



QUARTER 4 NEWSLETTER

PG. 2
INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

PG. 2
GRANT UPDATES

PG. 3
FEATURE EVENT AND ORGANIZATION

PG. 4
GORP UPDATES

PG. 5
GENERAL UPDATES



NOVEMBER 2024

INDUSTRY SPOTLIGHT

Fly Oz



Recreational Flying is an emerging growth sector of the outdoor economy in Arkansas. FlyOz is an aviation club based in Bentonville, Arkansas, designed for those passionate about flying in the beautiful Ozark region and beyond. Fly Oz brings the adventure of the skies to everyone, whether you're a plane owner, student pilot, or someone seeking memorable experiences in the air.

[READ MORE >](#)

GRANT UPDATES



Outdoor Recreation Grant Program

The application deadline for the Outdoor Recreation Grant Program FUN Park and Matching grants closed on Aug. 30. Our committee has been hard at work evaluating and scoring each application. Grant hearings were held on Oct. 24 and 25. Committee recommendations have been sent to the Governor's Office and final results will be announced in a few weeks. The application deadline for the Great Strides program Trails for Life grant closed on Sept. 30. As stated above, the committee has been evaluating and scoring these grants and final hearings will be held on Nov. 18. Committee recommendations will be sent to the Governor's Office and final results will be announced in the coming weeks.

[READ MORE >](#)



FEATURE EVENT AND ORGANIZATION

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers

Backcountry Hunters and Anglers (BHA) is a leading organization dedicated to protecting North America's public lands, waters, and wildlife habitats. Founded in 2004, BHA advocates for responsible outdoor activities, focusing on hunting, fishing, and public access to wilderness areas. The organization's mission centers on preserving these natural spaces for future generations, encouraging stewardship through advocacy and grassroots initiatives. With chapters across the U.S. and Canada, BHA mobilizes members to influence policy, engage in conservation efforts, and defend public access rights to ensure the continued enjoyment of outdoor pursuits.

[LEARN MORE HERE >](#)

Horseshoe Hell

Arkansas is home to one of the best climbing events in the nation - 24 Hours of Horseshoe Hell. This endurance rock climbing competition is held annually on the last full weekend of September within the steep sandstone cliff walls of Horseshoe Canyon Ranch. Teams of two choose between a 12-hour or 24-hour climbing event. The festival lasts four days with food, camping, music, swag, games, competitions, and most of all fellowship. The event starts with participants yelling out the Climbers' Creed, and a banshee yell goes out every hour, sweeping through the whole canyon.

[LEARN MORE HERE>](#)



GORP UPDATES

Fall Cohort

The Greenhouse Outdoor Recreation Program (GORP) at the University of Arkansas recently announced its fall 2024 cohort, featuring seven startups focused on innovative outdoor products and services. Projects include eco-friendly fire starters, modular storage solutions, e-bike accessibility initiatives, and custom mountain biking gear. Each participant receives mentorship, resources, and up to \$15,000 in non-dilutive funding through this 12-week program. GORP continues its mission to support entrepreneurs in the outdoor industry, fostering sustainable and innovative growth. [For more details, visit the GORP announcement page.](#)

GORP Around the State

The GORP Around the State program kicked off in early 2024, expanding outreach and resources to outdoor-focused entrepreneurs across Arkansas. The program offers workshops, mentorship, and resources tailored to the needs of local startups in outdoor recreation. Alongside Fayetteville, Bentonville, and Little Rock, GORP holds events and workshops in cities like Fort Smith, Hot Springs, and Jonesboro. By visiting various communities, GORP helps startups statewide gain insights and support in the outdoor recreation sector, fostering connections and growth for Arkansas' outdoor economy. [Learn more on the GORP website.](#)

Demo Night

Join the GORP for Demo Night on Nov. 12. This event offers an exciting chance to see innovative outdoor recreation projects in action, network with enthusiasts, and get updates on the latest developments. [Don't miss the opportunity to RSVP and secure your spot for a night of demos and outdoor inspiration.](#)



Inaugural Natural State Day at the Capitol - Feb. 4, 2025

Mark your calendar for Feb. 4, 2025, as we celebrate the first-ever Natural State Day at the Arkansas Capitol. This special day will spotlight Arkansas as a premier outdoor adventure destination and a leader in the outdoor economy. From 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. in the Capitol's second-floor rotunda, explore Arkansas-based products, gear, and outdoor destinations through industry exhibits and live demos. You'll also have opportunities to connect with industry leaders, legislators, and community partners. Interested in attending? [Contact the Office of Outdoor Recreation for details and join the celebration.](#)

Arkansas Outdoor Economy Summit - Feb. 23-25, 2025

Join us in Bentonville for the second Arkansas Outdoor Economy Summit, held this year alongside the Arkansas Governor's Conference on Tourism. Building on last year's success, which brought more than 100 participants, this year's summit features sessions on the economic impact of outdoor recreation, workforce development, industry resources, and balancing conservation with tourism. Connect with industry leaders and help shape the future of Arkansas' outdoor economy. Make sure to mark your calendars for this upcoming chance to grow partnerships and inspire change. More details will be coming soon!

Defining the Economic Impact of Outdoor Recreation

On November 20, the Bureau of Economic Analysis will release its annual report on the economic impact of Outdoor Recreation – evaluating data nationwide, and state-by-state. The Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation uses this data each year to help inform our work, and we look forward to seeing and sharing the information as soon as it's released.

Maumelle Pinnacle Conservation Area (MPCA) Recreation Master Plan

Development of the MPCA Recreation Master Plan is wrapping up and we will soon have a final draft to release to the public. The plan is a unified effort among multiple partners, including the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation, Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Central Arkansas Water, The Nature Conservancy, Arkansas Parks & Recreation Foundation, Arkansas Game & Fish Commission, Pulaski County, Metroplan, and the City of Little Rock to balance conservation of the natural realm with recreation opportunities in Little Rock and Pulaski County between the Big Dam Bridge and Lake Sylvia. The MPCA includes more than 24,000 acres, plus an additional 8,400 acres in the projected second phase between Lake Maumelle and Lake Sylvia. Being close to the largest population center in Arkansas, the MPCA Recreation Master Plan represents a significant project for the state.

As a collection of outdoor resources home to mountain biking, hiking, canoeing, hunting, and other nature-based recreation opportunities, the project developed as a partnership effort to harmonize goals between the natural and human realms. A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between the original partners, the Arkansas Office of Outdoor Recreation, Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission, Central Arkansas Water, and The Nature Conservancy in 2023 with the goal of strengthening connections between public lands. Crafton Tull was then hired to pull additional partners together and draft the Recreation Master Plan.

The future of the MPCA is one where a system of conserved lands and waters provides habitat for the plants and animals that comprise Arkansas' native diversity but also recreation opportunities that provide quality outdoor experiences, enhanced quality of life for residents and visitors, and an increase in the outdoor economy. Access points are spread throughout the landscape, starting in urban centers and connecting to more rural parks and preserves, providing access to a broad range of recreational amenities and allowing people of diverse backgrounds to create a more personal experience.

Implementing this plan will maintain the protection and conservation needs of the sensitive natural areas within the MPCA while also expanding opportunities for access, engagement, and education for the public.

[LEARN MORE HERE >](#)

Trails at Mena

The Trails at Mena Project is an ambitious trail-focused recreation development designed to bring new downhill biking experiences to Mena. This collaborative initiative, involving Arkansas State Parks, the Arkansas Parks and Recreation Foundation, the U.S. Forest Service, and the City of Mena, aims to establish a network of trails spanning city, state and federal lands. With guidance from the Office of Outdoor Recreation, a Request for Information (RFI) process is underway to engage design partners for the proposed downhill bike park, shaping this unique destination for bikers and outdoor enthusiasts alike. For more information, visit TrailsAtMena.com.

Delta Heritage Trail Network

The Delta Heritage Trail is an 84.5-mile, multi-use path that will soon connect Lexa to Arkansas City along Arkansas' eastern border. Slated for completion by late 2025, this scenic trail will offer an immersive experience of the state's Delta region. The Office of Outdoor Recreation is working with local mayors, chambers, economic developers, business owners, and recreation organizations to position this trail as a driver of economic growth and trail tourism for the Arkansas Delta. Interested in joining the Delta Heritage Trail Network? Contact Becky Flynn at Becky.Flynn@Arkansas.gov.

Guide AR

Guide AR is a new Office of Outdoor Recreation program designed to spotlight Arkansas' top outdoor guides. This directory will feature guides who are credentialed, licensed, and insured for activities like hunting, fishing, cycling, paddling, climbing and hiking. Through this voluntary program, guides can submit their credentials for review, and once approved, they'll be promoted as part of Guide AR. Stay tuned for a formal announcement and further details on how guides can join this exciting new network.

Statewide Outdoor Recreation Listening Session

In 2024, the Office of Outdoor Recreation partnered with the Arkansas Economic Development Commission, Arkansas Small Business and Technology Development Center, University of Arkansas Office of Entrepreneurship and Innovation, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission to host statewide listening sessions in cities like Hope, Little Rock, Fayetteville, Marshall, and Jonesboro. These sessions provided information on resources for the outdoor industry and gathered insights from communities. The final session is on Nov. 19 at the Sadie Johnson Community Center in Monticello, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m., with lunch provided. Key findings so far include the need for better access to capital, a consolidated list of resources, and state promotion of niche outdoor locations. A comprehensive report of insights will follow in 2025.

75Strong Initiative

The 75Strong initiative is a two-year blended program of in-person sessions and virtual activities supporting entrepreneurship and small business growth in rural Arkansas. Led by Startup Junkie, Conductor, and AEDC, it trains local leaders to foster economic development and build entrepreneurial ecosystems. Participants earn the Entrepreneurial Development Professional (EDP) certification, develop tailored strategies, and support small businesses in their regions.

Ideal applicants come from underserved communities and work across public and private sectors. Applications are open until Dec. 1, 2024, with a commitment that promises long-lasting impact for Arkansas communities. [To learn more, visit www.75strongarkansas.com](https://www.75strongarkansas.com)



Ways to get outside in the winter

Winter in Arkansas is perfect for exploring the outdoors. Arkansas State Parks kicks off the year with First Day Hikes on Jan. 1, where guided hikes showcase the natural beauty of the season. Check the [Arkansas State Parks website](https://www.arkansasstateparks.com) for details on hikes near you.

For hunters and anglers, winter is a prime season. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission posts season dates for deer, waterfowl, and more. [Visit AGFC's website](https://www.arkansasgameandfish.com) for all hunting and fishing dates and requirements.



ARKANSAS
— OFFICE OF —
OUTDOOR RECREATION

ARKANSAS OFFICE OF OUTDOOR RECREATION

1 Capitol Mall | Little Rock, AR 72201

501-682-6829

FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL!

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.



Want to change how you receive these emails?

You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe](#) from this list.