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TDEC Opens Window Cliffs State Natural Area to the Public

BAXTER – On Friday, April 7, the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) unveiled a new State Natural Area to the public.

“This area is part of the pristine upper Cumberland highlands and, like most trails in a Tennessee State Park, offers spectacular scenery with a big payoff at the end,” said TDEC Deputy Commissioner of Parks and Conservation Brock Hill.

Approximately 100 people gathered at Window Cliffs State Natural Area, within Burgess Falls State Park, to celebrate the newest addition to Tennessee’s 85 State Natural Areas. As part of Natural Areas Spring Celebration Week, multiple free guided hikes were offered after a brief dedication ceremony. The 275-acre area includes natural bridges or “windows”, where the area’s name is derived from, as well as a strenuous 5.4 mile roundtrip hiking trail with several bridgeless stream crossings.

“This Natural Area joins several other regional Tennessee State Parks – including Cummins Falls, Rock Island, Fall Creek Falls and Standing Stone – as an encouragement for tourism, healthy lifestyles and environmental appreciation,” said Hill.

Those in attendance included State Representatives Ryan Williams and Paul Sherrell; Putnam County Executive Randy Porter; Putnam County Sheriff Eddie Farris; Putnam County Chamber President George Halford; Cookeville Mayor Ricky Shelton; and several staff from the Land Trust for Tennessee.

“We’re honored to work with our friends at Tennessee State Parks and the Division of Natural Areas to enhance the experience at Burgess Falls State Park, one of Tennessee’s most magnificent places for public recreation,” said Liz McLaurin, President and CEO of The Land Trust for Tennessee. “In all, we’ve partnered with the State of Tennessee to conserve over 20,000 acres of public land over the years, and the pace of this work is increasing. It is a privilege to work so closely with such dedicated public servants to protect land for the benefit of Tennessee citizens and visitors now and into the future.”

For more information about Window Cliffs and TDEC’s Division of Natural Areas, visit <http://tn.gov/environment/section/na-natural-areas>.

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