



Arkansas River Water Trail

The Arkansas Canoe Club and Fort Smith Parks and Recreation are partners in this project.



FORT SMITH PARK ACCESS

The Arkansas River wraps around Fort Smith, which began as a Western frontier military post in 1817. The river is a corridor for transportation and recreation, and home to a wide variety of wildlife – from the endangered pallid sturgeon to millions of migratory waterfowl. The shallow backwaters adjacent to the Arkansas River provide wonderful opportunities for paddling, fishing and wildlife viewing.

Alert – Barge traffic and strong currents can be hazardous on the main channel of the river.

Don't Get a Ticket – According to Arkansas law, children 12 and under must wear a Coast Guard-approved life jacket and anyone on a boat must have one ready to use. Vessels 16 feet and longer must have a throwable life preserver (type IV) aboard. Glass containers are illegal in boats such as canoes that can be easily swamped. Paddlers must securely fasten cooler lids, use attached litter bags and use floating holders for beverages.



Redhead Mike Wintroath

Wildlife and Habitat – “Backwater” refers to areas of a river that are out of the main channel and have characteristics unlike flowing water. Wildlife species rely on backwaters for many reasons – reproduction, food, nurseries, refuge from high water and rest areas. Many species of birds need backwater habitat; watch different fishing techniques of bald



eagles, ospreys and white pelicans. White-tailed deer feed on vegetation along the bank while raccoons, mink and opossums feed on the river's aquatic life.

Fishing – Largemouth bass, crappie, paddlefish, catfish and bream use backwaters for parts of their life cycles. Keep an eye out for large fish such as common carp, bowfin, gar and buffalo moving through shallow water.

Hunting – The Arkansas River, controlled by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, offers public hunting along parts of the river. Check city ordinances before hunting. Ducks migrate along the Arkansas River, following the Central Flyway toward its convergence with the Mississippi Flyway. In late fall and winter, look for mallards, teal, gadwalls, wood ducks, redheads, canvasbacks, ringnecks and scaup.



Tom Kennon

IMPORTANT NUMBERS

- Sebastian County EMS 911
- Sebastian County Sheriff 479-783-1051
- Wildlife Hotline 800-440-1477
- Fort Smith Parks and Recreation 479-784-2368

