

REQUEST FOR BOARD ACTION

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

MEETING DATE: September 20, 2006

SUBJECT: Chimney Rock Resolution

ATTACHMENTS: Resolution

SUMMARY OF REQUEST:

Mr. Jim Proctor, Mayor of the Town of Lake Lure, has requested that the Board of Commissioners consider adoption of the attached resolution. The resolution calls for the State to acquire Chimney Rock Park.

HENDERSON COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

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RESOLUTION

SAVE CHIMNEY ROCK PARK

Whereas Chimney Rock Park, a 1000 acre privately held natural preserve in Henderson County, North Carolina, has been offered for sale, and

Whereas this extraordinary parcel has been well maintained and has benefited from, the sound ecological practices employed by the same family for 104 years, and

Whereas the Park is home to numerous state and federally listed rare species, and

Whereas the Park has contributed to the local and state economy by hosting 200,000 to 250,000 visitors annually, the great majority of those being out of area tourists, and

Whereas Chimney Rock Park is situated in Henderson County which in 2005 had the third highest unemployment rate in North Carolina out of 100 counties (USDA Economic Research Service), and

Whereas Chimney Rock Park being operated as a tourist destination has traditionally employed 60 full and part-time individuals, and

Whereas Henderson County ranked 26th in tourism impact out of the state's 100 counties generating tourism revenues of over 118 million dollars, and

Whereas Henderson County tourism, greatly aided by tourism in the Chimney Rock/Lake Lure area, contributed state and local tax receipts in 2005 of 7.1 million and 3.75 million dollars respectively (NC Department of Commerce), and

Whereas the citizens of Hickory Nut Gorge strongly support continuation of park presence and facilities in the gorge area, and

Whereas the Henderson County Daily Courier has opined that "It would be a disaster unprecedented in Henderson County to see all that the Park has become and all that it still might be relegated to our memories." (Daily Courier 7/19/2006), and

Whereas the Asheville Citizen-Times has stated "Losing Chimney Rock Park to private development would severely harm the economy of Hickory Nut Gorge and be a sad end to a remarkable legacy of family stewardship" (Citizen-Times 7/21/2006), and

Whereas the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation, the legislators of Henderson County, the General Assembly and Governor Easley have shown the desire, foresight and commitment to establish a state park in Hickory Nut Gorge, and

Whereas the 1000 acre Chimney Rock Park would be an addition of inestimable value to a new state park and such has been previously recognized by the North Carolina Division of Parks and Recreation and state officials, Now,

Therefore, be it resolved that the Henderson County Board of Commissioners does hereby strongly urge and encourage the State of North Carolina through its various agencies, divisions, and legislative bodies, to do all that is possible and necessary to acquire Chimney Rock Park and add that acreage to the planned Hickory Nut Gorge State Park.

Adopted this 20th day of September, 2006.

ATTEST:

William L. Moyer, Chairman
Henderson County Board of Commissioners

Elizabeth W. Corn
Clerk to the Board