

The background of the cover is a photograph of three Native American dancers in a grassy field with a forest in the background. One dancer on the left is playing a large wooden drum. The central dancer is in a dynamic pose, wearing a large, colorful feathered headdress. Another dancer is visible on the right, also in traditional regalia.

FIND — OUTDOORS — ANNUAL JOURNAL 2023

IN THIS ISSUE

LET'S GO FIND OUTDOORS

Enriching Programming for Educational Discovery

THE FOREST IS A PLACE TO RE-CHARGE OUR BATTERIES AND FIND PERSPECTIVE. Numerous studies have shown that time with nature helps our well-being and quality of life. Through Forest-Inspired Nature Discovery, we help people FIND Outdoors. With the mission to provide all people with educational, recreational, and interpretive opportunities about natural resources and cultural history, FIND moved headlong into 2023 with the confidence of inspiring people to connect with nature through well-managed outdoor recreation sites, campgrounds, visitor centers, guided tours, educational and outdoors opportunities. We aspire to share the benefits and wonder of nature to as many people as we possibly can.

FIND's goal of inspiring people to connect with nature and the call to action, "Let's Go!" conveys a sense of collaboration and forward momentum. Our efforts to serve diverse communities, elevate visitor experiences, and encourage our visitors to create meaningful connections with public lands demonstrate the commitment to our organization's mission.

With more than a half-century of successful collaboration with the US Forest Service across four states, FIND Outdoors hit the ground running this year. Our board, leadership, team members and volunteers have taken the time to reflect on past accomplishments and are using that wisdom to guide our efforts to be strategic, visionary, and successful in providing 50 more years of exceptional service.

The year was filled with many great highlights that you will find featured in this edition of the Annual Journal: The ability to continue to offer exceptional services in Georgia for two visitor centers and three campgrounds in collaboration with the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests; The second year of a successful Club de Exploradores, reaching out to and serving Latinx youth and their families throughout western North Carolina; Elevating the visitor experience at the Cradle of Forestry through generous grants from the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences; and concluding our important work in Indiana on the Hoosier National Forest as well as the Northwest Trading Post on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

We stood strong as our team navigated both challenges and successes in 2023. Our entire organization wants to express heartfelt appreciation to Beth Hooper for serving as the Interim President and CEO this past year. She carried the organization through an important year of organizational strengthening and transition. We are thrilled to have Beth continue in her previous role as Chief Operating Officer.

We also completed a long-overdue expansion and update of our Headquarters. This work provided much needed space for our team, inventory, and meeting areas. We are excited about how this renovation will enhance our connections in the community and provide a professional work environment for our team members. We invite you to pay us a visit and tour our home base.

Finally, we worked with Armstrong McGuire & Associates, a well-respected consulting firm specializing in nonprofits, to lead us through the search for a new President and CEO. This process helped FIND to evaluate who we wanted to lead our organization and advance our mission going forward. Stacey Wiedrich joined the team as our new President and CEO in January 2024. Together we are excited to build on the opportunities ahead.

With 50 years of continued growth, we move into 2024 committed to making certain that when you discover you connect; when you connect, you care; and when you care, you protect. That is why through Forest-Inspired Nature Discovery, we help people Go FIND Outdoors.



Chad

Chad Leatherwood
FIND Outdoors Board Chair

ON THE COVER:
Danza Azteca Chichimeca. The artists of Danza Azteca Chichimeca honor Mexican ancestors and indigenous legacy while preserving historical and cultural identities.



Excitement at the Cradle of Forestry

The 2023 season at the Cradle of Forestry offered a wealth of new experiences and adventures while continuing to hold true to the history of the birthplace of modern forestry and forestry education in America.

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Continued Commitment in GA

FIND Outdoors is pleased to continue our relationship in the operations, management and ongoing educational opportunities at our Georgia visitor centers and recreation sites!

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Forest Notes from Club de Exploradores

The Club de Exploradores continued in the 2023 season with much success and great new adventures.

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2023: Year in Review

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Gratitude and Thanks to our Indiana Partners



CONTINUED COMMITMENT IN GEORGIA



HAVING THE PRIVILEGE to work in a collaborative manner under a Special Use Permit with the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forests encompassing the Blue Ridge Ranger District and Chattooga River Ranger District, FIND Outdoors is pleased to continue our relationship in the operations, management and ongoing educational opportunities at Anna Ruby Falls, Brasstown Bald, Lake Rabun Beach, Lake Winfield Scott and Morganton Point Recreation Areas.

PHOTO BY BETHANY K. MITCHELL



THE LOOKOUT PLATFORM AT BRASSTOWN BALD / PHOTO BY BETHANY K. MITCHELL

ANNA RUBY FALLS

Anna Ruby Falls is a beloved site right outside of Helen, Georgia that is available for year-round visitation. You can enjoy the forest and majestic views of twin waterfalls by walking on the half mile paved trail from the visitor information center. The double waterfalls are formed as two creeks, Curtis Creek and York Creek, tumble over a massive, towering cliff below the summit of Tray Mountain. The Curtis Creek waterfall, on the left, is the larger of the two, tumbling over 150 feet into the boulder-filled basin below. York Creek, on the right, spills 50 feet before joining Curtis Creek at the base of the waterfall. The joined creeks form Smith Creek, which eventually links with the Chattahoochee River as it flows to Atlanta.

BRASSTOWN BALD

Brasstown Bald offers boundless beauty and 360-degree sky top views from the highest point in North Georgia rising 4,784 feet above sea level. The spectacular view of the surrounding area also includes four states (GA, TN, NC & SC) and on a really clear day, you can even see the skyline of Atlanta!

Both Anna Ruby Falls and Brasstown Bald offer a gift shop, visitors center, picnic areas and hiking trails along with scheduled educational opportunities throughout the year.

IT IS TRULY A BREATHING EXPERIENCE! THE VIEW FROM THE TOP OF THE MOUNTAIN IS EXTRAORDINARY. I HIGHLY RECOMMEND THIS EXPERIENCE TO EVERYONE!

— BRASSTOWN BALD VISITOR

Most Visited

VISITOR CENTER
ANNA RUBY FALLS

336,432

VISITORS WELCOMED
TO GEORGIA VISITOR
CENTERS IN 2023

41,276

VISITORS ENTERED GEORGIA
CAMPGROUNDS FOR DAY USE
IN 2023

11,475

VISITORS REGISTERED TO CAMP
AT GEORGIA SITES IN 2023



LAKE RABUN, LAKE WINFIELD SCOTT, AND MORGANTON POINT

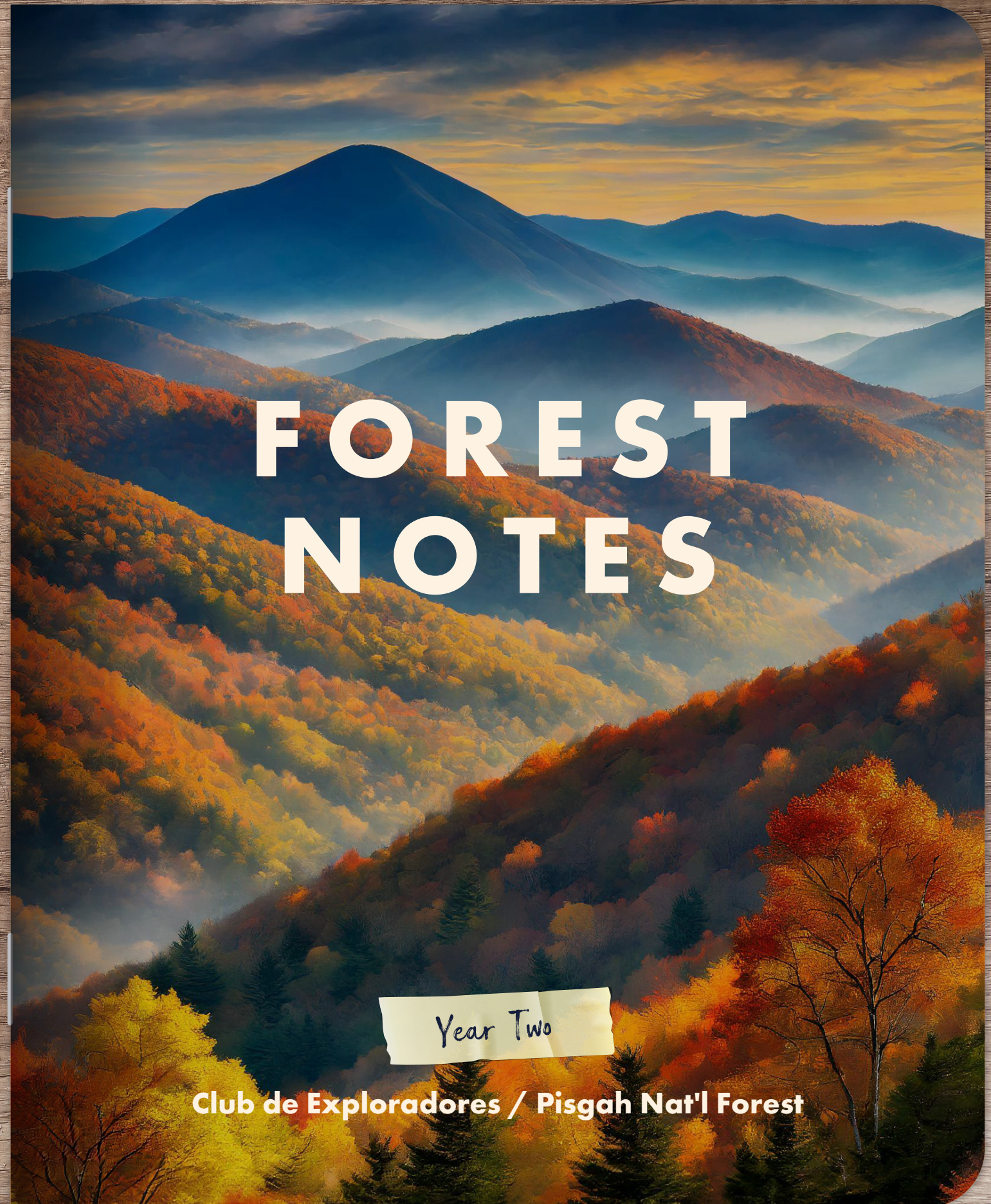
Lake Rabun, Lake Winfield Scott and Morganton Point Recreation Areas offer unique experiences in camping, fishing, hiking and enjoying nature. Each site offers a multitude of water activities along with the opportunity to just relax and absorb in the peacefulness of the outdoors and beautiful lake scenery.

FIND's entire team and board believes in the common vision of "improving everything we touch." Our proven track record of safety, exceptional operations, education and maintaining complex federal land facilities that see hundreds of thousands of visitors is over five decades strong. We have been honored to be a trusted partner operating on the Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest since 2008 and we look forward to continuing and advancing this legacy of excellence the public has come to expect working hand in hand with the US Forest Service.

By continuing in our roles in Georgia, FIND Outdoors aims to serve and exceed the expectations of our most important stakeholder — the public, in all we do.

IF YOU WANT TO GET IN TOUCH WITH MOTHER NATURE AND FALL IN LOVE WITH THE VIEWS TAKE A BREAK FROM LIFE AND VISIT THIS BEAUTIFUL PLACE.

— ANNA RUBY FALLS VISITOR



Club de Exploradores / Pisgah Nat'l Forest

THIS NOTEBOOK IS PROPERTY OF:

FIND Outdoors Supporter

FOR THE YEAR:

Start Date

05 - 01 - 20 23

Location

The Pink Beds Trails, Pisgah

End Date

10 - 31 - 20 23

Location

North Mills River Camping, Pisgah

WHAT IS THE CLUB DE EXPLORADORES?

This free, bi-lingual outreach program for middle school aged students from the Latinx communities of Transylvania County and surrounding areas had the opportunity to join FIND Outdoors team members on monthly, all-day adventures in Pisgah National Forest.

Through experiencing healthy lifestyles, to becoming familiar with the economic opportunities being taken advantage of by local small business owners, club members see first-hand and feel the local community echoing the message that "these forests belong to you too!"

PURPOSE OF THE CLUB

Explorers become Leave No Trace experts on monthly adventures. At the heart of Club de Exploradores is a desire to ensure there will be a new generation of advocates for our public lands. The Seven Principles of The Leave No Trace (LNT) ethic, taught by FIND Outdoors LNT certified trainers, are the best tools we have to fulfill our mission and create the next generation of responsible outdoor lovers.

**PARAÍSO — We live in paradise.
We all belong in the outdoors.
— Cata Noreña**

YEAR TWO OVERVIEW

The second year of Club de Exploradores continues stronger than ever. The season started with 21 happy faces, twice as many as last year, and a lot of excitement for having a special space where culture is celebrated while we venture out and learn about all the ways to enjoy and protect this very special forest that surrounds us. The Club represents more than five countries and countless stories that remind us that we are connected by an invisible and strong bond that unites us and motivates us to face these challenges together and learn from curiosity, adventure, and companionship. With each adventure, Club members earned a unique patch and new piece of gear to help them on their future outdoor explorations. The more adventures Club members attend, the more patches and gear they earn to take home at the end of the season.



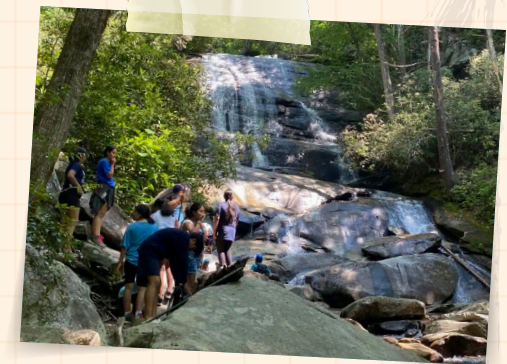
Adventure #1 HIKING

They delved into the fundamentals of Leave No Trace, forged meaningful connections, equipped themselves with outdoor gear, and set out for an invigorating hike in the Pink Beds. On this adventure, club members were introduced to Leave No Trace (LNT) principle #1 "Plan ahead and Prepare" and #2 "Travel on Durable Surfaces."

Adventure #2

WATERFALL SAFETY

The Explorers welcomed a special visit from the Transylvania Rescue Squad, who shared invaluable tips on waterfall safety. Inspired and equipped with knowledge, the Explorers embarked on their own thrilling waterfall adventure. They visited two breathtaking spots in Pisgah National Forest. LNT principle #4 "Leave What You Find" and #7 "Be Considerate of Other Visitors" were the focus this time.



Adventure #3

WATER SAFETY & FIRE SKILLS

On this extraordinary adventure, club members dove into the power of representation with participants from Latino Aventureros, ways to give back to our public lands, and more. They embarked on an epic day of discovery as the Exploradores mastered fire skills and safety, embracing the LNT principle #5 "Minimize Campfire Impacts."

Adventure #4

STREAM INVESTIGATION, BEACH DAY, & S'MORES COOKING

Their day began with a warm welcome from the awesome educators at the NC Arboretum followed by beach time and s'mores! It was a day filled with discovery and cultural exchange amidst the beauty of the forest. Highlights of this adventure included Leave No Trace Principle #3 "Dispose of Waste Properly" and Principle #6 "Respect Wildlife."





Adventure #5

MOUNTAIN BIKING & TRAIL WORK

The Exploradores embarked on an adventure on two wheels, gave back to area trails, and learned about trail etiquette and much more in partnership with our friends from Pisgah Area SORBA and The Hub.



Adventure #6

WEEKEND CAMPING ADVENTURE

The last adventure of the season arrived filled with enthusiasm, curiosity, and a bit of nervousness as the Explorers prepared for their first overnight camp. Equipped with tents, sleeping mats, and sleeping bags, the group said goodbye to their families early on Saturday to head into the forest for a weekend full of outdoor activities. The club's weekend home was the Wash Creek group camp in the North Mills River area of Pisgah National Forest. This camping opportunity provided the

chance to recap all 7 Leave No Trace Principles with the Exploradores putting their knowledge into practice throughout the weekend. From preparation, choosing the right spot for the tent, keeping the campfire under control, hiking along the trail, finding the perfect trees to hang hammocks, and, in the end, leaving the site as if we had never visited it. The weekend also provided an opportunity for a crosscut saw demo with SAWS (Southern Appalachian Wilderness Stewards).

Bonus Adventures

SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS

In addition to the six planned adventures, we offered the following special interest group sessions throughout the year:

- FLY FISHING
- RAFTING
- PACKOUT HIKE
- TUBING
- ROCK CLIMBING
- MOUNTAIN BIKING

Through each of these adventures and contacts, we are building for future generations of explorers. With each trip into Pisgah National Forest, Club members have a chance to interact with the forest in a new way. Whether on horseback or on foot, standing in its streams or on a mountain bike, club members are invited to explore how the forest can provide them with excitement, inspiration, or simply a place to set up a hammock and relax.

LEARN MORE!

To learn more about Club de Exploradores and read the newsletters from each of the adventures along with reflections from the participants, visit gofindoutdoors.org/education/club-de-exploradores



MAKE A DONATION

We need to raise **\$25,000 PER YEAR** to keep this program going. Your support is appreciated for the upcoming season!



Excitement at the Cradle of Forestry

The 2023 season at the Cradle of Forestry offered a wealth of new experiences and adventures while continuing to hold true to the history of the birthplace of modern forestry and forestry education in America.

“OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH FIND HELPS US SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND EXPANDS OUR REACH SO MORE PEOPLE CAN ENJOY THEIR PUBLIC LANDS.

JAMES MELONAS
SUPERVISOR FOR USFS NATIONAL FORESTS IN NC

“I LOVE HOW THE CRADLE TRIES TO ACCOMMODATE EVERYONE! IT'S ADMIRABLE.

CRADLE OF FORESTRY VISITOR

THROUGH A SPECIAL GRANT AWARD from the NC Museum of Natural Sciences, we worked hard to create more accessible programming by offering fee free days, bilingual programs and materials and culturally specific events, demonstrations and activities. All with the intent to engage with and reach a larger, more diverse audience at the Cradle.

Focusing specifically in these areas, we saw an increase in foot traffic, visitation from a variety of populations and more bilingual program offerings and

bilingual materials. This in turn contributed to a more welcoming informal science education center and learning space where visitors contribute to and benefit from the FIND Outdoors mission of providing all people with educational, recreational and interpretive opportunities about natural resources and cultural history.

Events included: Fee Free Tuesdays for all attendees every Tuesday during the 2023 season from April through November; Dia Del Niño a celebration of children's rights worldwide; specific outreach to the Latinx Community and offering

“THANKS NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF NATURAL SCIENCES! THE MORE WE CAN ENCOURAGE PEOPLE TO VISIT THE MORE WE CAN SPREAD THE LOVE OF THE FOREST!

CRADLE OF FORESTRY VISITOR

Blue Ghost Tours in Spanish; a Juneteenth Day focusing on the Emancipation of enslaved people in the U.S. along with showing the movie Hidden Figures celebrating the contributions of African-American females working as NASA mathematicians; Celebration of Caregivers, Children and Families; Woodsy Owl Programming; No Taste Like Home Foraging Tours in both English and Spanish; the First ever Hispanic Heritage Festival; Global Diversity Month; and the celebration of Native American Heritage Month with performances and activities from the Tsalagi Touring Group from the Cherokee Nation of the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians.

As a result, the Cradle of Forestry saw an increase in on site visitors by close to 20%.

Additionally, several different affinity groups are developing with families connecting to arrange meet-ups at various times throughout the year. Generational visits seem to be on the rise as well.

“I went with my family to the Hispanic Heritage celebration. The music, food, and activities were fantastic and we saw the education happening. We all saw information sharing and connections forming because of the partnership between the National Forests in North Carolina and FIND Outdoors. Our relationship with FIND helps us serve the community and expands our reach so more people can enjoy their public lands,” said **James Melonas**, Forest Supervisor for US Forest Service National Forests in North Carolina.



▲ FOLK DANCING AT HISPANIC HERITAGE FESTIVAL



▲ AXE THROWING AT THE FOREST FESTIVAL DAY



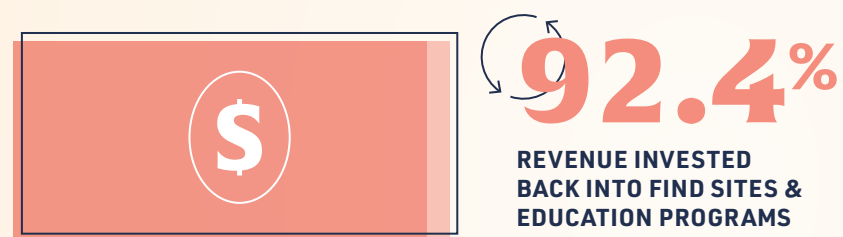
▲ DEMONSTRATIONS AT CHEROKEE DAY 2023



▲ THE FIND OUTDOORS TEAM AT HISPANIC HERITAGE FESTIVAL / PHOTO BY JUAN DIEGO REYES

2023 in Review

ORGANIZATION OVERVIEW



VISITOR CENTERS & GIFT SHOPS



CAMPING & RECREATION AREAS



EDUCATION



PUBLIC EDUCATION PROGRAMS ACROSS ALL FIND SITES



COLLABORATIONS



The Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians, Brevard-Davidson River Presbyterian Church, Columbia, Davidson River Outfitters, Dogwood Health Trust, El Centro Comunitario, Headwaters Outfitters, Hola Carolina, Latinos Aventureros, Packout Pisgah, Pisgah Area Sorba, Pisgah Map Co, The Hub, and Transylvania County Rescue Squad

GRATITUDE & THANKS TO

Our Indiana Partners

FIND OUTDOORS WOULD LIKE TO EXPRESS OUR SINCERE APPRECIATION and gratitude to Hoosier National Forest headquartered in Bedford, Indiana and our amazing FIND Team Members at Hardin Ridge, Indian-Celina and Tipsaw Recreation Areas. Throughout the years, our FIND team members have been providing exceptional services, maintaining the facilities in a superior manner and ensuring that operations and upkeep were efficient and effective. All the while making certain that our visitors enjoyed their time at these beautiful public lands and are always eager to return in the future.

At each of these locations, we strived to give everyone that entered the location the same exceptional experience whether that be a playful hunt for Bigfoot, the annual Kentucky Derby event, Junior Ranger/Leave No Trace activities, the traditional Halloween trick or treat event or movies by the lake.

None of this would have been possible without the hardworking employees of the Hoosier National Forest and Tell City Ranger District. Your years of collaboration and support of FIND Outdoors is truly appreciated. The contributions and support that we received from Leadership along with District employees and staff was instrumental in our years of success in Indiana.

The recreation sites, people and community will hold a special place in the hearts of everyone at FIND Outdoors.



CHUCK & NORMA SINK, MANAGERS AT HARDIN RIDGE



LONNIE & SHARON TINDELL, MANAGERS AT INDIAN-CELINA

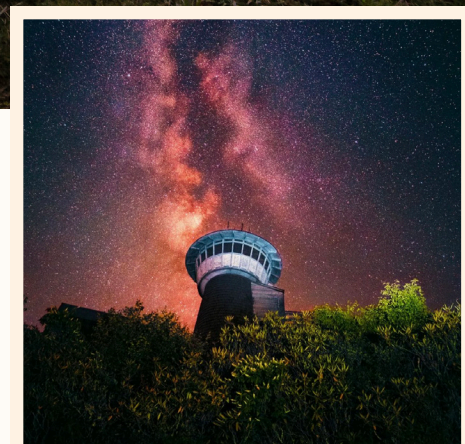


AL & JULI SMITH, MANAGERS AT TIPSAW

PHOTO BY STEVEN HIGGS



GIVE BACK



Brasstown Bald (Photo by Bryon Johnson)

ANNUAL GIVING

Support the work and mission of FIND Outdoors and the more than 16 managed sites in three states: North Carolina, Georgia, and Kentucky.

MAJOR GIFTS AND SITE ENHANCEMENTS

Champion a specific project by directing your gift to a project that matters to you. Contact the President/CEO and/or Chief Mission Officer to discuss the many possibilities.



TRIBUTE GIFTS (IN HONOR/IN MEMORY)

The impact of our beautiful outdoors can resonate throughout a lifetime. It is also a great way to recognize a birthday, anniversary or special celebration. Highlight the legacy of a loved one or commemorate a special occasion with a tribute gift to FIND Outdoors. These gifts will be utilized to support high priority projects.



Biltmore Forest Trail at the Cradle of Forestry

COMMEMORATIVE BENCH/PLAQUE PROGRAM

Donations are accepted for the purchase and placement of Commemorative Benches and Plaques at a location approved by FIND Outdoors along a trail or in an identified space on the grounds of the property of the Cradle of Forestry located in Pisgah Forest, NC.

SOCIAL MEDIA

In addition to raising funds, you can make a difference by simply liking the FIND Outdoors Instagram page and following us and each of our managed sites on Facebook. We also have a YouTube channel. At each of these social media channels, we offer engaging information which you can share with others and bring attention to our mission of stewardship, educational opportunities for all and exceptional outdoor experiences.

#GOFINDOUTDOORS



EMPLOYER MATCHING

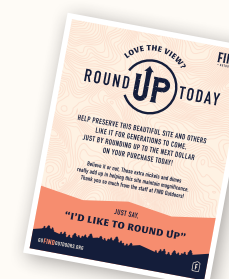
Ask your employer if they will match your charitable contribution to FIND Outdoors. Many employers sponsor matching gift programs and can provide you with a form to submit online or by mail. It's an easy way to help your gift go twice as far.

GIFT OF SECURITIES

Gifts of stock and other appreciated securities provide an easy way to help FIND Outdoors, while also receiving a number of tax benefits.

ROUND-UP

Keep an eye out for Round-Up opportunities at each of our visitor center gift shops. You have the option to Round-Up your purchase so your loose change and dollars can help change the future for FIND Outdoors.



LEARN MORE!

If you have questions or would like to learn more, contact: **Lee Henderson-Hill**, Chief Mission Officer at 828.553.4049 or lee@gofindoutdoors.org

Scan to donate today!



CELEBRATING OUR DONORS

Donors are the lifeblood of nonprofit organizations. We want to express our appreciation and a heartfelt THANK YOU for your generous support throughout the year. FIND Outdoors works hard to minimize administrative overhead to make sure as much funding as possible is used to directly support our work and mission in making Forest-Inspired Nature Discovery available to all people.

We treasure each of your gifts and please know that your contribution helps insure that our public lands are protected and available for future generations. Thank you for your support in helping people Go FIND Outdoors!

**Denotes Unrestricted Giving*



Maintaining Facilities	78.1%
Including capital improvements	
Education and Programming	14.3%
Administrative	7.5%



CFAIA d/b/a FIND Outdoors is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit that has adopted nine critical guiding principles and best practices to operate at the highest level of non-profit ethics and transparency. TIN: 56-1302500

\$10,000 +
Dogwood Health Trust
NC Museum of Natural Sciences
REI Cooperation Action Fund

\$5,000 – \$9,999
Mid-Atlantic Stihl
Mountain Biz Works/MADE X
MTNS

\$1,000 – \$4,999
High Range Designs*
L2 Brands*
Morrow Insurance Agency*
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Weyerhaeuser

\$250 – \$999
American Online Giving
Foundation, Inc./Benevity Giving
Platform*
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Edward Alley
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Monica Erbeck
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Erin and Aaron Reykdal
Paula Ravetto
Vicki Schnor Roche
Susan Rodriguez
Sacred Heart Catholic Church -
Ladies Guild
Janet Sauls
Season Passholders
Sarah Smith
Smokey Bear Donations received
at Pisgah Visitor Center
Paul Snyder
Amelia Taber
John Tumminello
Judith Walker
Melissa Ward
Jocelyn and Clay Wilson
Kate Wilson
UBS Financial Services, Inc.
for Jan Grossman and
Lynn Heinrichs

MAKE A DONATION TODAY!

Gifts of any size and any amount provide needed resources to make recreation equitable and available for all. Become a supporter of FIND Outdoors by scanning the QR code and making your donation today!



In Honor of
Bill Christian
by Warren Christian
Lenore Conroy
by Harry Fleischer
Natalie Britt
by Wendell (WC) Godfrey
Bo Winfrey
by Cheryl McLaughlin
Clinton Wickers
by Robert Bannister, Jessica
Bell, Cindy Carroll, William
Hamilton, Mandy Harmon, Lois
Lukens, Karin Craig McGrath,
Katherine Morrison, Paula
Ravetto, Vicki Schnor Roche,
Susan Rodriguez, Kate Wilson

In Memory of
Dr. Edward "Ed" R. Buckner
by Ed Gash
Donald Eichinger
by Lauren Gates
Linda Jackson
by Robert Bannister

Dr. Jim Keely
by Robert Bannister
Luther and Lucy Norton
by Douglas Norton and
Kathryn Friggle-Norton
Kevin Robert Tam
by Edward Alley, Larry and
Hope Ascher, Robert Bannister,
Centennial Park Conservancy,
Michael Dettmer, Monica
Erbeck, Robinpat Gossard,
Christie Granowicz, Marsha
Harmon, Maryellen Hittel,
Bill McGlincy, Larry Parker,
Chris and Martha Pomares,
Erin and Aaron Reykdal, John
Tumminello, Judith Walker
Mr. Boyd "Bo" Winfrey
by Steve Newton

In Recognition of
Beth Hooper serving as
Interim President/CEO
CASP Service Volunteers

FIND Outdoors Board of Directors
FIND Outdoors Team Members
All Hosts and Volunteers
National Forests of North Carolina:
Supervisors Office
National Park Service –
Blue Ridge Parkway
Natural Inquirer
Pisgah Tavern
Ranger Districts in Georgia:
Blue Ridge and Chattooga
Ranger Districts in Indiana:
Tell City and Supervisors Office
in Bedford, Indiana
Ranger Districts in Kentucky:
Cumberland
Ranger Districts in North Carolina:
Pisgah, Appalachian,
Grandfather, Cheoah, Tusquitee,
and Nantahala
Supporters of Donation Boxes and
Round Ups at all of our sites
The Hub
The Team at Trevett's Creative+
The Team at Marketing Outpost
US Forest Service

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