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Blue Ridge Parkway Announces New Concession Partner for Northwest Trading Post
FIND Outdoors Begins New Venture on Blue Ridge Parkway

(Laurel Springs, NC) – The National Park Service announced today it has approved a contract transfer from Sally Mae’s LLC to FIND Outdoors for management of the Northwest Trading Post on the Blue Ridge Parkway at Milepost 259. The Northwest Trading Post, approximately 45 minutes north of Boone and Blowing Rock, North Carolina and 30 minutes south of Doughton Park, has provided retail merchandise and food and beverage services to Parkway visitors since 1958.

“FIND Outdoors is excited to have the opportunity to build upon the legacy of the previous managers, who ran the Trading Post as ‘Sally Mae’s on the Parkway’,” said Beth Hooper, Director of Visitor Centers for FIND Outdoors. “Our plan is to expand the Trading Post to include educational opportunities so we can inspire others to FIND their place on our beautiful public lands.”

FIND Outdoors, formerly the Cradle of Forestry Interpretive Association, has a 47-year mission of education and recreation in the natural world through partnerships and community involvement. Executive Director Natalie Britt explains, “We are elated at the chance to expand our reach and provide Blue Ridge Parkway visitors with keepsakes and educational experiences that help inspire and connect every individual to our natural world.”

“National Park Service concession operators have a long and important history of helping the National Park Service carry out its mission and enrich the visitor experience,” said J.D. Lee, Blue Ridge Parkway Superintendent. “We are delighted to welcome FIND Outdoors to the Parkway; their legacy and future as a leader in environmental education and recreation opportunities will bring many new opportunities for the Parkway.”

The Trading Post will offer its guests a large mix of nature and forest-based souvenirs such as t-shirts, hats, nature-based games and children’s activities. When asked what may be a big selling point for the
Trading Post, Hooper explained, “Definitely the large assortment of new items that will be available for purchase. We’ll have things there that folks have never seen before in addition to a variety of locally made crafts.” In addition to the array of merchandise, the FIND Outdoors team will offer guests an opportunity to ‘grab and go’ a variety of snacks including biscuits, sandwiches and several drink options.

Opening dates for the 2020 season are not yet finalized and will be coordinated with other park openings planned in conjunction with local and state public health guidance related to COVID-19. Please visit the Northwest Trading Post Facebook page or Blue Ridge Parkway website for updates.

About FIND Outdoors

FIND Outdoors, formerly known as Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association, is a 47-year-old 501(c)(3) nonprofit with headquarters in Pisgah Forest, NC at the entrance to Pisgah National Forest. FIND’s mission promotes educational, recreational and interpretive opportunities about forest and water resources, natural history, and the Cradle of Forestry in America. FIND Outdoors serves approximately 800,000 visitors each year with over 150 educational and recreational programs, special events, and tours, and manages 21 recreation, education and camping facilities in North Carolina, Georgia and Indiana; offers to the public environmental education programs and forest-related gifts, educational books and other resources; and provides partnership opportunities for the health, safety and education of all forest users on local and regional public and private lands.

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