



VISIT HOT SPRINGS

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NEWS RELEASE

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Visit Hot Springs Prepares to Begin Construction On First Phase of 44.6-mile Northwoods Trail System

**Partnership With Walton Family Foundation Helps Kick-Start
Initial 16-mile Segment, Which Is Seen as Major Boost for Local Economy;
Hot Springs Predicted to Become Next Mountain Biking Destination**

*(Photo courtesy of Visit Hot Springs – a biker enjoys the terrain in the Northwoods
property adjacent to Hot Springs.)*

HOT SPRINGS NATIONAL PARK, Arkansas – Visit Hot Springs is ready to begin construction in November of Phase One of a planned 44.6-mile system of mountain biking trails on the city-owned Northwoods/Cedar Glades properties in the northern section of Hot Springs.

It has partnered with the Walton Family Foundation to initiate work on the first 16-mile segment of the project, which will provide Hot Springs with an important new tourism attraction aimed at mountain bikers and other outdoor enthusiasts.

Phase Two of the trail system will be constructed on completion of the first 16-mile segment, with the end result being a 44.6-mile system of first-class biking trails in the property that incorporates pristine forested hills and three lakes. It is in the Cedar Glades area north of Whittington Avenue.

“The new trails in the Northwoods property will be an enormous economic engine for our city and a world-class recreational facility for our residents and visitors,” said Steve Arrison, CEO of Visit Hot Springs. “It’s almost impossible to express how grateful we are as a community to the Walton Family Foundation for helping provide the resources to get started on this new attraction. Without the help and encouragement of the folks at the foundation, it would have been extremely difficult for us to develop what is going to be an outdoor recreation magnet that will place Hot Springs in the forefront of this booming tourism segment.”

“The city of Hot Springs, Arkansas, is poised to become the nation's next mountain bike destination” said Trail Specialist Joey Klein of the International Mountain Biking Association’s Trail Solutions program. “Hot Springs is surrounded by ample forested hillsides and pristine waterways. Cedar Glades Park and the new Northwoods Park will be connected by trails, all of which will be designed to be completely accessible from town. IMBA Trail Solutions plans to showcase the varied terrain, offering many trail experiences to all skill levels.”

Klein continued, “To have such high quality trail potential not more than minutes from a historic downtown setting is almost unheard of in this day and age. Residents and visitors alike will be reaping the benefits for decades to come.”

IMBA Trail Solutions will provide the planning and construction expertise for the Northwoods/Cedar Glades project.

A \$648,421 Walton Family Foundation grant for Phase One will be matched by Visit Hot Springs.

“The Outdoor Industry Foundation has found that bicycling has fueled important economic growth in our area of the country,” Arrison said. “In Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma and Texas, the OIF says, bicycling contributes

\$6.9 billion annually to the economy, supporting 66,000 jobs and producing \$621 million in retail sales and services.”

“In Arkansas, OIF estimates that outdoor recreation of all kinds generates \$9.7 billion annually in consumer spending and creates 96,000 direct jobs,” he said. “Sixty-three percent of Arkansans participate in outdoor recreation each year, with a significant portion of those enjoying bicycling in general and trail-biking in particular, according to OIF. These numbers will only grow in the future and the Northwoods trail system will position Hot Springs perfectly to capitalize on this economic powerhouse.

“Outdoor enthusiasts who come to Hot Springs to enjoy this marvelous new system of biking trails will stay in our hotels and motels, dine in our restaurants, shop in our stores and enjoy the many attractions that have made Hot Springs one of the Top 10 small-city destinations in America.”

The Phase One trails are expected to be ready for visitors by the fall of 2018. Completion of Phase Two will make Hot Springs one of the top destinations in the United States for the growing number of American and international biking enthusiasts.

“IMBA Trail Solutions is the premier mountain biking trail development leader,” Arrison said. “They will guide us in planning, design and construction of a trail system that will provide high-quality experiences for visitors and residents while minimizing environmental impacts in the treasure that the Northwoods/Cedar Glades property affords our city.”

He said Trail Solutions has developed more than 350 natural-surface bike-optimized trail projects in North America, Europe and Asia.

“And, in Arkansas, we’re about to kick off one of IMBA Trail Solutions' biggest-ever trail projects, building Phase One – 16 miles – of a much larger network adjacent to the city of Hot Springs,” IMBA said.

For more information contact Steve Arrison at 501-321-2027.

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