



A STATEWIDE CONTEST FROM
GOVERNOR SARAH HUCKABEE SANDERS
EDUCATION · GAME & FISH · PARKS, HERITAGE & TOURISM

ARKANSAS STUDENTS AGES 10-17

MY NATURAL STATE STORY

STUDENT ESSAY CONTEST

GET OUTSIDE

TELL YOUR STORY

WIN YOUR NEXT ADVENTURE

WHO CAN ENTER
AGES 10-17

Two divisions judged separately: 10-13 and 14-17.

WHAT TO WRITE
500 WORDS OR LESS

A true story about your own Arkansas outdoor adventure, in your own words.

DEADLINE
MON., OCT. 12

Entries close at 5:00 p.m. Submissions are open now.

PICK YOUR ADVENTURE

CHOOSE ONE OF SEVEN CATEGORIES

HUNTING

FISHING

BOATING &
PADDLING

CLIMBING

CYCLING

CAMPING

HIKING

A DAY ON THE WATER

PADDLE THE BUFFALO

A NIGHT UNDER THE STARS

OZARK HIGH COUNTRY

16 WINNERS
STATEWIDE

One winner is chosen in every category from **each** age group, for 14 category winners. Two more students, one per age group, are named **My Natural State Story of the Year** and receive an AGFC Lifetime Hunting and Fishing License plus a \$500 outdoor gift and experience package. All 16 are invited to a dinner honoring them at the Governor's Mansion.

HUNTING

Banded outdoor prize pack

FISHING

\$1,000 PRADCO Fishing prize pack

PADDLING

Canoe Club river school for two, plus gear

CLIMBING

State Parks lodge stay and a guided climb

CYCLING

Ozark Trail mountain bike and OZ Trails day pass

CAMPING

Two nights camping at an Arkansas State Park

HIKING

Crater of Diamonds pass and a Gearhead pack

TOP STORY

AGFC Lifetime License and a \$500 package

**READ THIS
FIRST**

- ✓ Must be a **real** outdoor experience you had in **Arkansas**
- ✓ Written in your **own words**
- ✓ 500 words maximum
- ✓ One category per entry
- ✗ **AI-generated entries are not eligible**

SUBMIT YOUR STORY AT

mynaturalstatestory.com

ENTRIES CLOSE
OCT. 12, 2026
5:00 P.M.



ARKANSAS OUTDOOR EDUCATION INITIATIVE A partnership of the Arkansas Department of Education, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission, and Arkansas State Parks, advancing Governor Sanders' Natural State Initiative.

Photos: Buffalo National River and campground, National Park Service; youth fishing derby, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (public domain). Steel Creek overlook by Jasari, CC BY-SA 3.0; Ozark vista by miketnorton, CC BY 2.0.