

From the Governor's Office

Governor McCrory Announces Agreement to Reopen Great Smoky Mountains National Park

- OCTOBER 15, 2013 • JOBS AND THE ECONOMY

Raleigh, NC – Governor Pat McCrory has teamed with Tennessee Governor Bill Haslam to reopen the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, which has been closed due to the partial federal shutdown. North Carolina will spend \$75,000 and the state of Tennessee and two counties will allocate \$305,000 to reopen the national park for five days during the peak fall tourism season. North Carolina's funding comes directly from appropriated tourism advertising dollars. Governor McCrory is also exploring options to open other national parks in North Carolina.

"This is about jobs and the economy," Governor McCrory said. **"Many North Carolina communities depend on tourism generated by the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. It's critical that we get the gates reopened during the fall season."**

Governors McCrory and Haslam have been working this week to open the shuttered national park. Approximately 10 million people per year visit the park, four million of which enter through North Carolina.

"I appreciate the leadership of Governor Haslam and cooperation from the state of Tennessee," Governor McCrory said. **"Together, we've been able to reopen one of the nation's most-visited parks during a key month for tourism in North Carolina."**

Professor Steve Morse, director of Western Carolina University's Hospitality and Tourism Program estimates nearly \$1 million of consumer spending is lost in North Carolina each day the Great Smoky Mountains National Park is closed. His analysis also found the closure is potentially costing North Carolina workers \$343,354 in lost wages per day. Morse calculates that North Carolina state government could be losing up to \$50,776 a day in taxes and local government \$28,679 per day in tax revenue.

Through the first 10 days of the partial federal shutdown, Morse estimates \$33 million in lost visitor spending, \$12 million in lost wages \$2.8 million in lost state and local taxes. Of these impacts, approximately 30 percent occur in North Carolina.

The park is scheduled to reopen tomorrow, October 16 through Sunday, October 20.