

EXECUTIVE ORDER NO. 298

WHEREAS, National Trails Day, founded by the American Hiking Society in 1991 and celebrated annually on the first Saturday in June, is a day of public events that highlights the importance of the National Trails System and promotes increased trail use and volunteer trail stewardship; and

WHEREAS, the "provision of lands for public recreation and the conservation of natural resources promotes the public health, prosperity and general welfare and is a proper responsibility of government," N.J.S.A. 13:8A-2; and

WHEREAS, "the provision of recreational programs to all segments of the public enhances the public health, prosperity and general welfare and is a proper responsibility of the State," N.J.S.A. 13:1L-2; and

WHEREAS, the Department of Environmental Protection ("DEP") is responsible for acquiring, planning, designing, constructing, operating, and maintaining state parks and forests pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1L-2, and empowered to promote and encourage the expansion and development of recreational programs on a statewide and local basis pursuant to N.J.S.A. 13:1B-15.1; and

WHEREAS, open and green space is a precious commodity throughout New Jersey, which is especially constrained within densely developed areas of the State and within the State's urban communities, many of which lack sufficient green spaces, tree cover, parks, and outdoor recreational opportunities; and

WHEREAS, all residents of the State of New Jersey, regardless of income, race, ethnicity, color, or national origin, have a right to live, work, learn, and enjoy recreational opportunities in a clean and healthy environment; and

WHEREAS, New Jersey's natural, cultural, and historic resources contribute to the breadth of destinations, visitors, events, and spending that supports the State's tourism industry, including over two hundred State Parks, Forests, Historic Sites, Natural and Wildlife Management

Areas across more than one million acres of public land throughout New Jersey; and

WHEREAS, Governor Murphy and Lieutenant Governor Oliver have prioritized the addition and revitalization of green and open spaces throughout New Jersey by facilitating more than \$400 million of State investment in local parks, open space, and natural resource restoration projects since 2018; and

WHEREAS, the Commissioner of Environmental Protection recently established the Community Investment & Economic Revitalization program within DEP, the primary function of which is to strengthen investments in natural capital and support sustainable economic growth that restores, preserves, and protects natural, cultural, and historic resources while enhancing quality of life for all New Jerseyans; and

WHEREAS, DEP represents the State in the development and implementation of the Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan, a condition of eligibility for National Park Service Federal Land and Water Conservation Fund assistance, which must identify statewide recreation needs and opportunities and articulate a comprehensive responsive strategy; and

WHEREAS, recognizing the critical value of engaging the public and collaborating with a multitude of stakeholders with interest in the preservation, planning, and improvement of the State's natural, cultural, and historic resources, the Murphy Administration launched *Outside, Together! A Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan for New Jersey* pursuant to DEP Administrative Order No. 2022-12;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, NICHOLAS P. SCUTARI, Acting Governor of the State of New Jersey, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and by the Statutes of this State, do hereby ORDER and DIRECT:

1. The first Saturday in June is declared National Trails Day in the State of New Jersey.

2. Nothing in this Order shall be construed to confer any legal rights upon entities whose activities are regulated by State entities; nothing shall be construed to create a private right of action on behalf of any such regulated entities; and nothing shall be used as a basis for legal challenges to rules, approvals, permits, licenses, or other action or inaction by a State entity. Nothing in this Order shall be construed to supersede any federal, State, or local law.

3. This Order shall take effect immediately.

GIVEN, under my hand and seal this
4th day of June,
Two Thousand and Twenty-two, and
of the Independence of the
United States, the Two Hundred
and Forty-Sixth.

[seal]

/s/ Nicholas P. Scutari

President of the Senate, Acting Governor

Attest:

/s/ Parimal Garg

Chief Counsel to the Governor