

### ***Pre-Legislative Session Visits***

The earlier these visits can be accomplished, the better, so long as there are follow-ups with the legislators and their staffs. Remember that in the crunch of the session, staff becomes all important, as you will see in the piece on working during the session.

For the time being, and probably into early fall, we will not have a specific bill with specific funding numbers, so you will have to work with the concept of state park support, although there are plenty of specific points to make from the fact sheet about the current situation brought on by inadequate funding.

- Be prepared. Have a package of materials with a brief executive summary ready to give to the official or staff.
- To the degree possible, try to put a good representative group of visitors together. There is strength in numbers and it will prevent multiple meetings on the same subject. Legislators are busy and in the off season have other jobs and obligations.

Be respectful of the office. Getting mad or overly argumentative is a surefire way to be shown the door – literally or figuratively – and it's hard to get back in.

- Try to measure the degree of support.
- If you don't know the answer to a question, say you don't and tell them you will get back to them as soon as possible. Then contact me or someone else in the know and get the answer back to them. It is the best follow-up!
- Drop them a thank-you note and have each member of the group do so.
- As developments occur, either send them the information or drop it by the office.
- Try to arrange a state and/or a local park visit for the elected officials and staff. This is particularly relevant for those local parks that have received TPWD grants.

Again, try to have a good representation group to go to these outings as well as local officials and leaders who can help make the case of how important past funding has been and/or how devastating the lack of funding is.

- While all of this is going on, try to find out as much about the official as possible. Who supports them? What are their personal interests, particularly in the outdoors. Who are their friends? Somewhere in all of this, there are probably mutual friends or interests.

Finally, please let me know how you progress and what the results are. It would be better to do so by e-mail so we can keep records. Thanks.