STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Newsletter From Rep. Justin Gonzales
District 89

July 3, 2025

Expanding Outdoor Recreation

As Arkansans gather to celebrate the Fourth of July, we are reminded that the spirit of independence lives in both our history and our land. From the Ozark trails to the Ouachita River, Arkansas offers some of the most spectacular outdoor experiences in the country. And this year, thanks to legislation passed during the 2025 Regular Session, we're investing in that promise like never before.

Tourism is Arkansas' second-largest industry. In the most recent year for which data is available, Arkansas welcomed more than 50 million visitors who spent nearly $10 billion, much of it on outdoor recreation opportunities.

This year, the General Assembly took significant steps to continue expanding outdoor tourism and recreational opportunities for families. Act 318 created the Office of Outdoor Recreation within the Department of Parks, Heritage, and Tourism. This new office will help coordinate programs, policies, and partnerships that highlight Arkansas's natural treasures and strengthen our tourism economy.

With Act 155, we established a clear legal framework for outdoor activities and recreational tramways. This legislation lays the groundwork for bringing lift access to downhill mountain bike parks to Arkansas.

We also passed Act 838, making it easier for businesses to invest in tourism attractions, particularly near our parks and historic sites, through expanded Natural State Initiative Opportunity Zones. Act 100 modernizes the way we manage trails and clarifies protections for private landowners who open their property for recreational use, ensuring that activities like rock climbing, cycling, and paddling continue to thrive.

As we mark Independence Day, we celebrate the freedoms we enjoy—and the natural beauty that defines our state. The legislation passed this year honors both, by opening new doors for exploration, economic growth, and shared pride in the land we call home.