WEST VIRGINIA CODE: §20-17-1

§20-17-1. Legislative findings.

The West Virginia Legislature finds that outdoor recreation is an increasingly vital part of the state's economy and that outdoor recreation participants spend billions of dollars annually in the state and support a significant number of local jobs.

The Legislature further finds that well-managed areas for trail-oriented recreation in the state will increase outdoor recreational tourism, increasing revenue to the state and creating more jobs for West Virginia citizens.

The Legislature further finds that, with the cooperation of private landowners, there is an opportunity to provide citizens and recreational tourists with greater access to trail-oriented recreation by incorporating private property into recreational trail systems and areas throughout West Virginia to provide significant economic and recreational benefits to communities in the state.

The Legislature further finds that, under an appropriate contractual and management scheme, well-managed trail systems may exist on private property without diminishing the landowner's interest, control, or profitability in the land and without increasing the landowner's exposure to liability.

The Legislature further finds that creating and empowering multicounty trail network authorities, that can work with the landowners, county officials, community leaders, state and federal government agencies, recreational user groups, and other interested parties to expand trail systems will greatly assist in improving and linking recreational trail systems.

The Legislature further finds that it is in the best interests of the state to encourage private landowners to make land available for public use, through multicounty trail network authorities, for recreational purposes by limiting landowner liability for injury to persons entering thereon, by limiting landowner liability for injury to the property of persons entering thereon, and by limiting landowner liability to persons who may be injured or otherwise damaged by the acts or omissions of persons entering thereon.

WV Legislature