

H.R. 4

IN THE HOUSE OF THE UNITED STATES

August 14, 2024

Mr. Anka of Lincoln (for himself, Mr. Nord of Pacifica) introduced the
following bill

A BILL

To designate and provide the necessary funding for Buffalo Rock and Starved Rock State Park in Illinois as one National Park, called the Buffalo and Starved Rock National Park, and to provide funding for local universities to partner with the park for research initiatives and college credit programs.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

SHORT TITLE—This Act may be cited as the "Buffalo and Starved Rock National Park Act."

SEC. 2. FINDINGS

(a) FINDINGS—Congress finds the following:

- i. Illinois currently has no national parks, despite its rich natural resources and diverse landscapes.
- ii. Designating Buffalo Rock and Starved Rock State Parks as a national park will enhance conservation efforts, protect biodiversity, and preserve the cultural and historical significance of the area.
- iii. Establishing Buffalo and Starved Rock National Park will promote tourism, boost the local economy, and provide recreational opportunities for residents and visitors.

- iv. The partnership between the national park and local universities will foster research, education, and workforce development, benefiting both students and the broader community.

SEC. 3. DESIGNATION OF BUFFALO AND STARVED ROCK NATIONAL PARK

(a) DESIGNATION—The Buffalo Rock State Park and Starved Rock State Park in Illinois are hereby designated as Buffalo and Starved Rock National Park (hereafter referred to as the "National Park").

(b) ADMINISTRATION—The Secretary of the Interior (hereafter referred to as the "Secretary"), acting through the National Park Service, shall administer the National Park in accordance with this Act and the laws generally applicable to units of the National Park System.

SEC. 4. FUNDING

(a) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to carry out this Act, including—

- i. The development and maintenance of park facilities and infrastructure;
- ii. The implementation of conservation and preservation programs;
- iii. The promotion of tourism and educational activities.

(b) LOCAL PARTNERSHIPS—The Secretary is authorized to provide grants and enter into cooperative agreements with local governments, nonprofit organizations, and other entities to advance the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 5. UNIVERSITY PARTNERSHIPS

(a) RESEARCH INITIATIVES—The Secretary shall establish a program to facilitate partnerships between the National Park and local universities for research initiatives related to ecology, conservation, geology, and other relevant fields.

(b) COLLEGE CREDIT PROGRAMS—The Secretary shall collaborate with local universities to develop and implement programs that allow students to earn college credit through internships, research projects, and other educational activities conducted at the National Park.

(c) FUNDING FOR EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS—There are authorized to be appropriated such sums as may be necessary to support the research initiatives and college credit programs described in this section.

SEC. 6. EFFECTIVE DATE

EFFECTIVE DATE—This Act shall take effect on the date of its enactment.

SEC. 7. SEVERABILITY

SEVERABILITY—If any provision of this Act, or the application thereof, is held invalid, the remainder of this Act and the application of such provision to other persons or circumstances shall not be affected thereby.

SEC. 8. REGULATIONS

REGULATIONS—The Secretary may promulgate such regulations as are necessary to carry out this Act.

SEC. 8. REPORT TO CONGRESS

REPORTING—The Secretary shall submit a report to Congress within three years of the enactment of this Act on the status of the National Park, including the implementation of university partnerships and the impact on local conservation and tourism efforts..
