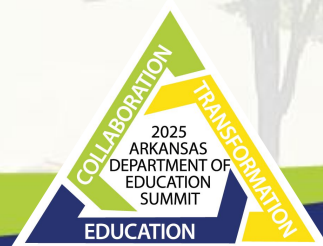




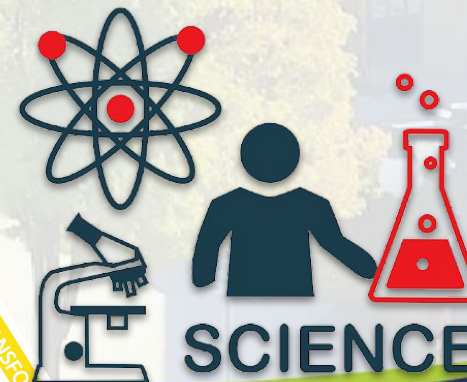
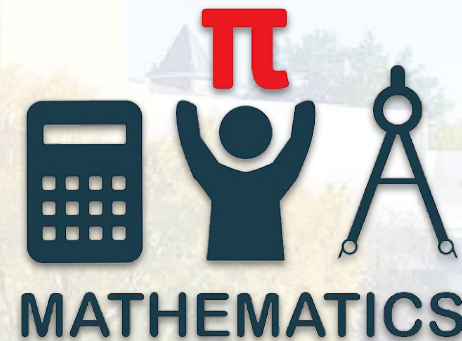
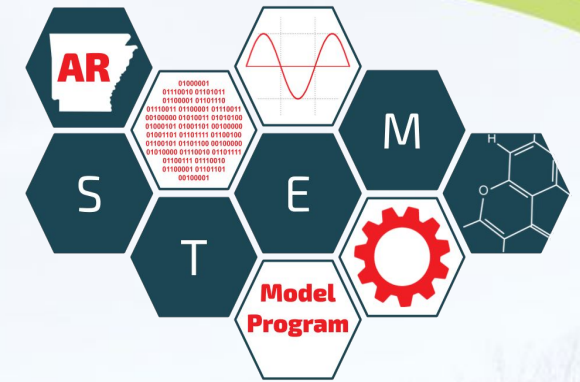
Arkansas Outdoor Education Initiative

Leveraging State Partners for Outdoor Learning Success



ARKANSAS READY FOR STEM

Develop a statewide system to connect Arkansas STEM Education to Arkansas careers and career training opportunities appropriate to the state's economy and students' needs.



AR Outdoor Education Initiative (AROE)



<https://tinyurl.com/4ww84ksk>



AR Outdoor Education State Agency Partners



ADE
➔



AGFC
➔



ADPHT
➔



Arkansas Outdoor Education Initiative





Recruitment

- 65 schools recruited to 25-26 pilot program (exceeded goal)
- 26-27 recruitment cycle started with meetings at ESCs:
 - South Central, Northwest, Northeast, and Wilbur Mills
- AR Environmental Educators Association (AEEA) Conference (K-8 AROE Curriculum)
- AROE Advisory Group

Arkansas Outdoor Education FY26 Pilot Year



Coaching/Support

- Direct support to AGFC Schools of Conservation Leadership
- DCTE Outdoor Recreation Pathway Development
- DESE Health & PE Standards Revisions
- PreK-12 School visits
- AGFC Generation Conservation Summit

Arkansas Outdoor Education FY26 Pilot Year



Professional Development

- GIS at EAST
- Connecting to the AROE Network of Resources
- AROE K-8 Curriculum
- School of Conservation Leadership Teacher Council (AGFC)
- Lake DeGray State Park (Dawson Coop)
- Crowley's Ridge State Park (NE Coop)

Arkansas Outdoor Education FY26 Pilot Year



DESE AROE Advisory Group

Faron Usrey	Northark College
Michael Ankton	Arkadelphia School District
Lindsey Beaton	DeWitt School District
Joy Jackson	Deer School District
Sophia Stephenson	AEEA
Derek Ratchford	AGFC
Rob Beadle	Project Learning Tree
Michele Snyder	DESE
Trey Suskie	DESE
Jason Blake	EAST
Michelle Flournoy	Crystal Bridges
Aaron Buchman	NEA Coop
Courtney Selph	ICC School District
Sharon Bennett	AR Climbers Coalition
Kelly Farrell	Arkansas State Parks

Recommendations

The core challenge is not a lack of interest, but a need for support, resources, and a shift in perspective.

- *Empower Educators with Confidence and Competence*
- *Prioritize Accessibility for All*
- *Utilize a Recreation-to-Conservation Model*
- *Communicate AROE Goals to Shift the Mindset*

Arkansas Outdoor Education FY26 Pilot Year



Career and Technical Education New & Revised Pathways

Natural Resources & Outdoor Management Pathway

Previously only Natural Resource Focused

- o Natural Resource
- o AR Wildlife
- o AR Forestry
- o Natural Resource Management
- o Environmental Issues in AR

Pathway now includes:

- o AR Aquatic Ecosystem
- o AR Greenland & Pastures
- o Natural Resource Management
- o Outdoor Recreation Resources
- Level 1 course will debut Fall 2026
- Standards to be state board approved this summer

Arkansas Tourism & Recreation Pathway

- New Pathway
- Level 1 course will debut Fall 2026
- FACs licensure or a technical permit is optional
- Alignment with Outdoor Recreation
- Pathway Includes:
 - o Arkansas tourism & destinations
 - o Outdoor recreation in AR
 - o Tourism & recreation in Arkansas
 - o Visitor motivations & travel patterns
- New Course will debut in Fall 2026
- Standards to be state board approved this summer

Arkansas Outdoor Education FY26 Pilot Year



ADE Coordinated School Health STEM Partnership



- Revision of the 2026 AR Health and Physical Education Standards - to be approved by State Board (ADE)
- Street Smart Curriculum with the Arkansas Department of Transportation (ARDOT)
- Outdoor Education and Injury Prevention with the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC)





AGFC Schools of Conservation Leadership

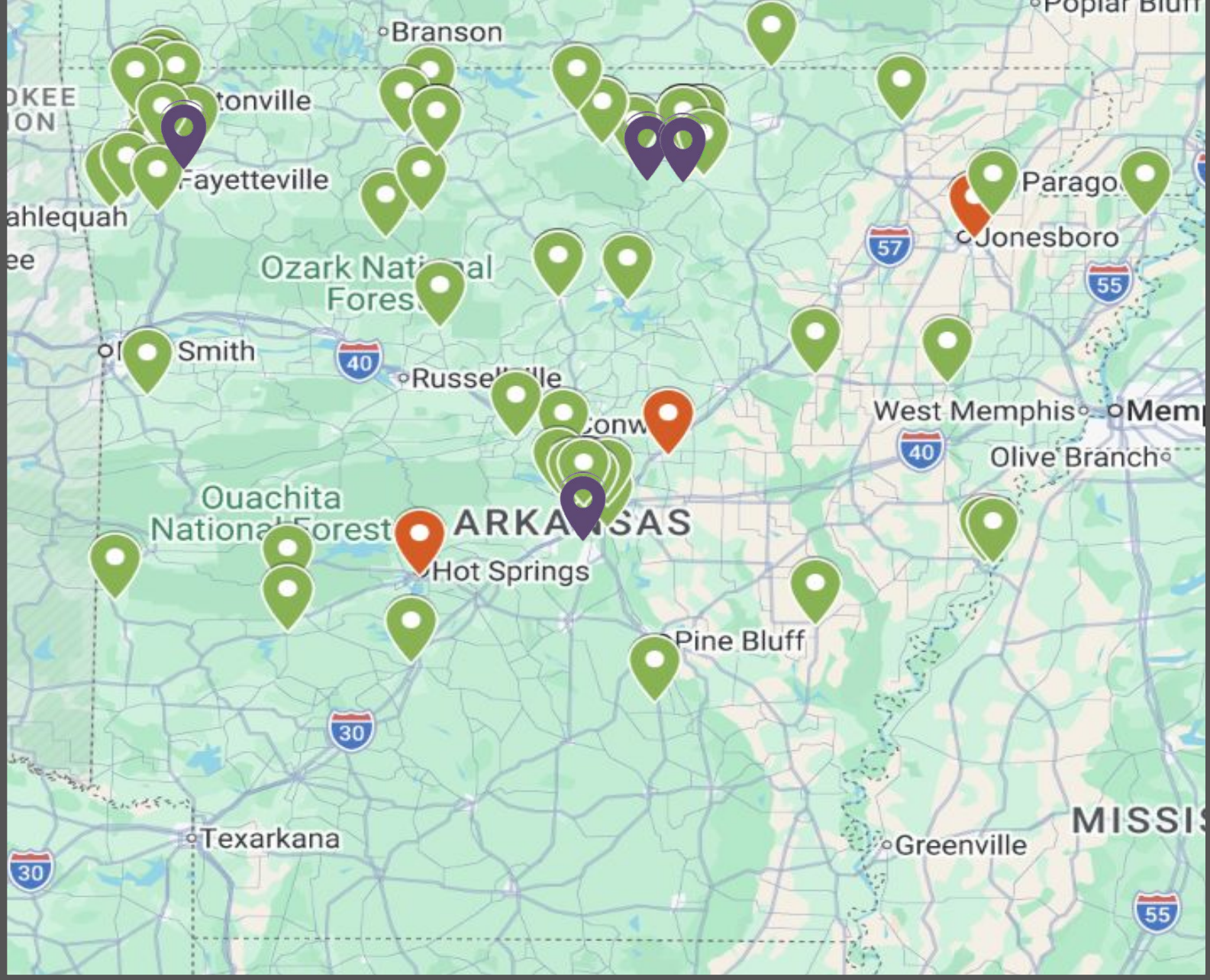


Through School of Conservation Leadership (SoCL) Program, AGFC is working to...

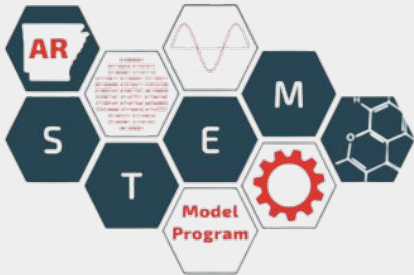
- Increase conservation education, outdoor learning & outdoor recreation opportunities for students in Arkansas
- Increase awareness of conservation careers
- Inspire the next generation of conservation professionals
- AGFC 3-year designation program that recognizes public, private, charter, early childhood & post secondary schools that are doing AROE well



Footprint of Conservation Leadership Schools & STEM Model Schools



N=52

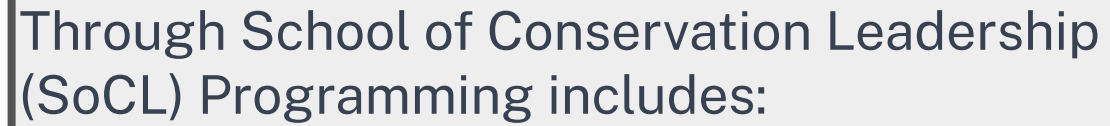


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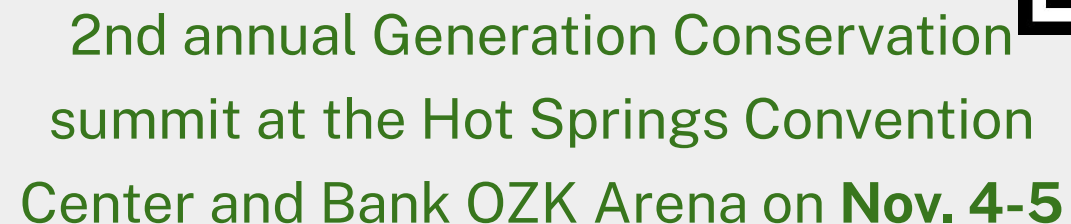
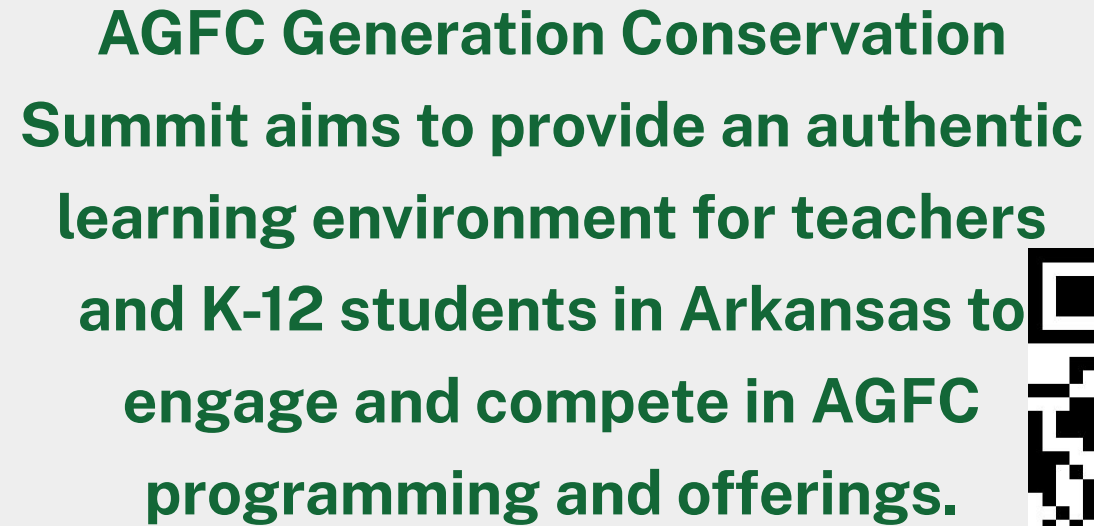


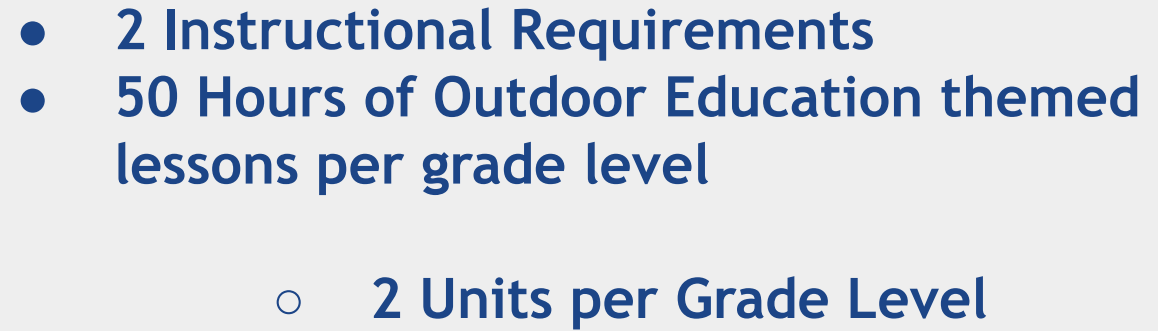
N=7

The logo of the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission is an oval emblem. The top half of the oval is dark brown with the word "ARKANSAS" in white, serif, all-caps font. The bottom half is also dark brown with the words "Game and Fish Commission" in white, serif, title-case font. The central area of the oval is a landscape scene. In the foreground, there is a blue body of water with white wavy lines. A green silhouette of the state of Arkansas is positioned in the center, partially overlapping the water and the land behind it. To the left of the state map, two brown ducks are shown in flight. To the right, a brown deer with large antlers stands on a green field. In the background, there are purple mountains under a light blue sky.



- 





Lesson
+
Experience
+
Project

= Unit

Find Your Closest AGFC Nature Center



[Licensing Info](#) [News](#) [Events](#) [Contact Us](#)

[Education](#) [Hunting](#) [Fishing](#) [Regulations](#) [Things to Do](#)

[GAME CHECK](#) [GET A LICENSE](#)

 2026 WRICE Landowner Application

 Apply For an Elk Permit

 View 2026 YSS State Tournament Scores

 Check Harvest Reports

Looking for something specific?

Search AGFC



What's Trending

[Get Involved in Wings Over Arkansas](#) [Register For A Summer Youth Fish Camp](#) [Take the Spring Gobbler Hunting Survey](#) [Licensing and VEMS System Support](#)

Find Your Closest AGFC Nature Trails



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[Driving Trails](#)
[Nature Trails](#)
[Water Trails](#)
[State Fish Hatcheries](#)
[Wildlife Viewing](#)

[GAME CHECK](#)
[GET A LICENSE](#)

Home / Things to Do / Nature Trails

Nature Trails

Discover the natural wonders of Arkansas on foot.

From bottomland hardwood forests to rugged mountains, Arkansas offers a diverse range of terrains and landscapes. Wildlife management areas and other public land are wonderful places to hike and ramble, watch wildlife and see wildflowers, and paddle bayous, lakes and streams.

Hunting is a draw to many areas, but there is plenty of time throughout the seasons to share public land. Wear hunter orange or bright colors during hunting seasons and avoid public land during permit hunts and busy times such as the opening of modern gun deer

Receive Relevant Alerts

×

The AGFC publishes the "Arkansas Hunting Guidebook" each year in



Lessons At-a-Glance

All AROE Lessons are:

- Developed in partnership with DESE & AGFC
- Aligned to Arkansas Academic Standards in ELA, Science, Social Studies, Math, Fine Arts, and PE/Health
- Aligned to an outdoor education competency in one of five categories:
 - Biking
 - Hiking/Camping
 - Fishing
 - Outdoor Recreation/Watchable Wildlife
 - Water Quality and Safety



Grade:

Subject Area:

AROE Competency:

Standards Addressed:

Lesson Objectives:

Materials:

Hook/Intro:

Lesson Description:

Outdoor Setting:

Safety Considerations:

Closure/Assessment of Understanding:

AROE Unit Experiences



Experiences can be on campus, but this is the best place in the learning model to explore the Natural State.

- Visit a local or state park to explore trails
- Visit a local camping outfitter
- Connect with the Master Gardeners and Master Naturalists at local county extension offices



AROE Unit Projects



Projects are intended to connect to the lessons and experiences in a practical way:

- Collaborate with the school to establish a hiking trail on campus
- Collaborate with a community partner to establish a biking path in a community space
- Add signage to your school or community spaces to encourage nature observation



AROE Outdoor Education Competencies



AROE K-8 Outdoor Education Scope & Sequence

The table below lists the Arkansas outdoor education competency for each grade level and outdoor learning category. Each competency has a corresponding standards-aligned lesson in ELA, Math, Science, PE/Health, Fine Arts, and Social Studies.

Grade	Biking	Hiking & Camping	Fishing	Outdoor Rec & Watchable Wildlife	Water Quality & Safety
K	Balance Bikes	Intro to Camping	Fish Biology	Nature Journaling	Water Cycle & Aquatic Habitats
1st	Pedal Bikes	LNT Principles	Aquatic Habitats	Stewardship	Water Safety Rules
2nd	Bike Parts	Safety & First Aid	Casting & Conservation	Group Movement	Macroinvertebrates
3rd	Trail Etiquette	Local Trail Hike	Bait & Mimicry	Teamwork/Games	Macroinvertebrate Sampling
4th	Maintenance	Gear Selection	Fish Identification	Plant/Animal ID	Pollution Index
5th	Route Mapping	Mapping/Compass	Alt. Fishing Methods	Migratory Patterns	Erosion Control
6th	Trail Experience	Bioblitz	Knots & Fly Tying	Boater Ed / Paddling	Human Impacts
7th	Road Experience	Survival & Fire	Food Chains/Webs	Archery Skills	Water Chemistry
8th	Mountain Biking Experience	State Park Trip	Dissection/Culinary	Hunter Education	Natural Selection



Where do you see opportunities for outdoor experiences?



Where do you see
opportunities
for outdoor education and recreation
off campus?

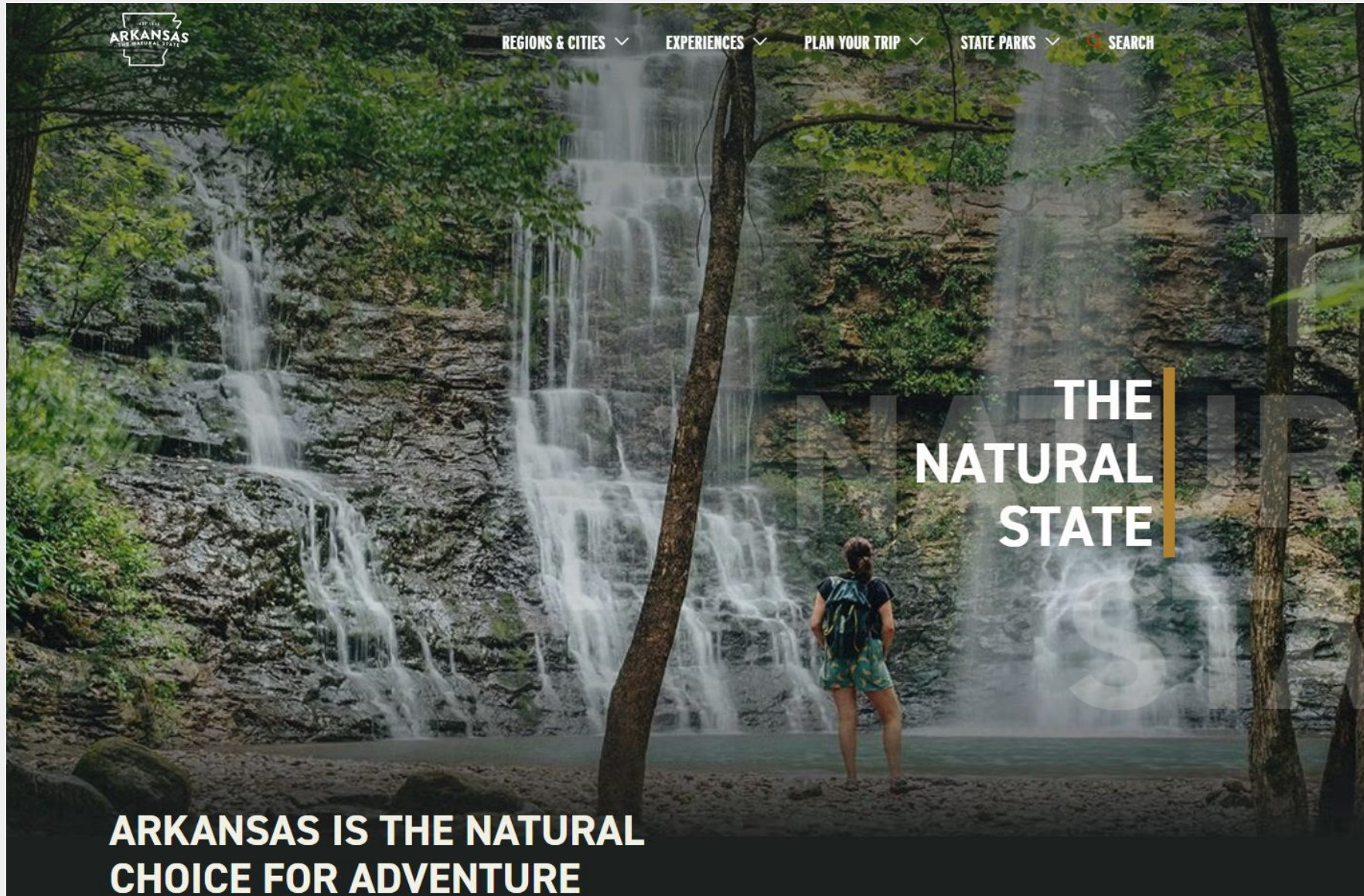




ARKANSAS DEPARTMENT OF **PARKS, HERITAGE AND TOURISM**



Outdoor Recreation Opportunities in Arkansas State Parks

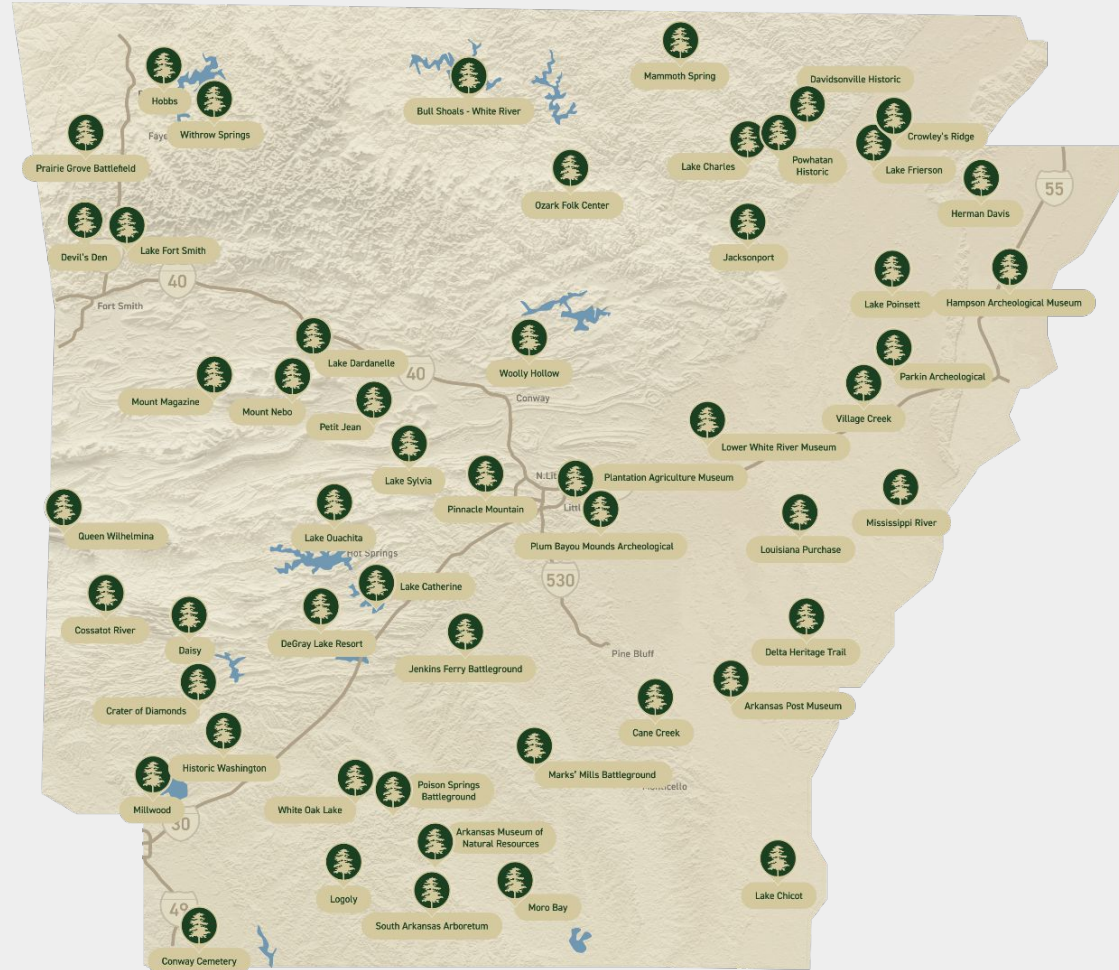


Arkansas State Parks

54 sites

16 natural parks
15 historical parks
15 recreational parks
1 recreational area
5 museums
1 arboretum
1 stadium

- distinctive natural features, scenic beauty, or historical interest
- physical, aesthetic, intellectual, creative, or social value





REGIONS & CITIES ▾

EXPERIENCES ▾

PLAN YOUR TRIP ▾

STATE PARKS ⤴

🔍 SEARCH

EXPLORE

- State Parks Home →
- Park Finder →
- Track Down a Trail →
- Monument Trails →
- Guides & Maps →

STAY IN A PARK

- Cabins →
- Camping →
- Lodges →
- Unique Stays →
- All Park Stays

EXPERIENCES

- Park Activities →
- Park Events →
- Passport Program →
- Become a Park Explorer →
- Education & Volunteers →
- Group Experiences →



EXPLORE ARKANSAS STATE PARKS

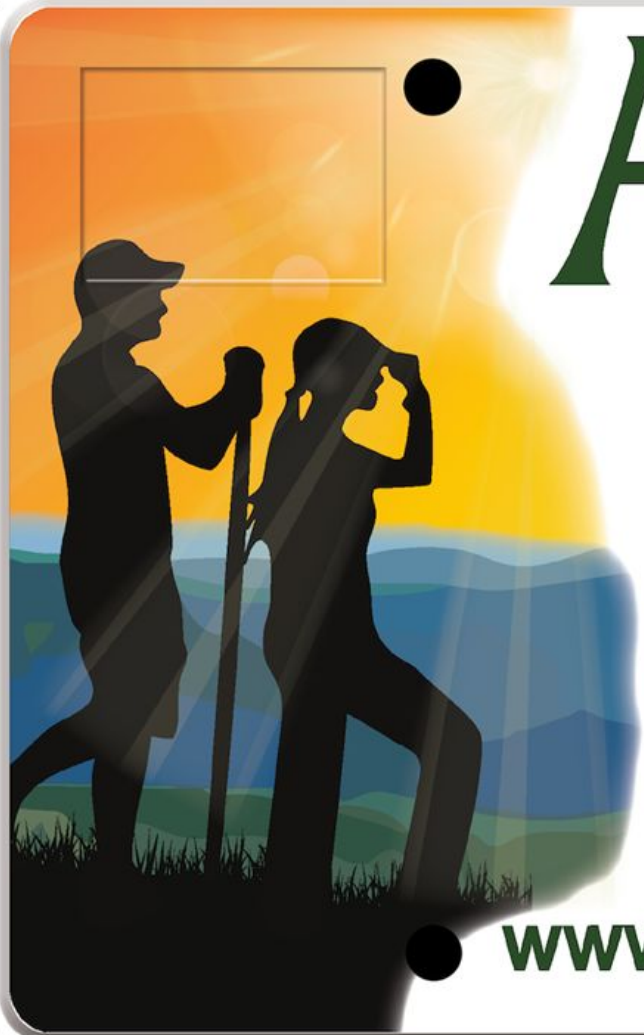
Connecting people to the landscapes,
history and outdoor fun that define The
Natural State.

Find A State Park



Interpretation communicates the science of the natural world, the stories of the cultural world, and the excitement of the recreational world to an audience in a manner that is provoking and interesting, and leaves them wanting to discover more.



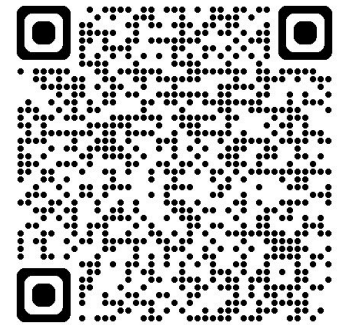


Arkansas

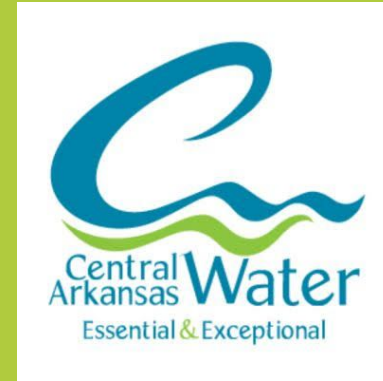
PARK

www.ArkansasStateParks.com

Speciality license plate funds support college student scholarships, internships for future park professionals, and school field trips!



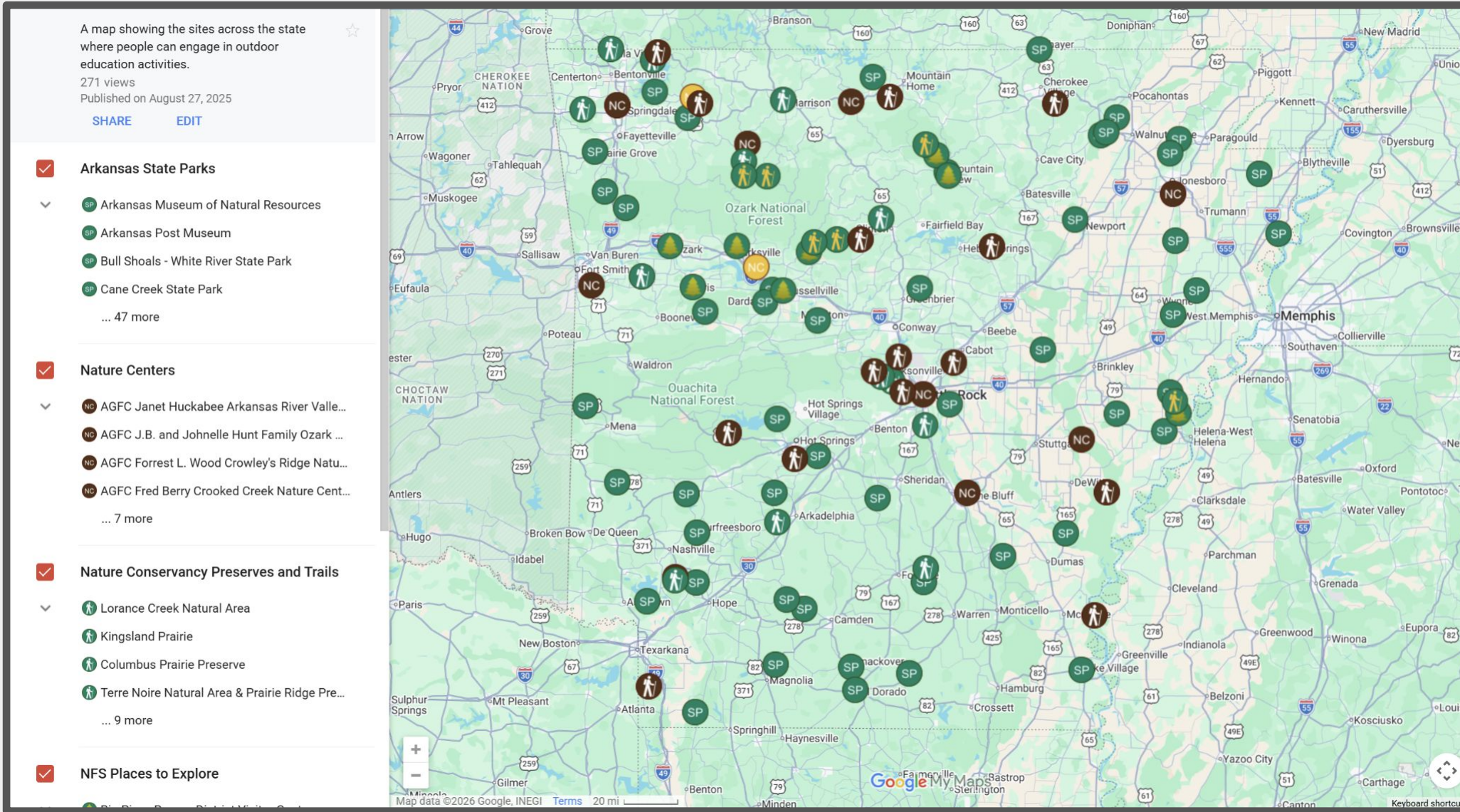
Informal Outdoor Education Community Partners





- Project Learning Tree
- UofA 4H
- UofA Extension
Offices/Agents
- Missouri-Arkansas
Kiwanis Youth Kamp
- Water Districts (Beaver,
Illinois River, Central AR)
- AR Environmental
Educators Association

A State-Level View of Places to Explore



Grants Available for Districts to Implement Outdoor Education

ADHE-Arkansas Future Grant ARFUTURE

DESE - Multiple Grant Opportunitites - Arkansas Joint Use Agreement (JUA) Grant

AEEA - arkansasee.org/ee-funding/
State Parks Outdoor Recreation Grant -

<https://adpht.arkansas.gov/office-of-outdoor-recreation/arkansas-outdoor-grants/>
AR DoT Transportation Alternative Program and Recreational Trails Program -
TAP:

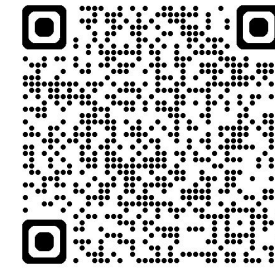
<https://ardot.gov/divisions/local-programs/local-funding-opportunities/transportation-alternatives-program-tap/>
RTP:

<https://ardot.gov/divisions/local-programs/local-funding-opportunities/recreational-trails-program/>

Overview: https://media.ark.org/ardot/TAP-RTP-Fact-Sheet-v15_W.pdf

2025 Awardees:

https://media.ark.org/ardot/2025_Awarded_NewsRelease_Packet.pdf



State Parks
K-12 Field Trip Grants
(busses, subs,
chaperone mileage)



Grants Available for Districts to Implement Outdoor Education

Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Grant Opportunities

- Wildlife Conservation Grant
 - Total available funds last year were \$800,000 state wide
 - Each county's funds are determined by the citations collected in the county
 - Grant awards are determined by the funds available for the county in which the school resides
- National Archery in the Schools Program Grant
 - \$2,000 Grant
 - Applications are accepted after the Basic Archery Instructor Training (BAI) has been completed by someone on the campus
- All Kids Bike
 - \$9,000 Grant
 - Learn-to-Ride program for Kindergarteners



Contacts

Michele Snyder

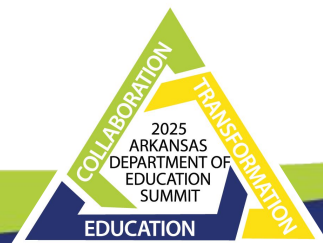
michele.snyder@ade.arkansas.gov

Derek Ratchford

derek.ratchford@agfc.ar.gov

Kelly Farrell

kelly.farrell@arkansas.gov



AROE & STEM Sessions to Look For

TODAY 1:00-2:00

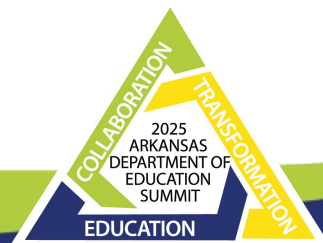
AGFC's School of Conservation Leadership: Building a Culture of Conservation

TODAY 2:20-3:20

AR STEM Model Program: Honoring
2026-2029 Designated STEM Model Schools

TOMORROW 1:00-2:00

AR State Parks: An Education Destination



DESE Professional Learning Survey

Survey Link: <https://bit.ly/LS2026PL>

PROFESSIONAL LEARNING AREAS:

Accelerated Learning and Gifted Education (ALGE)

Course Codes

English Language Arts (ELA)

English Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)

Fine Arts

LAUNCH for Students

Mathematics

School Health

Science

Social Studies

Science, Technology, Engineering, & Math (STEM), Outdoor Education

World Languages

