



Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Governor

Shea Lewis

Secretary

July 24, 2024

As Secretary of the Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism and Director of Arkansas State Parks, I've seen first-hand how our department's reach into communities spans far and wide. The Trails at Mena project is important to Arkansas — from driving tourism to Mena and statewide, to preserving and sharing our Main Street and historic buildings for future generations to enjoy, to the expanded outdoor recreation that Arkansas State Parks aims to provide for our visitors.

The Trails at Mena project encapsulates just what makes Arkansas special — the people who love it and the countless adventures that can be had in The Natural State. We have seen how public-private partnerships have transformed our State Park System with the opening of the Monument Trails System in Arkansas State Parks, which have attracted regional and national visitors and benefited local economies.

Arkansas State Parks, thanks to the Monument Trails system, have been named the best trails in the United States by Outside Magazine, and Mount Nebo State Park has been featured two years in a row in the country's premier Big Mountain Enduro race series. If implemented successfully, the Trails at Mena project is expected to create economic opportunity for the people of Mena as well as increase travel and tourism in the city and region. Given the collaborative nature of this project and the significant support it has received, the project partners believe it is feasible in both scale and economic scope.

This project has the potential to position this part of our state as a nationally recognized outdoor recreation destination for trail running, hunting, fishing, birding, hiking and cycling. Additionally, it has the potential to improve the health, well-being, economy and lives of those in and around the region. Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism is working with all the aforementioned partners on this collaborative effort to improve outdoor recreation in The Natural State.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Shea Lewis", is written over a faint, larger blue outline of the same signature.

Shea Lewis

Secretary

Director, Division of Arkansas State Parks

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Office of the Secretary

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