

**GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF NORTH CAROLINA**  
**SESSION 2009**

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**HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 637**

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Sponsors: Representatives Haire; and Harrison.

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Referred to: Rules, Calendar, and Operations of the House.

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March 18, 2009

1 A JOINT RESOLUTION HONORING THE SEVENTY-FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF THE  
2 GREAT SMOKY MOUNTAINS NATIONAL PARK.

3 Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains are among the oldest mountains in the world  
4 and among the tallest of the Appalachian chain forming a boundary between North Carolina  
5 and Tennessee; and

6 Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains, named for their smoke-like haze, were  
7 originally inhabited by the Cherokee people and later settled by Europeans; and

8 Whereas, as logging increased in the Great Smoky Mountains, a movement began to  
9 preserve the remaining pristine forest as a national park; and

10 Whereas, in order for the Great Smoky Mountains to become a national park, the  
11 land had to be purchased from timber companies and hundreds of families and deeded to the  
12 federal government, which occurred over a number of years through private donations and  
13 public appropriations; and

14 Whereas, in 1930, the Governors of North Carolina and Tennessee, along with other  
15 representatives of both states, traveled to Washington, DC, to present the deeds for 158,876.5  
16 acres of land to the federal government, allowing the land to obtain the basic protection of the  
17 National Park Service; and

18 Whereas, Congress passed legislation on June 15, 1934, which stated that the Great  
19 Smoky Mountains National Park, "be established as a completed national park for  
20 administration, protection and maintenance"; and

21 Whereas, today, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has over 521,085 acres,  
22 with over 244,741 acres located in North Carolina; and

23 Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park has over 800 miles of trails,  
24 2,100 miles of streams, 66 species of mammals, 200 varieties of birds, 50 native fish species,  
25 and 80 types of reptiles and amphibians; and

26 Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park consistently has some of the  
27 highest visitation rates of any of the 58 national parks, attracting 9,000,000 visitors in 2008;  
28 and

29 Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park generates an economic impact  
30 of over \$718 million for surrounding tourist communities; and

31 Whereas, during 2009, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park will be  
32 celebrating its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary during a number of public events; and

33 Whereas, many individuals have been credited with helping to establish the Great  
34 Smoky Mountains National Park, including Horace Kephart, a librarian, who was born in 1862  
35 in Pennsylvania and spent much of his early life in the West and Midwest; and



1           Whereas, Horace Kephart moved to western North Carolina in 1904, and soon after  
2 became immersed in the region's natural environment and interested in the history and culture  
3 of the people who lived there; and

4           Whereas, Horace Kephart became a respected authority on the region, writing  
5 numerous articles and two well-known books, "The Book of Camping and Woodcraft"  
6 published in 1906 and "Our Southern Highlanders" published in 1913; and

7           Whereas, during the 1920s, Horace Kephart joined the movement to preserve the  
8 Great Smoky Mountains as a national park and once said, "Here today is the last stand of  
9 primeval American forest at its best. If saved—and if saved at all it must be done at once—it will  
10 be a joy and a wonder to our people for all time. The nation is summoned by a solemn duty to  
11 preserve it." (as quoted in Dykeman and Stokely, Highland Homeland 1978 at p. 144); and

12           Whereas, a few months before his death in 1931, Horace Kephart was honored by  
13 the United States Geological Board when the Board named a peak in the Great Smoky  
14 Mountains as Mount Kephart; and

15           Whereas, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park's 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary and the  
16 people who helped establish the Park are worthy of recognition and celebration; Now,  
17 therefore,

18 Be it resolved by the House of Representatives, the Senate concurring:

19           **SECTION 1.** The General Assembly recognizes the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Great  
20 Smoky Mountains National Park and encourages the citizens of this State to participate in  
21 activities planned to celebrate the Park's historic anniversary.

22           **SECTION 2.** The General Assembly honors the life and memory of Horace  
23 Kephart and expresses its appreciation for his contributions to the preservation of the history  
24 and culture of western North Carolina.

25           **SECTION 3.** The Secretary of State shall transmit a certified copy of this  
26 resolution to the Superintendent of the Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

27           **SECTION 4.** This resolution is effective upon ratification.