

State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

EXECUTIVE ORDER

16-01

January 04, 2016

ESTABLISHING AN OUTDOOR RECREATION COUNCIL

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's network of recreational and natural areas — including its world class beaches, outstanding parks, affordable campgrounds, bustling bike paths, and vibrant bay and waterways — is one of the most beautiful and diverse in America; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island's network of recreational and natural areas welcomes over 6 million visitors annually and offers them plentiful opportunities to bike, bird watch, boat, camp, fish, golf, hike, horseback ride, hunt, picnic, surf, and swim; and

WHEREAS, the Rhode Island State parks system contains 23 parks and beaches that preserve and protect some of the State's most significant natural and cultural resources; and

WHEREAS, the outdoor recreation industry is an increasingly important part of our State's economy, where it is worth an estimated \$3.3 billion and already supports some 36,000 jobs; and

WHEREAS, the State of Rhode Island is committed to conserving our natural resources and increasing access to opportunities for outdoor recreation; and

WHEREAS, increased use of outdoor recreation spaces enhances quality of life and improves public health, especially for our children who benefit from playing outdoors; and

WHEREAS, a strategic vision for managing Rhode Island's outstanding recreation areas and natural resources is essential to preserving the outdoor experience for all Rhode Islanders and to ensuring the sustainable growth of the outdoor recreation sector; and

WHEREAS, fully developing Rhode Island's resources and recreation will require significant coordination between the State government, municipalities, private businesses, educational institutions, and other interest groups; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island must encourage and support the efforts of our stellar educational institutions and private sector partners to develop funding streams that will promote outdoor recreational infrastructure and the preservation of natural space; and

WHEREAS, Rhode Island seeks to grow its tremendous recreational and environmental assets for the use and enjoyment of Rhode Islanders and visitors, to appropriately steward these resources and to fully realize this critical tool for creating jobs and promoting tourism.

NOW THEREFORE, I, Gina M. Raimondo, by virtue of the authority vested in me as Governor of the State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations, do hereby order and direct the following:

1. There is hereby established the Rhode Island Outdoor Recreation Council ("Outdoor Recreation Council") that shall exist for the purpose of advising the Governor on ways to effectively manage our recreational and environmental assets with the overarching goal of increasing their use and enjoyment to the greatest extent possible.
2. The members of the Outdoor Recreation Council shall be appointed by the Governor and shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor. The membership shall include, but not be limited to, representatives from the following organizations and stakeholders with expertise in the following areas:
 - a. The Department of Environmental Management
 - b. The Department of Health
 - c. The Department of Transportation
 - d. The Executive Office of Commerce
 - e. The Coastal Resources Management Council
 - f. Land trusts

- g. The healthcare industry
- h. Private businesses in the outdoor recreation sector
- i. Philanthropic organizations
- j. Environmental research and advocacy groups
- k. Organizations dedicated to the promotion of tourism in Rhode Island
- l. Associations relevant to outdoor tourism and natural resources
- m. Public transit authorities
- n. Municipal leadership

The Governor may designate any other members deemed appropriate to serve on the Outdoor Recreation Council.

3. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall have one chair and two vice-chairs who shall be appointed by the Governor and who shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor.
4. The Outdoor Recreation Council's meetings shall be public meetings, and they shall be convened every two months. Members of the Outdoor Recreation Council may be assigned to committees consistent with their areas of expertise and interest.
5. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall engage and solicit input from a broad and diverse range of groups, organizations, and individuals.
6. All departments, offices, boards, and agencies of the State shall provide assistance and cooperation to the Outdoor Recreation Council, including use of State facilities, which may be necessary to fulfill the purposes of this Executive Order.
7. All departments, offices, boards, and agencies of the State shall provide staff support necessary for the Outdoor Recreation Council to fulfill the purposes of this Executive Order.
8. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall evaluate and propose specific recommendations concerning the implementation of a statewide strategy to promote and improve opportunities for outdoor recreation and tourism in Rhode Island. This plan shall include:
 - a. A statewide recreational infrastructure plan detailing project and investment priorities and recommendations for funding strategies;
 - b. Strategies to educate the public on recreational resources offered in Rhode Island's outdoor spaces and promote the value of State parks, beaches and natural areas to Rhode Island's economy, environment and quality of life;
 - c. Recommendations for the promotion of Rhode Island state parks, beaches and natural areas as part of the State's new tourism branding initiative;
 - d. Strategies to use Rhode Island's outdoor recreation opportunities and environmental resources to attract and retain new businesses, as well as to expand jobs in outdoor recreation and tourism; and
 - e. Targets and metrics for measuring progress toward these goals and objectives.
9. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall work collaboratively with Rhode Island municipalities to ensure that their significant natural resources are preserved and that the benefits of the outdoor recreation economy flow in significant proportion to local economies.
10. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall begin its work immediately and shall produce an interim report no later than July 1, 2016. This report shall include:
 - a. An assessment of the state's outdoor recreational infrastructure and current usage of State and municipal parks, beaches, bikeways, and natural spaces; and
 - b. An analysis of the contribution of Rhode Island's outdoor infrastructure to economic growth in the state.
11. The Outdoor Recreation Council shall submit its final action plan and recommendations to the Governor by November 30, 2016, at which time it shall terminate its work and be relieved of all responsibilities and duties pursuant to this Executive Order.

This Executive Order shall take effect immediately.

So Ordered:

Gina M. Raimondo
Governor

Dated: _____