

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

**PROCLAMATION**

EO 23-13

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS COME - GREETINGS:

**EXECUTIVE ORDER TO ESTABLISH THE NATURAL STATE INITIATIVE**

WHEREAS: Arkansas, the Natural State, is home to some of the most beautiful natural resources in the world. Arkansas' scenic rivers, lakes, forests, mountains, caves, creeks, roadways, airstrips, and trails offer limitless opportunities for outdoor adventure;

WHEREAS: Outdoor recreation is a powerful economic engine and a gateway to improved quality of life and positive health outcomes for all Arkansans;

WHEREAS: The Bureau of Economic Analysis at the United States Department of Commerce estimated that outdoor recreation generates \$862 billion annually in economic output. In Arkansas, the outdoor economy grew by almost twenty-three percent (23%) in the last year;

WHEREAS: Arkansas must seize this momentum and further establish the Natural State as a leader in the outdoor economy and a destination for outdoor enthusiasts from around the world; and

WHEREAS: The Governor seeks to establish the Natural State Initiative.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS, acting under the authority vested in me as the Governor of the State of Arkansas, do hereby order the following:

- (1) There is hereby created the Natural State Initiative (the "Initiative") and the Natural State Initiative Advisory Council ("Advisory Council"), which shall provide advice to the Governor regarding the promotion of outdoor recreation and the outdoor economy in Arkansas.
- (2) The Governor hereby appoints Bryan Sanders, the First Gentleman of Arkansas, to serve as chairman of the Advisory Council on a volunteer basis with no compensation for his duties.
- (3) The Governor shall appoint the members to the Advisory Council, each of which shall serve at the pleasure of the Governor and on a volunteer basis.
  - a) To serve as a member on the Advisory Council, an individual must have an interest in outdoor recreation in Arkansas due to

his or her position in state government, on public commissions, within non-profit organizations, or in the private sector.

- (4) The Advisory Council shall undertake the following responsibilities in making its recommendations on how the Governor may best advance outdoor recreation and the outdoor economy in Arkansas:
  - a) Coordinating with the Arkansas Department of Commerce, to promote both Arkansas' growing outdoor recreation industry and the economic impact of outdoor infrastructure investment; to recruit new outdoor recreation businesses to Arkansas, to expand existing outdoor recreation businesses, and to foster entrepreneurial growth by using economic development incentives, site selection services, funding, and training resources within the Arkansas Economic Development Commission; and to explore the development of outdoor recreation opportunity zones near state parks.
  - b) Coordinating with the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism in both establishing a plan to maintain Arkansas' world-class trail systems at state parks and connecting those trails to larger regional trail systems; to develop an innovative, data-driven marketing strategy to promote tourism and outdoor recreation in Arkansas; to elevate the Office of Outdoor Recreation's efforts to grow the outdoor recreation economy; and to create a framework for attracting partners to improve programming and experiences in state parks.
  - c) Coordinating with the Governor's team on workforce development to support efforts in building the outdoor recreation workforce in Arkansas, thereby generating a pipeline of skilled workers and entrepreneurs to grow Arkansas' outdoor economy.
  - d) Coordinating with the Arkansas Department of Finance and Administration and the Arkansas Department of Transformation and Shared Services to develop innovative food, beverage, and vendor services to enhance outdoor recreation in Arkansas.
  - e) Conducting a review of the tax and regulatory environment, including internal agency and department policies, and explore opportunities to grow the outdoor economy and advance the Initiative's objectives.
- (5) The Advisory Council shall present to the Governor an annual written report summarizing its progress on the duties as set forth herein as well as stating its recommendations and advice for how the Governor may advance outdoor recreation and the outdoor economy in Arkansas.

This Executive Order shall become effective upon its signing and shall remain in full force and effect until amended or rescinded by further executive orders.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand and cause the Great Seal of the State of Arkansas to be affixed this 24th day of January, in the year of our Lord 2023.



A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Sarah Huckabee Sanders".

Sarah Huckabee Sanders, Governor

Attest:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John Thurston".

John Thurston, Secretary of State