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## It's time to take a stand for N.H. state parks

By [GARY GHIOTO \(/byline?byline=By GARY GHIOTO\)](#)

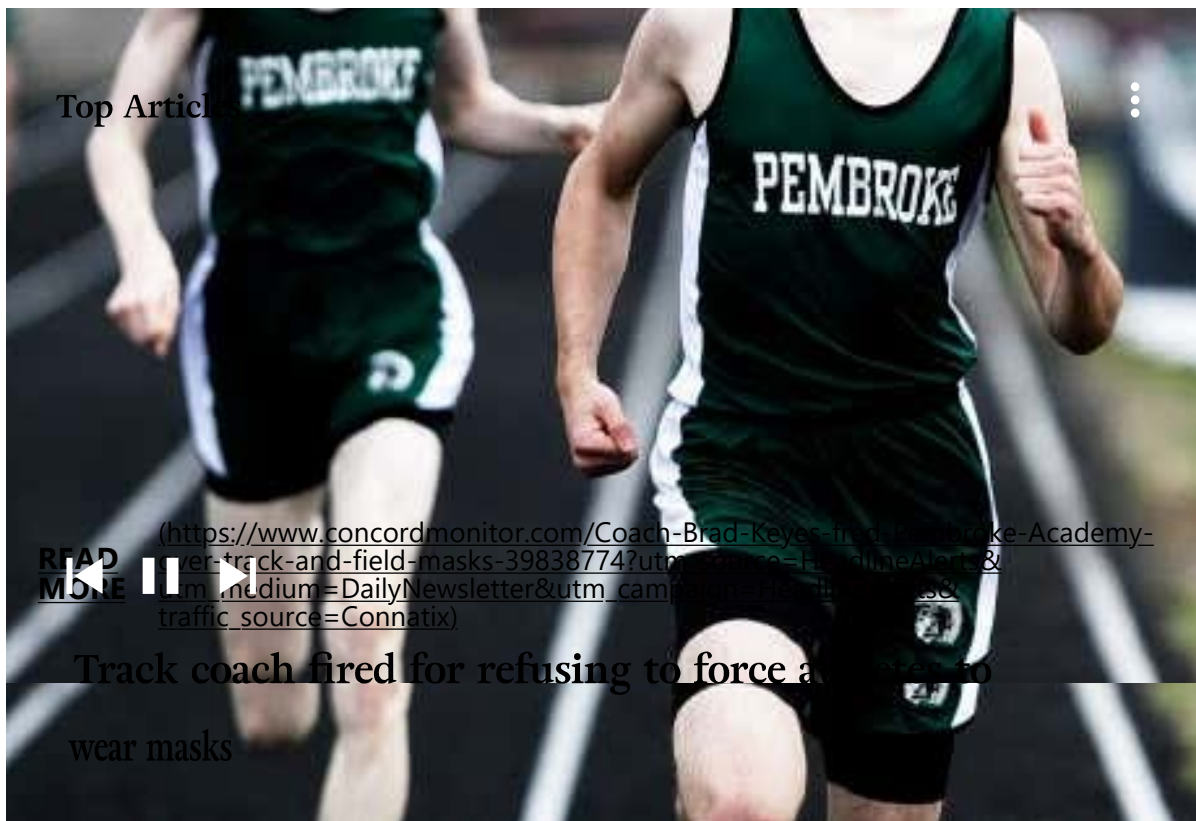
For the Monitor

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In early April, the New Hampshire House will take up legislation to ensure the natural preservation of our 68 state parks for residents and visitors to enjoy for generations.

State Parks were established for perpetuity by wise people decades ago who realized that protecting natural places to recreate, walk and enjoy is an instrumental need for people. The idea to set aside New Hampshire's natural splendors from the Seacoast to the North Country – and everywhere in between forever was the goal for these visionaries.

That in simple terms is the thrust of HB 177, a bi-partisan bill to set a 2-mile barrier around state parks from landfill developments.



There is rising statewide support for HB 177 as people ask their elected representatives to protect all NH state parks from the public health threats, environmental insults and economic losses that inevitably come with a nearby landfill.

Toxic odors, waters fouled with the feces of scavenger birds, steady noise, blowing dust and trash from heavy truck traffic and eventual wetlands and groundwater pollution would be ruinous for any park.

This commonsense bill is an assertion of our right as N.H. citizens to put N.H. first – to create a 2-mile buffer around our parks for the public good.

This bill affects very little land statewide. It is not a significant limitation on property owners near parks or developers of landfills. Land adjacent to parks can be sold for any number of land uses – just not landfilling. Developers can seek countless properties through the state without damaging a park with an incompatible land use.

In this decision we must not get distracted by tangential arguments for corporate self-interest or by an eager seller with a limited vision for the future. Such narrow interests must not dictate what is best for our whole state. Their personal gain does not begin to outweigh the opportunity HB 177 offers to assure long term protection of our Parks.

People must understand that the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services cannot protect state parks from landfill developers – but HB 177 can do that.

NH DES issues landfill permits based on a waste management plan last updated in 2003. It is outdated and inadequate by today's standards. It's time to take a stand and protect our parks forever. Please contact your House representatives before the tentative April 9 final vote on this bill. Ask them to support HB 177 to protect your favorite park and then, let's fix our outdated Solid Waste Management plan.

*(Gary Ghioto lives in Lisbon.)*

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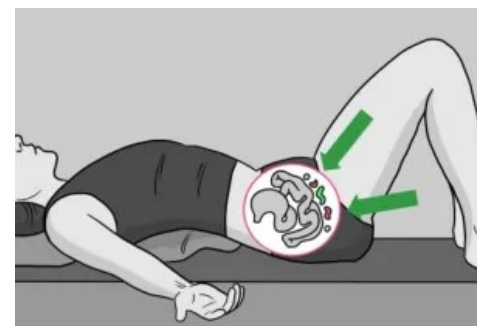
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