



National Association of State Park Directors

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First Day Hikes in America's State Parks Offer Invigorating Start to the New Year Hashtag Your Hike: #FirstDayHikes

Make a New Year's resolution to your health and happiness by kicking off 2017 with an invigorating **First Day Hike** at a state park near you. On January 1, all 50 states will be participating in the sixth annual national event that encourages everyone to celebrate the New Year with a guided outdoor exploration.

"First Day Hikes offer families the opportunity to rejuvenate and reconnect with nature on guided outdoor adventures," Wyoming State Park Directors and NASPD President Domenic Bravo said. "There are shorter options for families with young children, to longer treks for adventure seekers. State parks offer stunning views, unique cultural and historical experiences, and wintering wildlife for everyone to enjoy."

Through the event, park rangers, naturalists and volunteers will share their knowledge of each state's unique natural and cultural features. Adventures include a trek along a rail trail in Arkansas' Delta Heritage Trail State Park and a Missouri hike amongst sinkholes, a geologic fault and serene woodlands in Ha Ha Tonka State Park. This year, many locations are including pet-friendly hikes, such as Greenbrier and Patapsco Valley state parks in Maryland. Details on every state's hikes are located at www.StateParks.org. Participants are encouraged to share their adventures on social media with #FirstDayHikes.

"America's State Parks provide havens for young and old alike to explore the beauty and serenity of nature through outdoor recreation," National Association of State Park Directors Executive Director Lewis Ledford said. "Hiking offers inspiring ways to improve your physical and mental health, while discovering beautiful public lands in every state."

The First Day Hikes originated more than 25 years ago at the Blue Hills Reservation – a state park in Milton, Massachusetts. Last year, more than 55,000 people participated on guided hikes that covered over 133,000 miles on 1,100 hikes across the country.

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The National Association of State Park Directors promotes and advocates for the state park systems across America in providing for conservation and management of natural and cultural resources, quality outdoor recreation experiences, connecting children and families to nature and the outdoors, and more. With more than 10,200 park areas and visitation of 760 million annually, the economic impact to local communities is estimated to exceed \$20 billion each year. America's State Parks is an alliance of state park systems in all 50 states.