



Sarah Huckabee Sanders

Governor

Shea Lewis

Secretary

Monday, July 29, 2024

Secretary Vilsack,

Thank you for considering the Draft Environmental Assessment (EA) for the Trails at Mena Project. Arkansas is renowned for its breathtaking landscapes, from rolling mountains and winding rivers to vibrant communities dedicated to exploring and preserving these natural resources. As Chief of Staff for the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism, our mission is to protect and promote our state's natural, cultural and historical assets, contributing to a thriving economy and high quality of life. The Trails at Mena Project exemplifies this mission, and we are fully committed to supporting its successful implementation.

Our department has witnessed the numerous benefits of trails at our State Parks, with the public-private development of the Monument Trails, which were recognized as the best trails in the nation by Outside Magazine. These trails have led to new visitors, increased volunteerism, and renewed support for outdoor recreation and conservation—benefits that any public lands manager aspires to achieve. In an era increasingly dominated by technology, outdoor recreation offers essential health and wellness benefits.

The proposed action in this Draft EA aligns with the U.S. Forest Service's Ouachita National Forest plan and promises significant advantages, including improved community health, enhanced regional and national tourism, and job creation.

The strong public support for this project underscores its potential. We are committed to making this area a premier multi-recreational destination that will serve future generations. I fully endorse the implementation of Alternative 2, as outlined in the Draft Environmental Assessment. This project stands as one of the most innovative and exciting developments in outdoor recreation today.

Thank you for your consideration.

Best regards,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Suzanne Grobmyer".

Suzanne Grobmyer

Chief of Staff

Arkansas Department of Parks, Heritage and Tourism

Cc: Dan Olsen

Forest Supervisor

Ouachita National Forest