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OUTDOOR NEWS

NOVEMBER 2023



INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Smith's Consumer Products

Smith's Consumer Products in Hot Springs was founded in 1886 with humble beginnings as a small Arkansas stone

company. Today, it is a manufacturer of electric and manual sharpeners for sporting goods, hardware and houseware markets. In addition to sharpeners, fishing and hunting tools and kitchen tools, Smith's Products has an extensive line of everyday and tactical carry pocket knives. A Sporting Survival Tool line includes knives, fire starters, LED lights for outdoors, sharpeners and tools. A line of Made in USA products is manufactured in Hot Springs.

GRANT UPDATES

State Grants



The Outdoor Recreation Grants Advisory Committee

makes funding recommendations in late October. Applicants receiving grants will be notified after the committee's recommendations have been approved by the ADPHT Secretary and the Governor's Office. ORGP staff will assist successful applicants in the execution of their funded projects. They will also provide feedback to unsuccessful applicants in order to improve those applicants' chances of funding in a future funding cycle.



Wings Over the Prairie Festival - Nov. 24-25

The 88th annual Wings Over the Prairie Festival and World's Championship Duck Calling Contest is set for Nov. 24-25 in Stuttgart. The largest outdoor expo in the Mid-South, the event spans six city blocks in downtown Stuttgart with designated areas for shopping, food, children's activities, a carnival and midway, a beer garden, duck calling contests and more. Downtown merchants are open for business during the festivities. The first National Duck Calling Contest was held on Main Street in Stuttgart on Nov. 24, 1936 in connection with the annual Arkansas Rice Carnival. Seventeen people entered and the grand prize was a hunting coat valued at \$6.60. Today, more than 65 contests across the United States are held to qualify competitors to come to Stuttgart on Thanksgiving weekend to vie for the title of World Champion. Today's winner receives a prize package worth more than \$25,000.



Arkansas Tourism Development Incentive Program

To encourage growth in Arkansas' outdoor recreation and tourism industries, the Tourism Development Incentive Program was introduced. To stimulate the expansion of these industries, economic incentives are offered to qualified private development projects in the form of sales and income tax credits. Since the intent, in part, is to generate additional tourist traffic to Arkansas, each proposed project must develop a marketing plan that targets at least 25% of its visitors from out of state, meet other requirements, and submit a completed application prior to incurring any project costs.

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Arkansas' Katherine Andrews elected Chair of Confluence of States

The Confluence of States recently met at the Outdoor Economy Conference in Cherokee, North Carolina. The conference brought together over 600 outdoor industry leaders, advocates, business leaders, and stakeholders from across the country to collaborate on important issues facing the outdoor economy. The conference featured keynote speakers, panel discussions, and workshops focused on topics such as building vibrant outdoor communities, leveling up outdoor businesses, advancing inclusive and effective coalitions, and envisioning the future of the outdoor economy. Members of the Confluence of States also met with leaders of the Statewide Outdoor Business Alliance Network and members of the National Governors Association's Outdoor Recreation Learning Network. During the convening, Katherine Andrews, director of the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation, was elected Chair of the Confluence of States Coalition for 2024. Carolann Ouellette, director of the Maine Office of Outdoor Recreation, was re-elected to serve as co-chair.

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Arkansas Graveler

Registration opens Jan. 1, 2024 for the inaugural Arkansas Graveler, a six-day and approximately 340-mile gravel ride traversing Arkansas' most rural roads. The event will take place June 23-29, 2024. The Arkansas Graveler route winds through some of the most scenic, iconic rural roads of Arkansas, beginning in Fayetteville in the northwest corner and ending in Jonesboro, located in the northeast corner. Daily ride distances vary between 40-70 miles depending on the difficulty of the terrain. It is not a race, but rather a tour and cycling festival with an emphasis on live music, community activation, culinary focus, and outdoor experiences at each overnight stop, making the Arkansas Graveler more than a ride.

Eddyline Kayaks Relocates to Arkansas

Recreational kayak manufacturer [Eddyline Kayaks](#) is relocating its headquarters from Washington to downtown Siloam Springs in Northwest Arkansas and plans to complete the move before the end of the year.

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Leveraging Climbing Opportunities in Arkansas

In an American Alpine Club interview, Katherine Andrews, Arkansas director of the Office of Outdoor Recreation, discussed leveraging new climbing opportunities and creating economic impact through recreation.

[READ THE ARTICLE >](#)

AGFC Update

Modern gun deer season and waterfowl season open in November. Check the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission website for [deer hunting zones](#). Information on [hunting waterfowl](#) and WRICE program field hunting draws are also on the AGFC website. The WRICE program fields are part of the 3.2 million acres of public land that Arkansas has for hunters to choose from.

[FIND PRIVATE GUIDES FOR WATERFOWL HUNTING >](#)

Growing Trails in Jonesboro

Northwest Arkansas isn't the only part of the state investing in mountain biking. Read this article by Liz Chrisman to see how Jonesboro engaged the International Mountain Bicycling Association to help with its trail system.

[READ THE ARTICLE >](#)

WOKA Whitewater Park Now Open

Now open, [WOKA Whitewater Park](#) near Siloam Springs boasts a 1,200-foot-long channel with eight drop features designed to challenge and excite kayakers, surfers and tubers. The park has seasonal rentals, a shop, concessions, changing rooms, restrooms and a shaded viewing area. In Oklahoma near the Arkansas border, WOKA is located on a 30-acre site and is a joint endeavor of the Grand River Dam Authority and the City of Siloam Springs with generous support from the Walton Family Foundation. Mountain bike trails are also nearby.



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The Office of Outdoor Recreation works to grow and support the outdoor recreation economy at the state level through collaboration with outdoor businesses, local communities and stakeholders.



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