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First name: Adriane

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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I am thrilled to see the Trails at Mena project moving forward with momentum. I am in full support of this project and as many like this as possible across our wonderful state. Trail projects like this use one of Arkansas' greatest assets - our natural areas - to create opportunities for Arkansans and tourists to invest and enjoy in our local communities.

My family lives in Montgomery County. We love spending time hiking in the Ouachita National Forest and enjoying lake time on the pristine Lake Ouachita. My daughter goes to school in Garland County and I work from a Little Rock-based office and from a home office. We have family in Faulkner, Pulaski and Benton Counties. With such a wide network of work and family, we are fortunate to have the opportunity to travel often across Arkansas. I have seen the enormous success of new trail systems built in the Hot Springs, Little Rock and Bentonville/Rogers areas. I have seen firsthand how trail complexes like the Trails at Mena project can enhance and improve the communities, businesses and residents around them by way of more visitors and their investment, more jobs, and sustainable growth in general.

I meet families from across Arkansas and the U.S. when I visit trail systems like this proposed Trails at Mena project. Visitors are coming to Arkansas, to our great little state, because our natural beauty doesn't exist like this anywhere else. When we meet people from Louisiana, Texas, Mississippi, Missouri, Oklahoma and beyond, they tell us - Arkansas is one of the most beautiful, affordable, and safe places they have ever been. It always makes me proud to share with visitors that I've grown up here, I'm raising my family here and our state has something to offer in every region. We need as many projects like the Trails at Mena effort as possible. It just keeps making our state better.

This Trails at Mena project provides accessibility and adds convenience and comfort to outdoor activities that people love, like hiking and biking. It is backed by state and federal agencies that already go above and beyond to preserve, promote and improve Arkansas; with the U.S. Forest Service and Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism behind this project, it will have the very best tourism experts to ensure success. The project is a proven model for success in other Arkansas areas.

In conclusion, the overall design of the Trails at Mena project is a wise development, as it leverages the natural beauty of western Arkansas, the proximity of the well-established Queen Wilhelmina State Park, and the charming allure of Mena and its small businesses and rich Arkansas history. It is an opportunity that we (Arkansas) just should not pass up! Projects like this will continue to add to the growing list of destinations that make our great little state such a memorable, unique, safe and beautiful place to visit and live.

I ask that you support and approve this project.

Thank you kindly,

Adriane Barnes

Montgomery County Resident