

1 AN ACT relating to the establishment of historical commissions.

2 ***Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:***

3 WHEREAS, the parks system of the Commonwealth of Kentucky will reach 100
4 years of service to the citizens of the Commonwealth in 2024; and

5 WHEREAS, since its commencement in 1924 with the creation of Cumberland
6 State Park, now known as Pine Mountain State Park, the parks system has grown to
7 include 46 resorts, recreational parks, and historic sites throughout the Commonwealth;
8 and

9 WHEREAS, the parks system provides recreational opportunities for hiking,
10 camping, boating, fishing, golfing, horseback riding, and caving within the naturally
11 beautiful landscapes of the Commonwealth; and

12 WHEREAS, the parks system provides educational opportunities for the public to
13 experience the history of the Commonwealth; and

14 WHEREAS, the parks system has contributed to the economic well-being of the
15 Commonwealth by drawing out-of-state tourists to its lakes, trails, and campgrounds; and

16 WHEREAS, the Commonwealth would be the poorer if the Kentucky State Parks
17 system had not been established; and

18 WHEREAS, it is vital to preserve the history of the Commonwealth of Kentucky in
19 order to educate future generations of Kentuckians; and

20 WHEREAS, Kentuckians contributed so much to the American Revolution with
21 many Kentuckians heeding the call to arms to help secure our independence from Great
22 Britain; and

23 WHEREAS, construction on Fort Harrod was begun in 1774 led by James Harrod;
24 and

25 WHEREAS, the town of Harrodsburg, the first permanent English settlement west
26 of the Allegheny Mountains will celebrate 250 years of history in 2024; and

27 WHEREAS, Boone Trace, terminating at Fort Boonesborough and marked by

1 Daniel Boone and his party of trailblazers in 1775, was the primary entrance for
2 Europeans moving westward into what is now Kentucky, and will celebrate 250 years of
3 history in 2025; and

4 WHEREAS, Old Fort Harrod State Park and Fort Boonesborough State Park were
5 both established to memorialize these intrepid pioneers; and

6 WHEREAS, Old Fort Harrod State Park has been a vital contributor to the
7 community and economy of Harrodsburg and Mercer County as a whole; and

8 WHEREAS, the years 1774 to 1776 were critical to the founding of the
9 Commonwealth of Kentucky, the creation of the Declaration of Independence, and the
10 formation of the United States of America; and

11 WHEREAS, Native Americans, who lived in what is now Kentucky for thousands
12 of years, were catastrophically affected by this European westward expansion; and

13 WHEREAS, African Americans during this period were some of the first enslaved
14 people who traveled into what is now Kentucky and brought slavery into the region for
15 the first time; and

16 WHEREAS, the United States Semiquincentennial Commission was established to
17 provide for the observance and commemoration of the 250th anniversary of the founding
18 of the United States and related events through local, state, national, and international
19 activities planned, encouraged, developed, and coordinated by a national commission
20 representative of appropriate public and private authorities and organizations; and

21 WHEREAS, the United States Semiquincentennial Commission has encouraged
22 states to establish state-level commissions to plan and coordinate activities within each
23 state celebrating the 250th anniversary of the nation's founding; and

24 WHEREAS, the establishment of a Kentucky Semiquincentennial Commission
25 would enhance tourism, economic development, historic appreciation, historic
26 preservation, genealogical connections, and outdoor recreation within the
27 Commonwealth;

1 NOW, THEREFORE,

2 *Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Kentucky:*

3 ➔SECTION 1. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 148 IS CREATED TO
4 READ AS FOLLOWS:

5 *(1) The Kentucky State Parks Centennial Commission is established to plan and*
6 *implement events to celebrate the one hundredth anniversary of the state parks*
7 *system in 2024. To accomplish its charge, the commission shall:*

8 *(a) Assist local governments and organizations with planning, preparation, and*
9 *grant applications for parks centennial events and projects;*

10 *(b) Coordinate events and activities with parties, commissions, and*
11 *organizations wishing to participate in the centennial celebration;*

12 *(c) Seek funding sources such as foundations, line item appropriations, federal*
13 *grants, and philanthropic organizations;*

14 *(d) Establish press, print, and electronic contacts that generate stories on a*
15 *continual basis; and*

16 *(e) Perform other duties necessary to highlight Kentucky's parks system during*
17 *its one hundredth year.*

18 *(2) The Kentucky State Parks Centennial Commission shall consist of the following*
19 *nine (9) members:*

20 *(a) The secretary of the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet or his or her*
21 *designee;*

22 *(b) One (1) additional member from the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet,*
23 *appointed by the secretary;*

24 *(c) One (1) member from the Kentucky Historical Society, appointed by the*
25 *executive director of the society;*

26 *(d) One (1) member from the Kentucky Heritage Council, appointed by the*
27 *state historic preservation officer;*

1 (e) Three (3) members selected by the secretary of the Tourism, Arts and
2 Heritage Cabinet who work in onsite park leadership; and

3 (f) Two (2) citizen members, one (1) of whom shall be designated as the
4 chairperson and appointed by the Governor.

5 (3) The Kentucky State Parks Centennial Commission shall be attached to the
6 Kentucky Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet for administrative purposes only.

7 (4) This section shall expire on December 31, 2024.

8 ➔SECTION 2. A NEW SECTION OF KRS CHAPTER 148 IS CREATED TO
9 READ AS FOLLOWS:

10 (1) As used in this section:

11 (a) "Commission" means the Kentucky Semiquincentennial Commission
12 established in subsection (2) of this section; and

13 (b) "Semiquincentennial" means the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of
14 historic events from 1774 to 1776 that include the founding of Harrodsburg
15 in 1774, the opening of Boone Trace in 1775, the genesis of westward
16 movement, and the important events tied to our nation's founding in 1776.

17 (2) The Kentucky Semiquincentennial Commission is hereby established to plan and
18 implement events to celebrate the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of Old Fort
19 Harrod in 2024, culminating with the Declaration of Independence in 1776. To
20 accomplish its charge, the commission shall:

21 (a) Elect a chair of the commission and have the authority to form
22 subcommittees and working groups that include non-commission members
23 in order to plan, develop, and coordinate specific activities;

24 (b) Plan, encourage, develop, and coordinate the commemoration of the two
25 hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United States and
26 recognize Kentucky's integral role in that event and the impact of its people
27 on the nation's past, present, and future;

- 1 (c) Ensure that adequate way-finding signage and mapping is accomplished to
2 mark and identify the relevant points of interest and routes involved in the
3 founding of Kentucky and the opening of the west;
- 4 (d) Educate citizens of the Commonwealth and the nation about the stories of
5 pioneers, African Americans, and Native Americans in the early days of
6 westward settlement and the impact Fort Harrod and Fort Boonesborough
7 had on Kentucky and American history;
- 8 (e) Plan and implement events for a three (3) year semiquincentennial
9 commemoration of the years 2024 to 2026 and following years deemed
10 appropriate by the commission, including any battlefield commemorations
11 if funds are available;
- 12 (f) Assist local governments with planning, preparation, and grant applications
13 for semiquincentennial events and projects;
- 14 (g) Coordinate federal, state, local, and nonprofit organizations'
15 semiquincentennial activities occurring in Kentucky;
- 16 (h) Coordinate events and activities with parties, commissions, and
17 organizations wishing to participate in the commemoration;
- 18 (i) Act as a point of contact for national organizations wishing to distribute
19 information to state and local groups about grant opportunities, meetings,
20 and national events related to the settlement of Fort Harrod and
21 semiquincentennial activities;
- 22 (j) Seek funding sources such as foundations, line item appropriations, federal
23 grants, philanthropic organizations, and lineage societies;
- 24 (k) Establish press, print, and electronic contacts that generate stories on a
25 continual basis;
- 26 (l) Encourage and contract new publications and create a call for papers on
27 Fort Harrod, James Harrod, or other participating or involved parties, and

- 1 how the history of this early frontier settlement impacted American history;
- 2 (m) Organize symposiums and other methodologies to investigate genealogy
- 3 relative to the events involved in the founding of Kentucky and opening of
- 4 the west;
- 5 (n) Create higher and lower educational programs; and
- 6 (o) Perform other duties necessary to educate Kentuckians on the history of
- 7 early frontier settlements and on the Commonwealth's role in early
- 8 westward expansion and to highlight the importance of the years 1774 to
- 9 1776 to Kentucky history.
- 10 (3) The commission shall consist of the following fourteen (14) members:
- 11 (a) The secretary of the Education and Workforce Development Cabinet or his
- 12 or her designee;
- 13 (b) One (1) member from the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet appointed by
- 14 the secretary of the cabinet;
- 15 (c) One (1) member from the Kentucky Heritage Council, appointed by the
- 16 state historic preservation officer;
- 17 (d) One (1) member from the Kentucky Humanities Council, appointed by the
- 18 chair of the council;
- 19 (e) One (1) member of the Friends of Fort Harrod, recommended by the leader
- 20 of that organization and appointed by the Governor;
- 21 (f) Three (3) citizen members appointed by the Governor, one (1) of whom
- 22 shall be designated as the chairperson;
- 23 (g) The commissioner of the Department of Parks or his or her designee;
- 24 (h) The president of Friends of Boone Trace, Inc. or his or her designee;
- 25 (i) The president of the Fort Boonesborough Foundation, or his or her
- 26 designee;
- 27 (j) One (1) member from the Kentucky African American Heritage

- 1 *Commission appointed by the chair of that commission;*
2 *(k) One (1) member of the Kentucky Native American Heritage Commission*
3 *appointed by the chair of that commission; and*
4 *(l) One (1) member of the Kentucky Historical Society appointed by the*
5 *executive director of the society.*
6 *(4) The Kentucky Semiquincentennial Commission shall be attached to the Kentucky*
7 *Historical Society for administrative purposes only.*
8 *(5) This section shall expire on January 1, 2027.*

9 ➔Section 3. Sections 1 and 2 of this Act, as codified following the 2021 Regular
10 Session of the Kentucky General Assembly, shall be repealed effective January 1, 2027.