AN ACT TO CREATE THE MISSISSIPPI STATE PARKS STUDY COMMITTEE TO EXAMINE AND DEVELOP RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE RESTRUCTURING OF OWNERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS PERTAINING TO MISSISSIPPI'S STATE PARKS; AND FOR RELATED PURPOSES.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MISSISSIPPI:

SECTION 1. (1) There is hereby created the Mississippi State Parks Study Committee to examine and develop recommendations for the restructuring of ownership and management arrangements pertaining to Mississippi's state parks.

(2) The committee shall study, at a minimum, the following questions and report to the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature the committee's recommendations:

(a) The implications of renewal versus nonrenewal of the state's leases with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the John W. Kyle, George P. Cossar, and Hugh White State Parks, including, but not limited to:

(i) The term of each lease;

(ii) Whether each lease may be renewed with the right of assignment; and
(iii) The cost of renovating and maintaining the infrastructure and facilities built by the state at each park should the state renew one or more of the leases, compared with the cost of removing the same should the Corps demand it in the event of nonrenewal;

(b) Whether the following local governments would be willing and able to accept the following conveyances for the purpose of maintaining and operating them as county or municipal parks, and the best alternative for each park should the conveyance not be feasible:

(i) Great River Road State Park to Bolivar County or to the Town of Rosedale;

(ii) Florewood Park to the City of Greenwood or to Leflore County;

(iii) Tombigbee State Park to the City of Tupelo or to Lee County (and if the City of Tupelo will not accept the conveyance, whether it will execute a quitclaim deed for its reversionary interest in the park);

(iv) Lake Lowndes State Park to Lowndes County;

(v) Legion State Park to the City of Louisville or to Winston County; and

(vi) Paul B. Johnson State Park to the City of Hattiesburg or to Forrest County;
(c) The feasibility and desirability of repurposing the following state parks, and the best alternative for each park should the repurposing not be feasible or desirable:

(i) Lake Lincoln State Park, to be maintained and operated as a state fisheries lake; and

(ii) Natchez State Park, to be maintained and operated as a wildlife management area;

(d) The best management strategy for Clark Creek Natural Area; and

(e) The feasibility and desirability of leasing certain state parks to private companies for the purpose of maintaining and operating them for the recreational benefit of the public, including:

(i) A lease for a north Mississippi group to comprise Trace, J.P. Coleman, Tishomingo and Wall Doxey State Parks;

(ii) A lease for a central Mississippi group to comprise Golden Memorial, Roosevelt and Clarkco State Parks;

(iii) A lease for a south Mississippi group to comprise Percy Quinn and Buccaneer State Parks, and also possibly Paul B. Johnson State Park and Clark Creek Natural Area;

(iv) Admissions fees to be charged to the public;

(v) The revenue from the operation of the parks that should go to the state, and to which fund;
(vi) The revenue from the operation of the parks that should go to the lessees;
(vii) The process for selecting the lessees, including potential oversight of the leasing process by the Public Procurement Review Board (PPRB) or, alternatively, a statutory procedure for the development and dissemination of Requests for Proposals and the selection of a proposal; and
(viii) Obligations of a lessee to comply with any conditions attached to a park as the result of prior acceptance of federal Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) grants.

(3) The committee shall provide the provisions of the current Mississippi law that will need to be amended to adopt the measures described in this section and any other measures recommended by the committee.

(4) The committee shall be composed of five (5) members of the Mississippi State Senate appointed by the Lieutenant Governor and five (5) members of the Mississippi House of Representatives appointed by the Speaker of the House.

(5) Appointments to the study committee shall be made within thirty (30) days of the effective date of this act. At the first meeting, the committee shall elect from among its membership a chairman, a vice chairman and any other officers determined to be necessary, and shall adopt rules for transacting business and keeping records.
(6) A majority of the members of the study committee shall constitute a quorum. In the adoption of rules, resolutions and reports, and in the election of a chairman, vice chairman and any other officers determined to be necessary, an affirmative vote of a majority of the members present shall be required.

(7) The Department of Wildlife, Fisheries and Parks and the Joint Legislative Committee on Performance Evaluation and Expenditure Review (PEER) shall provide the staff and other support necessary for the study committee to perform its duties.

(8) To effectuate the purposes of this act, any department, division, board, bureau, committee, institution or agency of the state, or any political subdivision thereof, shall, at the request of the chairman of the study committee, provide the facilities, assistance, information and data needed to enable the study committee to carry out its duties.

(9) Upon its report to the 2022 Regular Session of the Legislature, the study committee shall be dissolved.

SECTION 2. This act shall take effect and be in force from and after its passage.