view, the leadership and staff of TDEC always seek to understand the needs and challenges Eastman faces and then work diligently to both ensure we maintain compliance with all applicable environmental regulations and have needed flexibility for growth.

**Bradley Jackson – President & CEO, Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry** The Tennessee Chamber of Commerce & Industry, as the state's largest broad based business & industry trade association, is appreciative of the collaborative spirit consistently demonstrated by Commissioner Salyers, Deputy Commissioner Young, and the entire TDEC leadership. Their willingness to dialogue and work with business and industry is essential to ensuring that Tennessee remains a top state for business and innovation while simultaneously excelling in environmental stewardship and sustainability.

**Scott Thomas, Bass, Berry & Sims PLC**

I am not aware of a brownfield program better than TDEC's. Tennessee's brownfield program does a great job of protecting human health and the environment and at the same time promoting the redevelopment of properties in the state. The program is responsive, which is critical to facilitate the complicated timing, financial and other business arrangements necessary for successful redevelopment projects.

**Stefan Maupin – Director, Public Policy Division, Tennessee Farm Bureau Federation**

The Tennessee Farm Bureau values its working relationship with the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, Bureau of Environment. Farmers have a deep and long-standing interest in protection of the environment based upon philosophical beliefs and practical self-interest. It is important farmers can trust individuals in government who handle environmental affairs. Efforts which aim to find solutions through conversation among all stakeholders, such as the Tennessee Nutrient Reduction Task Force, are highly regarded and appreciated by farmers as we seek to find voluntary and incentive-based approaches as opposed to stringent regulations while protecting the environment for all to enjoy.

**Kathy Hawes – Executive Director, Tennessee Clean Water Network**

Cleaning up and protecting an entire state's waterways is a job far beyond the capacity of one group or agency. Thankfully, and refreshingly, TDEC leadership has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to educate and assist dozens of boots-on-the-ground watershed groups that directly represent Tennesseans who live near, drink from, and recreate on our beautiful waters.

**Jay Mullis – Manager, DOE - Oak Ridge Office of Environmental Management**

Our partnership with TDEC continues to strengthen thanks to a shared desire to advance meaningful environmental cleanup in Oak Ridge. Under the current leadership, TDEC has embraced a solutions-oriented approach that is enabling a very safe and effective cleanup of DOE's legacies in Oak Ridge. This approach has led to historic achievements, such as completing all building demolitions at the East Tennessee Technology Park (ETTP) and removal of the massive Biology Complex at the Y-12 National Security Complex (Y-12). Cleanup at ETTP marked the first removal of an enrichment complex in the world, and now, through TDEC support, that land is being reused by the community for new economic opportunities.



**Richard Holland – External Affairs Manager, Packaging Corporation of America** Packaging Corporation of America (PCA) has numerous air emission sources that had separate permits for each emission point. PCA knew that future economic conditions would require an increase in production and wanted a better way to obtain permitting for expansion. PCA proposed to TDEC the use of a Plantwide Applicability Limitation (PAL) permit to simplify necessary permitting. TDEC, through its Air Pollution Control Division, reviewed and approved the permit change. This unique permit has allowed PCA to respond to increased customer demand for its product (corrugated boxes) and allowed PCA to operate at full capacity (and maintain full employment) during the Pandemic period. Without TDEC's issuance of this permit, PCA would not have been able to achieve the production rates needed.

**John Thornton – Chairman / CEO, Thunder Enterprises** I am a land developer with a 9,000 acre mountaintop community, Jasper Highlands, located in rural Marion County, TN. Under Mr. Salyers' and Mr. Young's leadership, we have seen a complete turnaround in TDEC's customer service. The communication, willingness to listen, problem solving skills, and transparency has been refreshing to say the least. We may not always agree on every issue, but we are no longer concerned about being treated fairly or with an open mind.

**Charles Schneider – CEO, Home Builders Association of Tennessee** TDEC has greatly improved in their willingness to listen to our frustrations and concerns. Often our activities occur at the friction point of property rights, land use and environmental regulations. In the last two years TDEC's Bureau the Environment has been receptive to our concerns to more accurately describe activities that occur during the practice of new construction. There will always be tension between our industry and our regulators. Nevertheless, today, we believe TDEC is more interested in partnering with all stakeholders to find effective solutions that match the complex activities in the real world.

**Doug Murphy – Executive Director, Duck River Agency** The Duck River Basin is experiencing a growth period that has become a driving force for the basin water systems to be looking for new ways to meet the water demands, which include improving existing infrastructure and building new facilities for water intakes and treatment plants. TDEC has stepped up to the plate supporting the request for new water supply projects by offering support from well qualified staff and giving clear direction on the processes needed to meet the needs of the basin water systems.

**Jeff Barrie – Executive Director, Tennessee Environmental Council** I really appreciate the time and expertise of everyone from TDEC who were very helpful and informative in developing what I hope will be a winning grant proposal and an ongoing collaboration to improve Tennessee's solid waste future.

**Charlie Floyd – Vice President, Domtar** June 21, 2021, marked a significant milestone for the Domtar Paper Company Kingsport, Tennessee operation as we received news that our State Air Permit had been issued. This allows our workforce to essentially begin the construction phase of the re-purposed mill into the company's first Packaging Business Operation. We want to make a positive environmental impact on our community and state AND get Domtar employees / Tennesseans back to work like we've been doing at this site since 1916!

**George Harvell – Director, Velsicol Chemical Corporation** The sale and ultimate redevelopment of the former Velsicol plant site in Chattanooga would not have happened without the help and support provided by numerous TDEC staff personnel. From meetings/phone calls with the prospective purchaser to answer their questions, to timely transfer of the RCRA permit to new owner and release of financial assurance. Responsiveness was great and communications more helpful getting this sale across the goal line. All done under some very strange and difficult pandemic conditions.

**Ed Tietjen – Vice President, Apex Bank** Frankly, I expected the inquiry to go into a typical "black hole" and never receive a response. In fact what happened is a response came within the same day that was very thorough and provided great input.

**Justin J. Pearson – Co-founder, Memphis Community Against the Pipeline (MCAP)** I'm writing to thank you, on behalf of our coalition and thousands of supporters, for making time to meet with us this past Friday. It was a productive meeting and wouldn't have happened without your willingness to meet and to engage with fellow citizens and stakeholders concerned about our state's water and people's future here.

**Todd Wood – President, DTWood Engineering** Our permit application was processed very efficiently. Time is money in the development world. The personnel and process for water line submissions and approvals with TDEC is very customer friendly.

**Tim Begley – City Engineer, City of Crossville** A large commercial development that will bring in outside money applied for permits. The permit approvals were emailed out on a Saturday and handled by upper management. The permitting process was moved at a fast pace, as to not delay the development, because of the economic impact to the community.

**Carol Mansour – Vice President, CFO Services** I filled out an application and submitted it online. The response came within ten minutes. I had gone through the process before in other states, and I am astounded with how quickly and efficiently the staff in Tennessee was able to answer my questions and process my application. I know you are all underpaid, overworked and under appreciated. Thank you for the service you render.



**Senator Frank S. Niceley – 1st Vice-Chair of Energy, Agriculture and Natural Resources Committee** This ain't your Daddy's TDEC.



# TDEC Prepares Once-in-a-Lifetime Water Infrastructure Investment Program

**T**DEC is ready to make the most of funds from the American Rescue Plan (ARP) to address one of the state's most pressing needs – water infrastructure across the state.

The federal law, signed in March, makes \$350 billion available to state and local governments to support continued public health response and economic recovery. One category of eligible expenditures is investment in critical infrastructure, including water and sewer infrastructure. Communities across the state rely on access to clean, reliable and abundant water resources. The infrastructure to make that happen is a critical need.

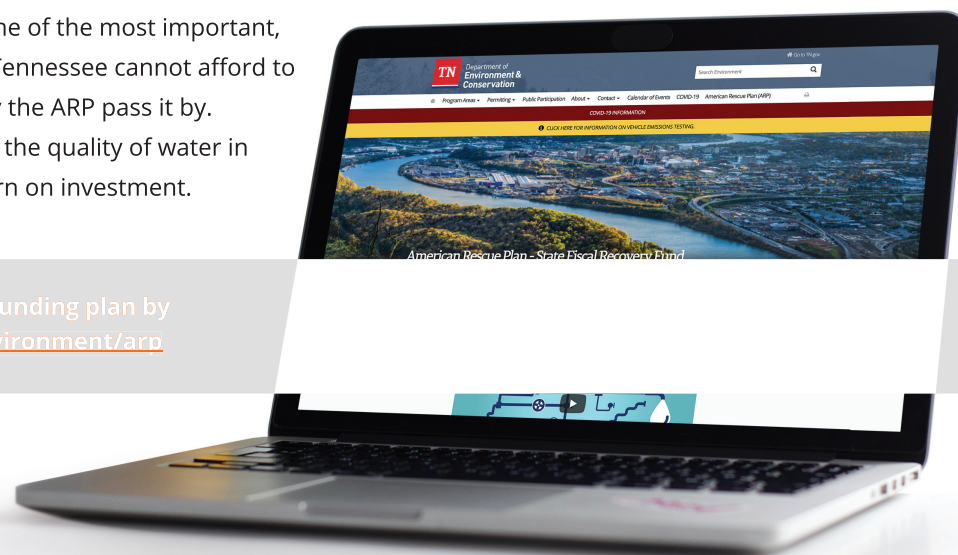
The State of Tennessee will receive \$3.91 billion under the ARP. The state is investing \$1.35 billion of the funds in water infrastructure. About \$1 billion of that will go to communities across the state through non-competitive, formula-based grants. The remainder goes to other strategic projects and administration of the funds. Any remaining money will go to competitive funding for other projects.

The state's need for water improvements involves not only drinking water, sewer services and stormwater management, but touches areas where water plays a significant role in the economy and quality of life. Those include agricultural activities, industrial operations, transportation on navigable waters, and recreation on lakes, rivers and streams that also feed the economy.

Reports from various agencies, including the TN H2O plan spearheaded by TDEC, point to necessary investment in water infrastructure ranging from \$5 billion to \$15 billion between 2018 and 2040. Water improvements from the ARP will help Tennessee absorb rapid growth in both the economy and its population. Access to efficient water systems is essential.

A dependable water system is one of the most important, fundamental needs for a state. Tennessee cannot afford to let the opportunity presented by the ARP pass it by. TDEC's investments will improve the quality of water in what promises to be a high return on investment.

Stay up to date on TDEC's ARP funding plan by visiting our website: [tn.gov/environment/arp](https://tn.gov/environment/arp)



TN H2O quantified the investment needed to repair and/or replace water and wastewater infrastructure between 2018 and 2040 to be \$15.6 billion.



**TN H<sub>2</sub>O**

TENNESSEE'S ROADMAP TO SECURING THE FUTURE OF OUR WATER RESOURCES

November 2018

[www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/wr-water-resources/tnh20.html](https://www.tn.gov/environment/program-areas/wr-water-resources/tnh20.html)



# College Students Solve Environmental Problems for Underserved Communities Through TN CUPP

When an underserved community needs help with a critical environmental or infrastructure project and lacks expertise, funding, or other resources to do the job, it can turn to a program known as TN CUPP, the Tennessee College and Underserved Community Partnership Program.

TDEC's Office of Sustainable Practices administers the program which is modeled after a similar program at the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), where the concept is to hook up the community with students and instructors at a local institution of higher learning. Students help solve the environmental issue for the community and gain hands-on experience while getting college credit; the community gets the assistance it needs at a lower cost, and professors add to their applied research portfolio for the college. Moreover, it benefits the environment and can bolster public health. It's a winning arrangement for everyone involved.

TDEC's subject matter experts and external partners, such as local government, community organizations, and consulting and engineering firms, are also critical contributors to making TN CUPP projects succeed.

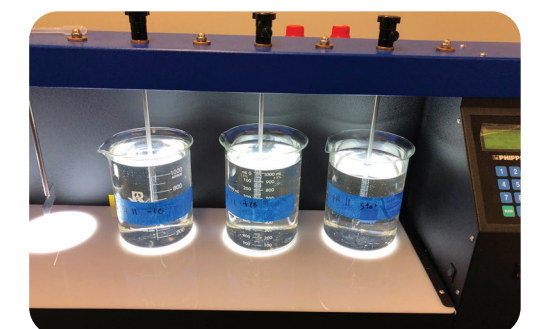
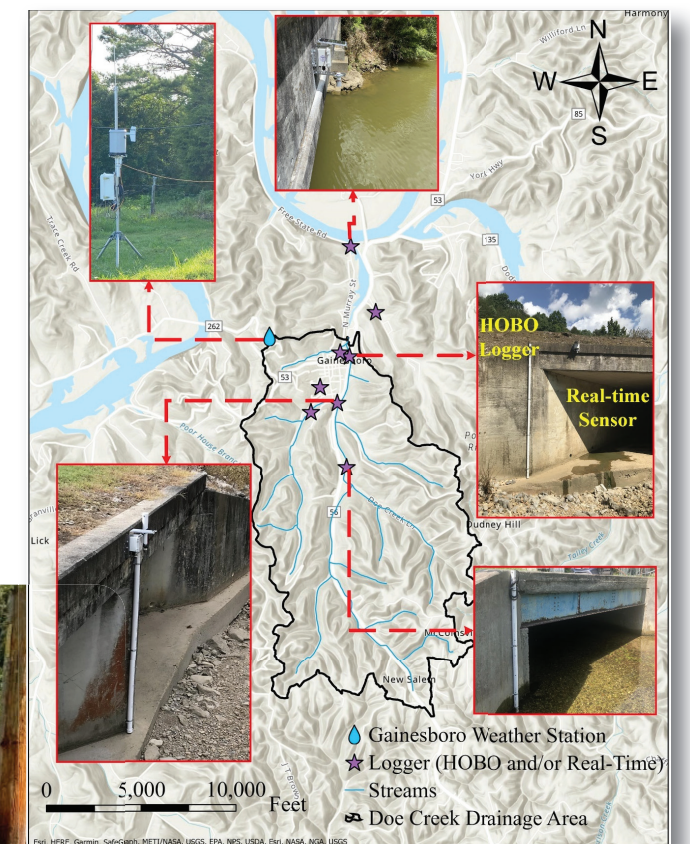
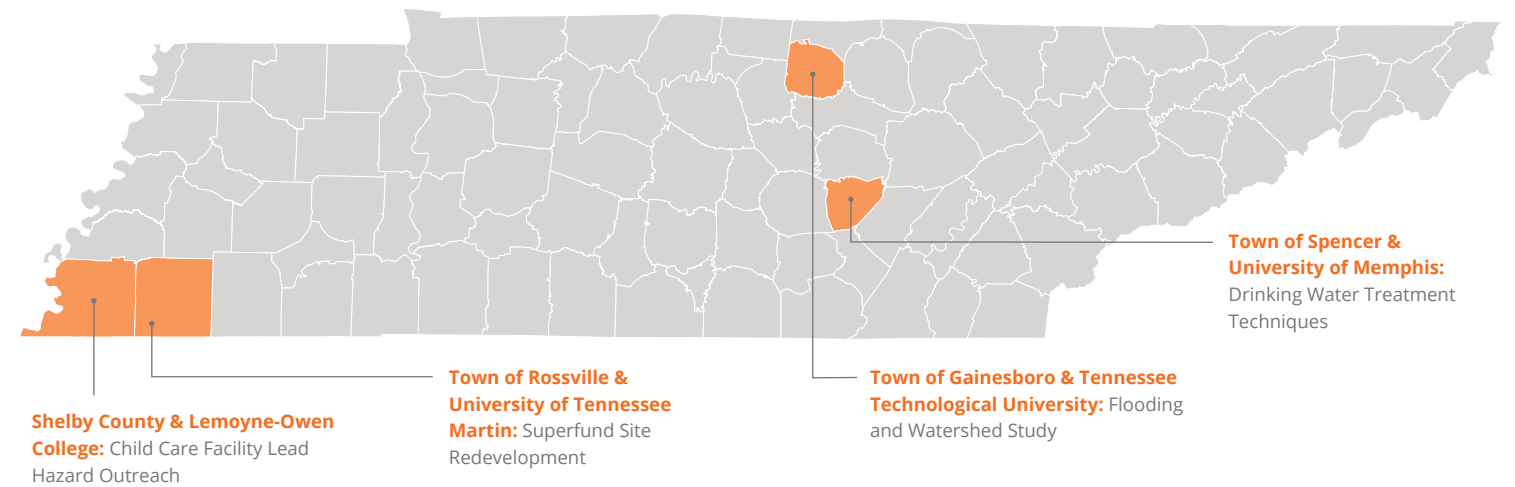
The program has succeeded for both communities and colleges. A partnership between Tennessee Tech University's department of civil and environmental engineering and the Upper Cumberland Development District resulted in installation of water level monitoring and completion of a watershed study for the Town of Gainesboro. The project addressed flooding in the downtown and surrounding areas.

The Town of Spencer partnered with a chemistry lab at the University of Memphis to manage byproducts in its drinking water treatment process. The university sampled, tested and analyzed water to find the source of a problem and provided technical assistance in the design of infrastructure improvements.

Other projects in the works include Rossville working with the University of Tennessee Martin and EPA to redevelop a Superfund site into a recreational site. Shelby County is working with Lemoyne-Owen College and the Shelby County Health Department in support of a Child Care Facility Lead Hazard Outreach Grant.

The TN CUPP has leveraged the resources of TDEC and higher education institutions to create a path for underserved communities to get cost-effective assistance, while also protecting Tennessee's environment and its citizens.

## TN CUPP Partnership Locations



Civil and environmental engineering students at Tennessee Tech used data collected in the field to conduct a GIS analysis and complete a watershed study for the Town of Gainesboro.



# Governor Lee Launches TN225 with Statehood Day Celebration and Untold Tennessee Parks Tour

**B**icentennial Capitol Mall State Park kicked off Gov. Bill Lee's yearlong celebration of 225 years of statehood. When Lee spoke at the park on June 1 it was Statehood Day for Tennessee and the 25th anniversary of the park.

The governor made the focus of his anniversary tour "Untold Tennessee," accounts of everyday heroes that define the state. His call for stories about those people perfectly fit the role of Bicentennial State Park, which consistently tells stories of people who exemplify the best of Tennessee. In fact, the park was rewarded for its efforts, winning the award for interpretation as part of the Tennessee State Parks 2021 Awards of Excellence.

When Lee spoke at the June 1 celebration, he called attention to Tennesseans who aren't always appreciated.

"We, throughout our history, have honored a lot of important people in this state," Lee said. "But there are a lot of un-honored people - everyday teachers, doctors, factory workers - everyday Tennesseans who in fact have made Tennessee the most remarkable state in the Union."

The event that day was part of a banner year for Bicentennial Capitol Mall State Park, despite the COVID-19 pandemic. When the park had to cancel live interpretive events, it went to a digital format, utilized social media, and still managed to bring history to life. The park was awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Tennessee Wars Commission to expand the quality of African American interpretation in the Civil War and Reconstruction eras.

So TDEC has its own group of everyday heroes, those who conserve and protect Tennessee's environment, tell the stories that explain its history, and often go unsung. Tennesseans rely on the work of over 2,700 employees in the department. They may not know those employees, but they benefit from their work - work that may go unnoticed but helps tell Tennessee's story every day.



Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River State Park

**T**he swift currents of the Ocoee and Hiwassee rivers drew the attention of Gov. Bill Lee on June 4 as part of his tour highlighting Tennessee's 225-year anniversary. The start of the whitewater rafting season drew more than 200 people for a day at Hiwassee/Ocoee Scenic River State Park.

Lee visited Sgt. Alvin C. York State Park in November to honor one of the most decorated soldiers in World War I and speak at the park's annual Veterans Day program.

Lee made other appearances to celebrate the state's 225-year anniversary, including Rock Island State Park to tour the Old Mill with Park Manager Damon Graham, and David Crockett State Park, where he discussed with Park Manager Rachel Lee the pioneer Crockett's role in Tennessee's statehood.



David Crockett State Park



Sgt. Alvin C. York State Park



Rock Island State Park



# Tennessee State Parks Finalist for National Gold Medal Award as Strategic Goals Guide Growth

**T**ennessee State Parks were among the four finalists this year for the national Gold Medal Award from the preeminent national parks and recreation organization in the country.

The Gold Medal is given for state parks every odd-numbered year by the American Academy for Park and Recreation Administration, in partnership with the National Recreation and Park Association. The other finalists were Delaware State Parks, the Ohio Division of State Parks & Watercraft, and Texas State Parks. Tennessee was among the four finalists in 2019 and 2017 as well.

The national recognition was validation of the hard work by staff at all 56 Tennessee State Parks who met the challenge of COVID-19. The pandemic not only presented issues in staffing and safety measures but led to a surge in visitors, and the staff responded.

While the parks help drive growth in economic development and tourism, they operate on the knowledge that every hiker, camper and park visitor have the potential to help the local economy and small businesses. They strive on the belief that there is inherent value in the natural environment.

Tennessee State Parks is one of only two state parks systems in the nation to receive accreditation through the Commission for Accreditation of Park and Recreation Agencies (CAPRA).

The parks have developed a four-year strategic plan. The objectives include surpassing the average guest satisfaction in hospitality operations; doubling the economic impact in Tennessee's 15 most



economically distressed counties through park improvements; encouraging outdoor recreation and education among youth; and exceeding the standards for accreditation. The parks also strive to complete deferred maintenance; increase annual net gain by \$2 million in operations and \$5 million in hospitality and obtain \$5 million in annual direct donations.

The past year proves that park management matters. But Tennessee State Parks proved its mettle by meeting the challenges with resolve and ingenuity. The challenges made Tennessee State Parks stronger.



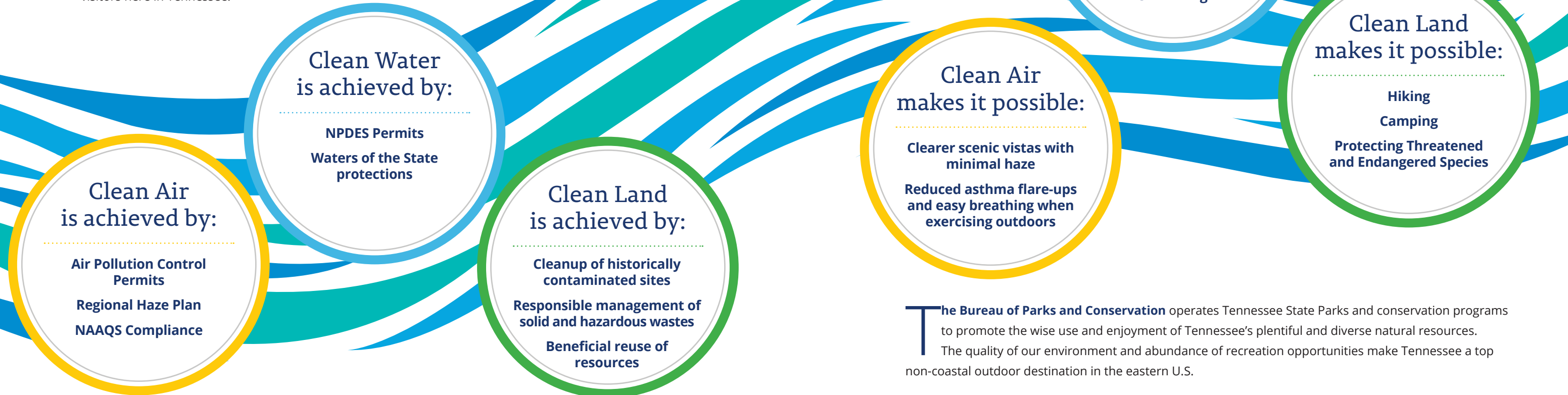
## Tennessee State Parks 2020-2024 Strategic Plan

- 1 **Double economic impact** in Tennessee's 15 most economically distressed counties
- 2 **Implement youth outdoor outreach programs** in Tennessee's 15 most economically distressed counties
- 3 **Eliminate \$82 million** in deferred maintenance
- 4 **Increase annual net gain by \$2 million** in operations
- 5 **Increase annual net gain by \$5 million** in hospitality
- 6 **Obtain \$5 million** in annual direct donations



# The Work of TDEC's Two Bureaus Go Hand-in-Hand

The clean air, unpolluted water, and land contamination protections that the Bureau of Environment works to maintain are essential to the diverse outdoor recreational opportunities that the Bureau of Parks and Conservation provides. This synergy attracts and retains residents, companies, and visitors here in Tennessee.



**The Bureau of Environment** operates programs to protect and improve the quality of Tennessee's air, land, and water for today and for future generations. Our efforts and partnerships with stakeholders create meaningful improvement in the condition and quality of our natural environment. Delivering successfully on the fundamentals of environmental protection not only keeps us in compliance with state and federal requirements, but also sets the table for economic development and upholds quality of life.

Effective environmental protection is an opportunity for technological innovation, enhanced efficiency, and sustained economic growth. Companies and people consistently cite our natural resources, clean environment, regulatory responsiveness, and outdoor recreation opportunities as key reasons why they choose to come, stay or expand in Tennessee.

Tennessee is a model state in demonstrating how it is possible to be clean, in compliance, and growing – proving that a clean environment and robust economy go hand in hand. The results of TDEC's work create an environment where individuals, families, organizations, and communities can thrive – today and far into the future.

– Greg T. Young, Bureau of Environment Deputy Commissioner

**The Bureau of Parks and Conservation** operates Tennessee State Parks and conservation programs to promote the wise use and enjoyment of Tennessee's plentiful and diverse natural resources. The quality of our environment and abundance of recreation opportunities make Tennessee a top non-coastal outdoor destination in the eastern U.S.

Tennessee's award-winning 56 state parks and 84 state natural areas are some of the most popular showcases of Tennessee's diverse landscapes, cultural and historical treasures, and outdoor adventures. Our extensive waterways, trails, and vistas afford residents and visitors from across the nation an opportunity to create authentic Tennessee outdoor experiences from Reelfoot Lake to Roan Mountain. This enthusiasm produces a significant economic impact on the communities where our state parks are located. Therefore, we choose to invest in the conservation and maintenance of the natural resources that support us.

Many of our programs and partnerships across the department make a positive impact on the condition of the air, water and land at our parks. We're pleased to demonstrate these sustainable approaches and activities because the quality of our natural resources is fundamental to our state park experience.

Our state parks and tremendous natural resources belong to the people of Tennessee – and attract millions from all over the world to live, work and play. I'm proud of our stewardship commitment and partnership across the department that ensures Tennessee will thrive through access to and opportunities from clean air, abundant clean water, fruitful land, and diverse outdoor recreational resources.

– Jim Bryson, Bureau of Parks and Conservation Deputy Commissioner

The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation exists to enhance the quality of life for citizens of Tennessee and to be stewards of our natural environment by:

**PROTECTING**

and improving the quality of Tennessee's air, land, and water through a responsible regulatory system;

**PROTECTING**

and promoting human health and safety;

**CONSERVING**

and promoting natural, cultural and historic resources;

**PROVIDING**

a variety of quality outdoor recreational experiences.

F U L L   S P E E D   A H E A D

