TDEC names Seven Islands State Birding Park State Park in Kodak of the Year in Tennessee

NASHVILLE – The Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation (TDEC) has named Seven Islands State Birding Park in Kodak its Park of the Year as part of the Tennessee State Parks Awards of Excellence.

"Seven Islands State Park had an outstanding year of achievement, and we are excited to announce this award for the park," said Greer Tidwell, deputy commissioner of Conservation at TDEC. "It takes a top-notch performance to stand above 57 state parks, and Seven Islands delivered extraordinary results."

The Park of the Year award is for a park that has demonstrated excellence in all award categories – Innovation, Sustainability, Interpretation, Resource Management, Facilities Management, and Customer Engagement as well as the fiscally responsible operation of the park.

Seven Islands worked with an Adverse Childhood Experiences grant and local schools to provide educational programs for over 1,100 students.

The park recorded over 2,268 volunteer hours with over 50 volunteers and three interns in numerous community science efforts. The park made major renovations to facilities, created 1,100 feet of new trail, and renovated another 676 feet. Park staff and volunteers removed six acres of invasive species, planted five acres of pollinator habitat, removed 1,130 feet of barbed wire, and removed two tons of debris from historic dump sites.

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The diverse natural landscape of aquatic and grassland habitats makes Seven Islands State Birding Park a premier birding destination with more than 190 species of birds sighted.

The park encompasses 416 acres along the French Broad River in Knox County, approximately 19 miles east of Knoxville.

TDEC also announced awards for the best parks in the following categories: Pickett CCC Memorial State Park for Customer Engagement and Resource Management; Radnor Lake State Park for Interpretation; Booker T. Washington State Park for Innovation; and Johnsonville State Historic Park for Sustainability. The winner of the Facilities Management category will be announced later.

Seven Islands State Birding Park is named Tennessee State Park of the Year. From left are Mike Robertson, director of operations for Tennessee State Parks; Veronica Greear, area manager; Justine Cucchiara, park manager; and Greer Tidwell, deputy commissioner of Conservation at TDEC. ***(Photo/Courtesy: TDEC)***

Seven Islands State Birding Park is named State Park of the Year in Tennessee. From left are Veronica Greear, Tennessee State Parks area manager; Justine Cucchiara, park manager; Gov. Bill Lee, Stephanie Mueller, park ranger, and Eric Collins, park ranger. ***(Photo/Courtesy: TDEC)***

Pearman & Rutledge talk victory at the AFTCO Collegiate Bass Open on the Rapala #WeAreCollegiateBass Podcast

The Fishing Wire

San Antonio, TX, Oct. 30, 2023 – The AFTCO Collegiate Bass Open was the second event of the 2023-24 season for the Association of Collegiate Anglers on the Bass Pro Shops Collegiate Bass Fishing Series. Wyatt Pearman & Ridge Rutledge from Top 25 ranked Campbellsville University won with a two-day total of 28.13 pounds. For their victory, the duo received close to $6,000 in prizes and contingencies, as well as 1,750 points to count towards the Bass Pro Shops School of the Year presented by Abu Garcia. On Episode 190 of the Rapala #WeAreCollegiateBass Podcast, host Kyle Curry talks to Pearman & Rutledge about their major victory and how they caught the winning fish!

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LISTEN HERE: EP: 190 – Pearman & Rutledge from Campbellsville University Talk Victory at AFTCO Collegiate Bass Open Tune in on iTunes, Spotify, Google Play, or Stitcher to listen to all Rapala #WeAreCollegiateBass Podcasts!

About the ACA

The Association of Collegiate Anglers (ACA) is a division of CarecoTV that was created to facilitate growth, development, and structure within competitive collegiate bass fishing, with emphasis on competitive events nationwide. The ACA created the original BoatUS Collegiate Bass Fishing Series 18 seasons ago. That single event has evolved into the Bass Pro Shops Collegiate Bass Fishing Series, which is now recognized as the longest-running consecutive collegiate bass fishing series in existence.

The ACA owns the Bass Pro Shops Collegiate Bass Fishing Series, Bass Pro Shops School of Year presented by Abu Garcia program, and associated assets. The ACA lineup of major college fishing events includes a variety of tournaments nationwide that are multi-day tournaments, all of which are televised on several networks, as well as streamed on a variety of connected platforms.

The ACA also provides support to numerous schools operating regional events nationwide which helps to grow the exposure and awareness of college fishing.

Thanks in part to the large diversity of media exposure the ACA provides, the series boasts the largest amount of televised and streaming coverage of any collegiate fishing series. This includes a dedicated television series on numerous television networks and streaming platforms, as well as additional coverage of select events inside other programs. This combination includes coverage from Discovery Channel, CBS Sports, Pursuit Channel, as well as other regional and national networks. You can also find coverage online at any time of past events thanks to coverage on OutdoorActionTV.com and PursuitUp.com

For more information on the ACA or the Bass Pro Shops Collegiate Bass Fishing Series, visit www.CollegiateBassChampionship.com. For more information on Bass Pro Shops, visit www.BassPro.com. For more information on CarecoTV, visit www.CarecoTV.com.

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YOUTH COURT PROGRAM VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

See sports page 4 for details

UofM invites Tiger community to join homecoming festivities

MEMPHIS, Tenn. — The University of Memphis encourages students, alumni and friends to unleash their inner Tiger at this year's homecoming festivities, which began Thursday, Nov. 2., with an unveiling of a mural featuring civil rights pioneer Maxine A. Smith. The following two days leading up to the homecoming football game on Saturday are full of nonstop activities for the Tiger family to enjoy.

"Homecoming is a momentous occasion for us all at the UofM," said Joshua Jones, senior director of Alumni Advancement. "We eagerly anticipate the return of our alumni and our community right here on campus. There is no better feeling than coming back home to where it all began. We can't wait to celebrate the incredible achievements of the University of Memphis with our Tiger community from across the country."

The homecoming events schedule includes:

FRIDAY, NOV. 3

•At noon, the Luther C. McClellan Alumni Mall will be the spot to enjoy the NPHC Yard Show and Official Homecoming Party hosted by Steve Transou and Orlandra Ward. A food truck will also be on hand.
•From 3-5 p.m. the UofM Student Ambassador Board will present Tiger Fest, our version of a fall festival. Open to the community and fun for all ages, this event will be held on the Alumni Mall.
•The Homecoming Parade begins on Central Avenue at 4 p.m. with a procession of floats, marching bands, UofM students and spirited participants decked out in their best stripes to make their way down Highland Ave.
•Following the parade, the excitement continues with a pep rally at the Elma Roane Field House starting at 5:15 p.m., featuring performances from the Mighty Sound of the South, the Spirit Squad and special appearances from the UofM Homecoming Court.

SATURDAY, NOV. 4

•Tailgate before the game against South Florida with the Black Alumni Chapter and the University of Memphis Alumni Association on Tiger Lane.
•The football game kicks off at 2 p.m., when our Memphis Tigers host the South Florida Bulls at Simmons Bank Liberty Stadium.
•The game will feature the crowning of the Homecoming King and Queen and performances by alums from the pom and band alumni chapters.

Find more information about Homecoming at memphis.edu/homecoming and purchase tickets to the football game at gotigersgo.evenue.net

Email sports news to MSTsports@prodigy.net

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