

**STATE OF ARKANSAS**  
**EXECUTIVE DEPARTMENT**

**PROCLAMATION**

**TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME - GREETINGS:**

**WHEREAS:** One hundred years ago, Governor Thomas Chipman McRae signed into law an act authorizing the acceptance of land for parks and state reservations in Arkansas; and

**WHEREAS:** Through the passion, pursuit, and founding vision of Dr. T.W. Hardison, House Bill 873 passed without a dissenting vote and was signed into law as Act 27 6 of 1923, serving as the foundation by which the entirety of the Arkansas State Park system was established; and

**WHEREAS:** Initial land was acquired for the creation of Petit Jean State Park on September 10, 1923, making it the first state park established in Arkansas; and

**WHEREAS:** The passion and pursuit of Dr. T.W. Hardison and the state park idea, culminating in the 1920s, is a legacy that we appreciate and enjoy today, 100 years later; and

**WHEREAS:** The Arkansas State Parks Commission was created in 1927 to select and acquire areas of natural and scenic beauty and promote recreational enjoyment for the people of the state and the attraction of visitors; and

**WHEREAS:** The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), created by President Franklin Delano Roosevelt during the Great Depression, began work in 1933 to construct Arkansas's first state parks at Petit Jean, Mount Nebo, Crowley's Ridge, Devil's Den, Lake Catherine, and the future Buffalo National River; and

**WHEREAS:** During his term, Governor Dale Bumpers invested more in Arkansas' State Parks than ever before, doubling the number of state parks, an unprecedented, visionary investment in preservation, conservation, and recreation; and

**WHEREAS:** With the support of Governor Mike Huckabee, in 1996, voters approved an amendment to the state's constitution for the collection of a one-eighth of one percent sales tax to support Arkansas State Parks, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, Arkansas Heritage, and Keep Arkansas Beautiful, thus confirming the importance of wildlife conservation, state parks, and heritage resources to the citizens of Arkansas; and

**WHEREAS:** With 52 state parks, 55,000 acres, and parks in 49 counties, Arkansas State Parks has grown into a representative sample of Arkansas's scenic beauty, rich history and treasured culture; and

**WHEREAS:** Each state park is a significant part of the fabric of Arkansas, and the Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism is charged with an important role in interpreting, maintaining, and protecting some of the most cherished natural, historical and cultural resources found in Arkansas; and

**WHEREAS:** The State Parks of Arkansas have impacted and enhanced the quality of life of Arkansans and served guests from around the world; and

**WHEREAS:** Collectively the Arkansas State Park system is one of the state's largest tourism and economic drivers, adding over \$1 billion each year to the state's economy and having last year welcomed over 8 million guests into Arkansas parks and museums;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, Governor of the State of Arkansas, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the laws of the State of Arkansas, do hereby proclaim the year 2023, as

**"ARKANSAS STATE PARKS CENTENNIAL YEAR"**

And urge the citizens of the state to take cognizance of this event and participate fittingly in its observance.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and caused the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed the 1st day of March, in the year of our Lord 2023.



Attes

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Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor

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John Thurston, Secretary of State