



## HAMILTON COUNTY, TENNESSEE

OFFICE OF THE COUNTY MAYOR

WESTON WAMP

### For Immediate Release

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## Plans Advance for Roaring Creek State Park at McDonald Farm

*Unanimous Commission Vote Paves Way for Historic State Investment in North Hamilton County*

**HAMILTON COUNTY, TN (March 4, 2026)** — In a decisive vote to secure the largest parks investment in Hamilton County history, the Hamilton County Commission today unanimously approved plans to convey 1,300 acres of McDonald Farm to the State of Tennessee to create Roaring Creek State Park. With \$45.3 million included in Governor Bill Lee’s proposed state budget, the stage is set for Tennessee’s 70th state park, permanently preserving McDonald Farm for future generations.

“This is what conservative governance looks like,” said Hamilton County Mayor Weston Wamp. “The county’s action today will benefit generations of Tennesseans and further establish Hamilton County as a premier outdoor destination. I am deeply grateful for Governor Lee and Senator Bo Watson’s support of the bold vision for Roaring Creek State Park.”

The proposed state investment covers park development, operations, and long-term maintenance, ensuring local taxpayers are not responsible for ongoing costs. The State has previously invested \$3 million for infrastructure improvements at McDonald Farm and plans to allocate more than \$1 million annually for park operations.

“McDonald Farm is a state treasure worth preserving for generations to come,” said TDEC Deputy Commissioner Brian Clifford. “We are grateful for the Hamilton County Commission’s motion to move forward with this proposed investment, and we will continue to work with local and state leaders on what would be a win-win for conservation and the regional economy.”

Under the proposal, approximately 800 acres in Hamilton County and 500 acres in Rhea County will be transferred to the State for permanent conservation and park development. Hamilton County will retain more than 700 acres, including more than 300 acres that will remain a county park anchored by the historic homestead and home of the Hamilton County Fair, preserving longstanding community traditions.

According to the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC), state parks of similar scope generate \$11 million in annual economic output and support an average of more than 70 jobs tied to park operations and related activity.

“When you’ve served this community as long as I have, you understand that some decisions are bigger than the moment,” said Hamilton County Commissioner Gene-O Shipley, who represents Soddy-Daisy and Sale Creek. “This is about making sure our children and grandchildren inherit the kind of Hamilton County we’re proud of, with land preserved and protected for them to enjoy.”

Next, the proposal moves to the Tennessee General Assembly for consideration as part of the state budget, with a final vote expected before the legislative session adjourns in April.

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