



FIRST DAY HIKES 2024 PHOTO ALBUM

Starting the New Year off on the right foot!



Cheaha State Park, AL

During the FDH to the highest point in Alabama at Cheaha State Park, several chatting hikers realized that they had all survived cancer during 2023. All agreed that state parks provide the best paths to wellness. They made a pact to hike 24 Alabama State park trails together in 2024 and to celebrate FDH 2025 together.



Massachusetts State Parks

We had four sites that had never hosted First Day Hikes before and almost 400 people came out to those properties!



Clinton State Park, KS

Clinton State Park in Kansas had a record number of hikers for this year's First Day Hike at 474 participants.

Park staff and AmeriCorps members were able to coordinate their annual food drive during the event to collect two 50-gallon barrels full of donated food items that will be donated to Just Food of Lawrence, KS.



Smallwood State Park, MD

179 people joined Ranger Kristina Soetje for her guided First Day Hike and among the many hikers there was one very special guest.

New to the area and looking to get outside, two hikers decided to give the park a try but they couldn't join the hike without their cat! We often see dogs on FDH but seeing FirstDayHikeCatinaBackpack, who loves to go on walks, enjoying our park was a special treat.

Our special visitor was able to enjoy fresh air while being a responsible park visitor by being carried along in its special backpack. This adorable cat is an excellent example of the many groups our FDH reached!



Tishomingo State Park, MS

Braving a wind chill of 26 degrees, hikers at Tishomingo State Park did a 1.5 mile hike. The youngest hiker was 16 months old and the oldest was 76 years young.



Pinnacle Mountain State Park, AR

Park Interpreter Sam Files had a couple from Oklahoma who have attended FDH across the US for over a decade.

Last year they did a FDH at Rocky Mountain National Park, and this year they decided to participate in Arkansas. They stayed in Little Rock the night before, attended the hike at Pinnacle Mountain SP, and drove home after!



Sweetwater Creek State Park, GA

Sweetwater Creek State Park's Interpretive Ranger Adrian Fox, offered four hikes, one advertised as an assessable hike.

One participant was very grateful and emotional, stating, "I never thought I would be able to call myself a hiker. Thank you for this opportunity."



Antelope Island State Park, UT

Antelope Island State Park offered a FDH to over 133 participants, many of them first timers.

One participant hadn't planned on hiking but when she saw the crowd she joined in. She did the 4.29 mile hike in dress shoes!

Upon returning, she realized that she'd locked her keys in the truck. Three rangers came to the rescue, and after 1.5 hours, she was able to get in and head home.



Harriman State Park, ID

We did a snow dance (on snowshoes) at Harriman State Park of Idaho to warm up and ask for more snow before we started the snowshoe hike!

Folks were from Utah, Michigan, California, and Pocatello, Ashton, Idaho Falls, Rigby, and Island Park, Idaho. Some were new to the Park or new to snowshoeing, while others had been there before and love the Park.



Hot Springs State Park, WY

On New Year's Day 2024, Wyoming State Parks and Historic Sites hosted a record number of participants during their annual First Day Hikes with 1,132 attendees hiking a combined 2,116 miles.

This reflects a 206% increase in participation from 2023.



Mt. Blue State Park and Two Lights State Park, ME

Hikers at Two Lights State Park gathered around a fire pit before starting out on a winter adaptations hike. Unfortunately, their view of the sunrise over the ocean was foiled by overcast skies.

Hikers gathered in a yurt before heading out on their hike at Mt. Blue State Park.





River State Park, MO

Carol, an employee of Emory Melton Inn at Roaring River State Park, took time off from work to enjoy a first day hike with her grandson.

They relished in their time together on the hike and spent some time exploring the cave.



Fort Griswold Battlefield State Park, CT

On this beautiful FDH, volunteer David Rose, clad in 18th-century attire, led the group around the battlefield.



Kaiwi State Scenic Shoreline, HI

The trek to the summit of Kaiwi State Scenic Shoreline on Jan. 1 for the first sunrise of the year was a go!

The sunrise celebration included the blowing of a pū (conch shell) in the four cardinal directions, an oli (chant), and a rousing taiko (Japanese drumming) performance by students from the Taiko Center of the Pacific.

This year marks the 12th anniversary of the shoreline hike in Hawai'i! The crowd covered the summit, and the air was still, as the conch blew and the oli followed, captivating spectators. A low bass slowly rumbled throughout the crowd, sending vibrations that could be felt throughout your body. The taiko drum was beaten harder and faster as the sun was rising, it was as if the drums were awakening the sun for all to greet into the new year. It was an experience that created lasting memories."



Honeymoon Island State Park, FL

At Honeymoon Island State Park visitors chose between a campfire cooking and trail hike or a beach walk. 101 people took the 2-mile hike and 23 took the 1-mile beach walk. Volunteers Nancy, Sheri, Lyn and Lyn served cornbread, greens and black-eyed peas, cinnamon rolls, coffee and hot chocolate.



PHOTO CREDIT: MITCHELL ROLAND / MITCHELL@CHRONLINE.COM

Ike Kinswa State Park, WA

This was our first time hosting a First Day Paddle, and it was tremendously well received. The weather was mild and it was a bluebird sky day- we couldn't have asked for better conditions.

A special memory was the bald eagle that flew over our heads and landed in the tree above us while we were rafted up in the river. We saw it off in the distance, and then it was like "oh, me? Ok, let me come closer!!". Everyone was very excited, we joked about it wanting to snag the beaver pelt I was passing around.

We were happy everyone had fun, but even happier that nobody fell in! This program would not have been possible without the support of the Boating Program.



Warrior's Path State Park, TN

One of the most unique first day hikes we host is at Warriors' Path State Park with Ranger Marty Silver!

Each year he offers a Lantern-Lit Night Hike that kicks off the new year right at 12:01am on January 1st! It is a huge hit with the community!