

burn scars, and damage nearby tree limbs and roots.

- Camp only on established, durable campsites provided in the park. Campsites are available at the Falls, Sandbar, and Ed Banks. Campsites should be at least 200 feet from streams to protect the riparian area. Camping on the trails is prohibited.
- Remove all trash and equipment from your campsite.
- Do not build trenches around your tent. They cause erosion and are not necessary for modern tents with floor liners.
- Do not move rocks or make stacks of rocks, called cairns. Removing rocks can alter the environment and cause erosion. Cairns are also considered unattractive to other guests; please be courteous to others.



- Do not drive nails into trees. If you need to take a temporary clothes line, use cord that you can untie and remove.
- Do not bring firewood from home. This may introduce invasive pests that can kill native trees.

HOW CAN FIRE BE USED SAFELY?

- Ensure that the fire is cool before you leave the campsite. Mix water into the embers and ash to cool the fire.
- Use only downed wood, smaller than your arm, for firewood. Larger debris can be a wildfire hazard as they take hours to go out.
- Create fires in grills and fire rings provided at the picnic areas and campsites. This

reduces burn scars on the land and helps prevent wildfire. Fire rings are not permitted on river banks and gravel bars.

- Please use dead wood to split firewood. Do not use live trees because this can damage the tree's protective bark. The bark defends the tree from stress, pests, disease, and death.
- Please hang lanterns from the post at your campsite or place them on the picnic table. Heat from a lantern can damage or kill a tree.

WHAT IS THE BEST WAY TO EXPLORE THE PARK?

- Trails are the best way to explore the interior portions of the park. Trails are designed to provide a single, hardened access route through the delicate riverside ecosystem.
- Stay on the trail. Trails meander and switchback to fit the topography of the land. Staying on the trail protects delicate vegetation from damage and reduces soil compaction and erosion. Cutting across or bypassing a switchback starts a new channel of erosion and causes route confusion.
- If you visit an area without a nearby trail, please travel on durable surfaces such as gravel bars rather than through delicate grasses and vegetation.



YOUR CHALLENGE: This special place has been set aside so it can be conserved for the future. Our challenge is to enjoy this natural treasure yet leave it without a trace of human impact.

We hope this brochure has given you a better understanding of how you can meet that challenge. The caring, ethical actions you take today help preserve the quality of this place. **We hope that you leave a pristine park as a gift to those who follow us.**



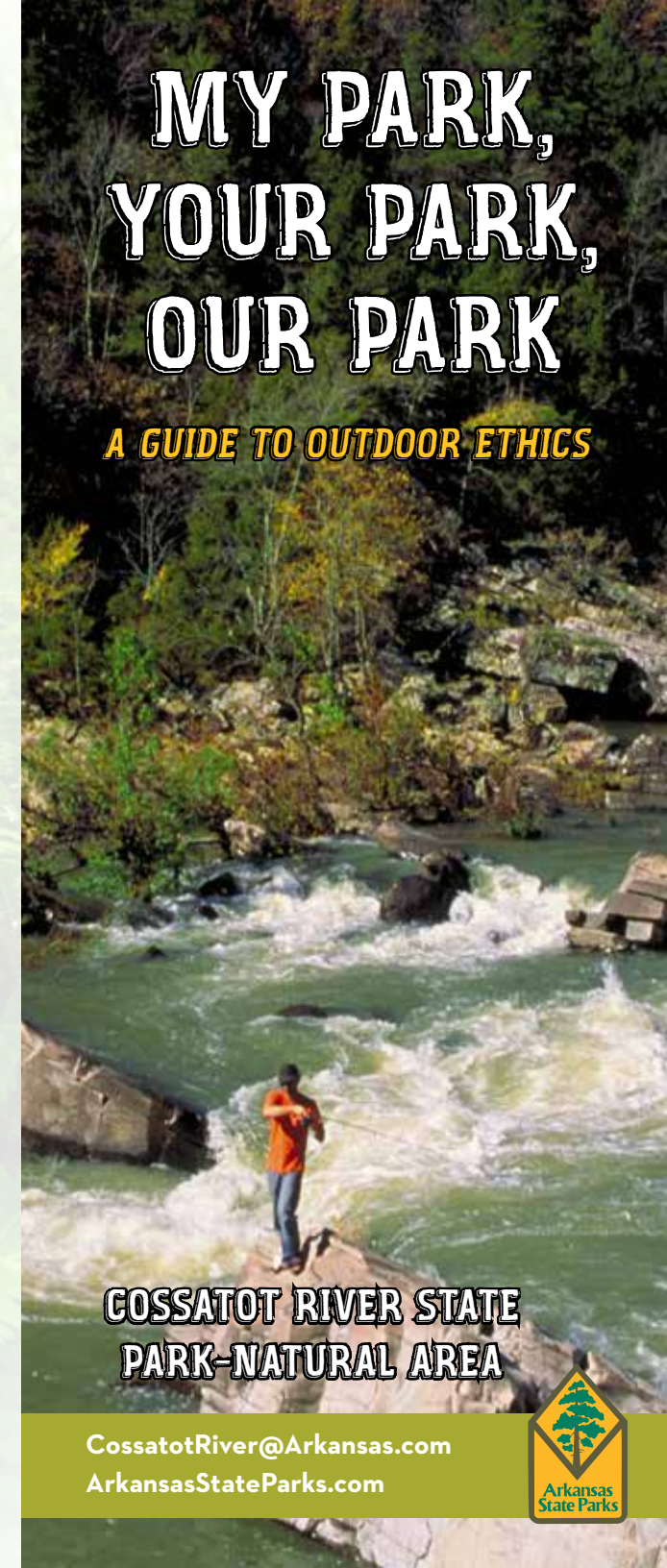
For more information about how to make responsible decisions outdoors contact the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics. You can also speak with park staff or attend a park program to learn more.



NOTICE: To preserve scenic beauty and ecology, fences and warning signs have not been installed in some park locations. Caution and increased supervision of your children and others in your care are required while visiting those areas.

MY PARK, YOUR PARK, OUR PARK

A GUIDE TO OUTDOOR ETHICS



COSSATOT RIVER STATE PARK-NATURAL AREA

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Cossatot River State Park-Natural Area extends for 12 miles along the nationally-designated Wild and Scenic Cossatot River.

What are ethics? An ethic is a personal standard of right and wrong. Outdoor ethics relate to how we respect and care for our natural world. Leave No Trace Ethics depend more on attitude and awareness than on rules and regulations. Ethics are very important to the Cossatot River area because just being designated a “State Park-Natural Area” doesn’t guarantee the area will be protected from harm. It will take each and every one of us to help care for this special Arkansas stream and its natural treasures.

Why are outdoor ethics important? The number of people seeking the beauty and excitement of outdoor recreation increases each year. As visitation increases, our impact on the natural environment increases. Careless acts can cause lasting damage to areas that we enjoy. The more that these areas are damaged, the harder it is for the environment to recover. Litter, damage to vegetation, water pollution, wildlife disturbance, and invasive species are all indicators of the need to develop a better outdoor ethic.

Why does the Cossatot River need protecting? This river corridor is much more than rocks, water, and trees. The variety of plant and animal life found here is astounding! Our challenge is to enjoy these treasures and yet leave this beautiful area without a trace of our presence behind. How can we make sure that the natural beauty of the remarkable Cossatot River will be part of our natural resource legacy for future generations? The following questions and answers will help.



HOW CAN I ENJOY THE COSSATOT RIVER WITHOUT HARMING THE WATER'S QUALITY?

- Allow sunscreen to fully dry before entering the river.
- Glass containers are prohibited within 50 feet of the river. This prevents visitors from being injured by broken glass.
- Use designated restrooms. If facilities are not available, use the “cat method” and dig a 6-8” hole 200 feet away from your camp, trails, or a stream. Fill the hole with soil when you are done. Never urinate in or near the river.
- Dispose of diapers and other hygiene products in provided trash cans. Waste, toilet paper, and other hygiene products are unsightly, harmful to water quality, and hazardous to others’ health.
- Washing and bathing should be done at least 200 feet from the stream. Only use small amounts of biodegradable soaps. To dispose of dishwater, strain out food particles, then scatter the dishwater onto vegetation. It should be dispersed at least 200 feet from campsites and streams.
- Do not feed fish and other wildlife in the river.
- Throw cigarette butts away in designated trash cans rather than in parking lots or along the stream. Cigarette butts contain toxic chemicals such as arsenic, acetone, ammonia, formaldehyde, and lead. These harmful chemicals can be carried into the river and harm water quality and wildlife.



WHAT EFFECTS DO VEHICLES HAVE ON THIS RESOURCE?

- Vehicles can scrape trees, crush vegetation, encourage erosion, and compact the soil. Drive only on established roads. Off road vehicles are not permitted on trails or highways.
- Travel in as few vehicles as possible to conserve energy and reduce crowding.
- Never drive a motorized vehicle into the river. This disrupts the stream bottom and puts petroleum contaminants directly into the river.

HOW CAN I HELP CONTROL LITTER?

- Take every object, utensil, and container with you when you leave the park. Leave NOTHING behind.
- Small trash matters too. Termed “micro-trash,” items such as cigarette butts, snack wrappers, soda tabs, bottle caps, and twist tops are commonly found throughout the park. These items are unsightly and can be harmful to water quality, wildlife, and other guests.
- Plan ahead and repackage your food before you leave the house. This can reduce the amount of trash that you have to keep track of.
- If you do not have a trash bag, please ask park personnel for one.
- Food waste is trash too. It is true that food scraps such as watermelon rinds, orange peels, apple cores, and peanut shells are biodegradable, but are also unsightly and attract nuisance animals.

HOW CAN WE BEST ENJOY THE PLANTS AND WILDLIFE THAT LIVE IN THE PARK?

- Trash your trash. Trash and food scraps can attract nuisance animals to your campsite or picnic area. Small articles of trash can be eaten by wildlife and harm or even kill them.
- Avoid introducing toxic products such as sunscreen, bug spray, and cigarette butts into the river. These chemicals can harm or kill wildlife in the stream. Let sunscreen and bug spray dry before entering the water.
- Keep pets at home or on a leash. Pets can prevent you from seeing wildlife and may disturb wildlife and guests. Park regulations require that pets are leashed at all times.
- Do not approach or catch wildlife. Use the “Rule of Thumb.” You are too close to the animal if you extend your arm and your thumb does not cover the animal in your view. You can safely and ethically view these animals from a distance by using binoculars or a camera.
- Please leave young wildlife alone. The mother will return when you leave.
- Leave wildflowers. Some flowers in the park are quite rare. Please take a photo or create a drawing to make a lasting memory.

HOW CAN I CAMP WITHOUT HURTING THE SENSITIVE ENVIRONMENT?

- Rather than making a campfire, consider cooking with a stove and using lanterns for light. Campfires can be a fire hazard, create

