



THE DEPARTMENT OF ARKANSAS
HERITAGE

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Trail dedicated at Devil’s Knob-Devil’s Backbone Natural Area

New trail increases accessibility for recreation

Arkansas Arts Council

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Arkansas Historic
Preservation Program

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Arkansas Natural
Heritage Commission

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Arkansas State Archives

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Delta Cultural Center

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Historic Arkansas Museum

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Mosaic Templars Cultural Center

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Old State House Museum

MELBOURNE, Ark. – Today at 2 p.m., the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission (ANHC), an agency of the Department of Arkansas Heritage, dedicated a new nature trail at Devil’s Knob-Devil’s Backbone Natural Area. The trail is a 1.25-mile loop and showcases the beauty of this 822-acre natural area.

Located 10 miles southwest of Melbourne, this Ozark Mountain treasure includes woodlands, forests, glades and bluffs. The natural area is comprised of an uplifted ridge with two knolls that are joined by a saddle, called the Devil’s Backbone, for which the natural area gets its name.

“The trail at Devil’s Knob-Devil’s Backbone is the result of yet another example of local government and state government working together to benefit the citizens of Arkansas,” Stacy Hurst, DAH Director, said. “Thanks to that partnership, even more people can enjoy the scenic views and natural beauty of this area.”

The hiking trail starts and ends at the main parking area and is considered moderate in difficulty level. Highlighting the beauty of the natural area, the trail takes visitors to the knolls and back to the parking area. Hikers can see Ashe’s juniper (*Juniperus ashei*) trees that are believed to be hundreds of years old, some with trunks measuring at 30 inches or more in diameter. Visitors will walk past glades, under a shelter bluff and past many overlook sites.

Devil’s Knob-Devil’s Backbone was added to the ANHC’s statewide System of Natural Areas in 1976. The idea to add a trail at the natural area came at the suggestion of IZARD County Judge, Eric Smith. Smith contacted the ANHC about the possibility of adding a trail and expanded, improved parking. The ANHC was able to contract with Rogue Trails, LLC. to build the trail. They were able to utilize a pre-existing footpath as a basis for a trail, which was completed this spring. IZARD County assisted in parking area improvements at the natural area to accompany the trail.

(more)



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The natural area is located in the Salem Plateau of the Ozark Mountains and reaches an elevation of 1,058 feet (mean sea level) at its highest point. The knobs and the backbone are home to a variety of outstanding woodlands, glades, and rock outcrops, as well as a variety of plant and animal species. Some of the key species found at the natural area include American smoke-tree (*Cotinus obovatus*), black-and-white warbler (*Mniotilta varia*), greater roadrunner (*Geococcyx californianus*), late purple aster (*Symphotrichum patens*), pine-weed (*Hypericum gentianoides*), prairie lizard (*Sceloporus consobrinus*), prickly-pear cactus (*Opuntia* sp.), tassel-flower (*Brickellia grandiflora*) and small palafloxia (*Palafloxia callosa*).

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About the Department of Arkansas Heritage

The mission of the Department of Arkansas Heritage is to identify Arkansas's heritage and enhance the quality of life for residents and visitors by the discovery, preservation and presentation of the state's natural, cultural and historic resources. This is accomplished through the work of eight divisions: [Arkansas Arts Council](#), [Arkansas Historic Preservation Program](#), [Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission](#), [Arkansas State Archives](#), [Delta Cultural Center](#), [Historic Arkansas Museum](#), [Mosaic Templars Cultural Center](#) and [Old State House Museum](#).

About the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission

Since 1973, the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission has been working to conserve Arkansas's natural landscape. ANHC's professional staff conducts on-the-ground field surveys to locate and evaluate occurrences of rare habitats and at-risk species. This information is housed in the Arkansas Heritage Program's biodiversity database. For more information, visit www.naturalheritage.com and follow ANHC on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube.