

*The Great American Outdoors Act is providing crucial funding – up to \$6.65 billion over five years – to fix our national parks' crumbling roads, decaying buildings, outdated water systems and many more repair needs. This bill, along with other funding sources, is ensuring our parks can continue to welcome millions of visitors each year and protect the natural and cultural resources that tell our nation's history.*

# Hot Springs NATIONAL PARK

**Nestled in the heart of downtown Hot Springs, Arkansas, Hot Springs National Park has a rich and colorful past. Ancient thermal springs, mountain views, incredible geology, forested hikes and abundant creeks—all in the middle of town—make Hot Springs a unique and beautiful destination.**

The area was first protected in 1832 to preserve the hot springs and reserve them for public use, decades before the National Park Service was founded. Today's lively town of shops, diners and family-friendly attractions grew around the land famous for its thermal waters. A stone's throw from the 5,500-acre park, visitors discover a pristine National Forest and several Arkansas state parks, which offer nearby hiking trails, blue-water lakes and stunning mountain overlooks. But while there are countless reasons to visit, for many of the 2.6 million annual visitors the main attractions are the springs and the impressive historic bathhouses.

Bathhouse Row, a strip that was designated as a National Historic Landmark District in 1987, consists of eight bathhouse buildings that were constructed between 1892 and 1923. Hot Springs National Park has a successful historic leasing program that has brought new life to downtown Hot Springs and Bathhouse Row. Along the row today, visitors can order a beer at Superior Bathhouse Brewery, which uses thermal spring water as its primary ingredient; stay overnight at the Hale Hotel, which has thermal water piped into its tubs; and enjoy thermal pools and spa treatments at the Quapaw Bathhouse. Other original bathhouse buildings house the park visitor center and the Hot Springs National Park Cultural Center.



## BY THE NUMBERS:



**\$17 million**

estimated investment from the GAOA to repair projects



**100+ year-old**  
historic buildings



**2.6 million**  
annual visitors



**23,000 sq. foot**  
vacant historic bathhouse



**5,500 acres**  
of park land

**PHOTOS:** Cover: ©Zack Frank | Shutterstock  
Back: ©Jeremy Janus | Shutterstock

**THE CHALLENGE: a large historic bathhouse shuttered and unused for nearly 50 years, facing structural and systems deficiencies.**

The Maurice Bathhouse opened for business in 1912. With a total floor space of 23,000 square feet, the three-story bathhouse had ample room for a gymnasium, staterooms, a roof garden, twin elevators, and a therapeutic pool in the basement. The Maurice closed in 1974 and is the only bathhouse on Bathhouse Row that has never received extensive renovation. All the others are in use and operated by the National Park Service or its concessionaires or are leased, so visitors can enjoy the grand historic interiors as well as the exteriors. While the Maurice's exterior is stabilized, the vacant building is facing structural and systems deficiencies and requires multiple upgrades to bring it up to code. The former

**“Buildings are best served when they’re living and breathing and have a purpose—and when there’s people in them,” said Hot Springs Superintendent Laura Miller.**

Libbey Memorial Physical Medicine Center, located off Bathhouse Row, once served as the government’s free bathhouse for those who couldn’t afford other bathhouses. It has also been vacant for many years and needs stabilization work. After decades of decay, neither of these buildings is usable without major rehabilitation.

**THE PROJECT**

Through a multi-million-dollar investment, the Great American Outdoors Act will preserve two historic bathhouse buildings. The work to the Maurice Bathhouse and the former Libbey Memorial Physical Medicine Center will include the restoration, rehabilitation or replacement of critical systems and features. In the Maurice Bathhouse, the project will replace electrical, HVAC, fire suppression systems and roofing, while repairing various components of the structure and site. The structural foundation of the former Libbey Memorial Physical Medicine Center will also be stabilized, and window and roof repairs will stop water infiltration. Other work will include roof repairs to portions of the Buckstaff Bathhouse. Work will begin in late 2023 or early 2024.

**THE IMPACT**

These essential repairs will address deferred maintenance and will provide employees and visitors with more accessible, safe and energy efficient facilities. When the work is complete, the park will have an economically viable leasing opportunity for adaptive reuse of these historic structures, including private sector business opportunities that would generate revenue while allowing for public use and enjoyment. Most importantly, perhaps, the buildings will be functional again. “Buildings are best served when they’re living and breathing and have a purpose—and when there’s people in them,” said Hot Springs Superintendent Laura Miller. “Nothing good ever happens by leaving buildings vacant.



The Great American Outdoors Act is successfully repairing infrastructure at hundreds of parks across the country. However, with a nearly \$22 billion backlog, much more is needed. We urge Congress to extend the Legacy Restoration Fund for an additional five years.

Preserving Our Past.



Protecting Our Future.