

# 2022 SPRING COAST MAGAZINE

**Flower Power**  
**America's Top Ten**  
**Botanical Gardens**

**Mysteries of**  
**the Outer Banks**  
**North Carolina's Islands**

## **SPRING DESTINATIONS**

Bee's RV Resort  
Clermont, Florida

Sunrise Adventures-Ridgeview  
Bullhead City, Arizona

Tres Rios RV Resort  
Glen Rose, Texas





# Pick up your **FREE** 2022 Coast Directory

Inside the 2022 Good Sam  
Campground & Coupon Guide!

*Look Inside!*

The new **2022 Good Sam Campground & Coupon Guide** that includes the new **2022 Coast to Coast Directory** is available to Coast members at no charge at any Camping World or Gander RV location. As a valued Coast member you were already sent a coupon, via either email or regular mail, good for a complimentary 2022 guide. **To claim your FREE copy simply take your coupon to any of the nearly 200 Camping World and Gander RV locations and exchange it for your FREE 2022 Good Sam Campground & Coupon Guide containing the 2022 Coast Directory. To find a store location, visit <https://rv.campingworld.com/locations>.**

The enhanced 2022 Good Sam Campground & Coupon Guide, the top North America campground directory and a **\$29.95 value**, has been combined with the new 2022 Coast to Coast Directory for the first time ever. The guide is redesigned to give you everything you need to navigate the Coast to Coast network, as well as **over \$1,500 dollars in coupons** and information on thousands of other RV parks and campgrounds. Plus in 2022 Coast to Coast is celebrating 50 great years of making our members' travel dreams come true, so this is a very special commemorative issue.

**Questions about your coupon? Or can't find your coupon?**

Call Coast Member Services at **800-368-5721**

or email us at **[info@coastresorts.com](mailto:info@coastresorts.com)**.



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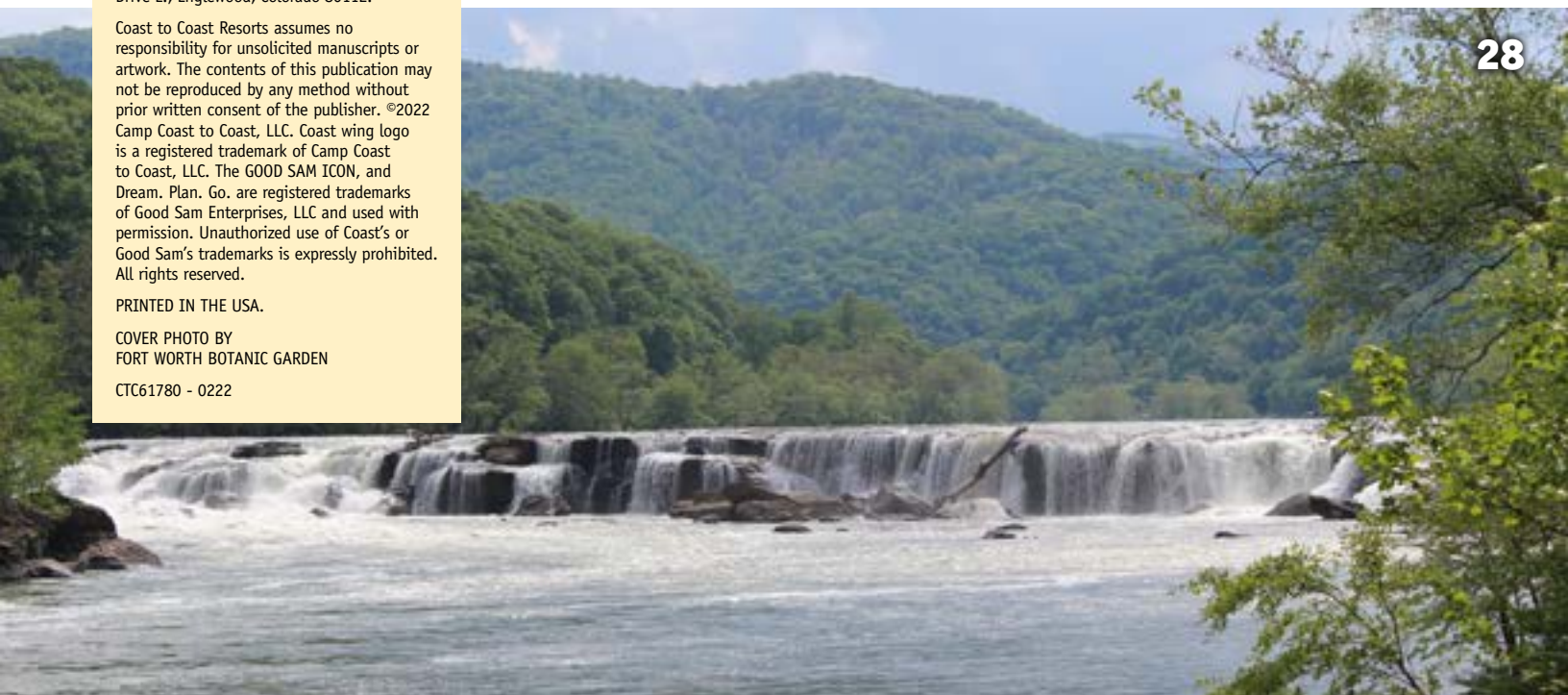
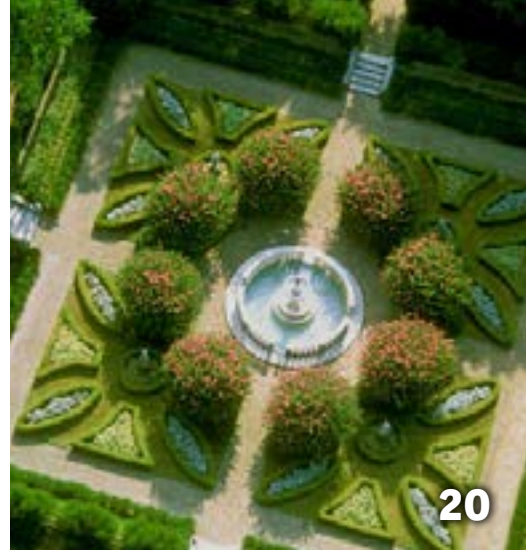
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# FROM THE PRESIDENT

PUTTING MEMBERS FIRST

## Planning a Trip?

### Digital Coast Magazine Are A Great Place To Start.

We have published a digital edition of Coast Magazine each spring, summer, and fall since 2013. Including this issue, that's 28 issues, and they are all accessible to you when you log onto our member website [www.CoastResorts.com](http://www.CoastResorts.com). Just scroll over the Benefits tab at the top of the page and in the drop-down menu click on Digital Coast Magazines.

We publish between two and four travel features in each digital edition, complete with recommended itinerary, plenty of photos, and websites to visit to learn more. In these 28 editions we have published a total of 76 travel features. But until now, you had to search individual issues to find out which areas of our great country were featured in each edition.

To make it easier for members to quickly find travel stories of interest to them, we have just added a new resource to our Digital Coast Magazine page on the website: an index by region of these 76 different travel features. Using the index, you can quickly find a travel feature for an area you are interested in exploring, and access that issue to find travel tips, suggested places to visit, relevant website links, and plenty of wonderful photos.

To view a digital Coast Magazine you have two options. One is a Flipping Book, which lets you flip through the pages like you would a print magazine. A great feature of the Flipping Book is that all website addresses are live links you can click to learn more about that particular area. The second option is to download a PDF of the issue to save or print and take with you on your journey.

While I can't list every travel feature here, I wanted to share a few of my favorites that have made my person "bucket list" of places to visit:

- **Erie Canal & Lockport, New York** – Spring 2017
- **Down East Maine** – Spring 2018

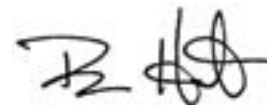
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- **Utah Road Trip: The Bicentennial Highway** – Summer 2015
- **Arizona & New Mexico Ancient Ruins** – Spring 2019
- **Southern New Mexico (White Sands National Park & Roswell)** – Spring 2021

Last summer my wife and I took a road trip north from Denver to visit Glacier National Park in Montana. Along the way we visited the Little Bighorn Battlefield in Crow Agency, Montana; the National Historic Trails Interpretive Center in Casper, Wyoming; the Lewis & Clark Interpretive Center in Great Falls, Montana; and the C.M. Russel Museum in Great Falls, Montana. All provided fascinating views into our country's history. In planning our trip, I recalled the travel feature about Wyoming's Bighorn Mountains and Bighorn Canyon by Emily and Mark Fagan (Summer 2019). So I printed a copy of this story to take along on our trip. On the way home we made a one-day detour to drive through the Bighorn Mountains and visit the Bighorn Canyon. We were treated to a wonderful scenic drive through the Bighorn Mountains and the stunning beauty of Bighorn Canyon.

To find our new index of Coast Magazine travel features, just log onto our member website [www.CoastResorts.com](http://www.CoastResorts.com), scroll over the Benefits tab at the top of the page, and in the drop-down menu click on Digital Coast Magazines. I hope this new member resource will be useful to you as you plan your travels this year and in the future.



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## RESORT UPDATES

### ADDITIONS AND CHANGES TO THE 2022 DIRECTORY

The 2022 *Coast to Coast Resort Directory* is packed with everything you need to navigate the network of Coast to Coast Resorts and Coast Good Neighbor Parks. To keep members up-to-date, each issue of Coast magazine includes any updates that have occurred since the last issue.

### GOOD NEIGHBOR PARKS

#### ALASKA

**Diamond M Ranch Resort**, 48500 Diamond M Ranch Rd, Kenai, 99611. Phone (907) 283-9424, email [stay@diamondmranch.com](mailto:stay@diamondmranch.com), website [www.diamondmranchresort.com](http://www.diamondmranchresort.com). RV notations: 2022 special discount Coast members available May, June, August & September. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Tax. Season: Year round.

**Eagle's Rest RV Park & Cabin**, 139 E Pioneer, Valdez, 99686. Phone (800) 553-7275, email [info@eaglesrestrv.com](mailto:info@eaglesrestrv.com), website [www.eaglesrestrv.com](http://www.eaglesrestrv.com). RV notations: 2022 Coast special discount available May and August only. Rate includes 2 adults per site,

full hook-ups. Additional charges: Tax. Season: May 12-September 15.

**Northern Nights Campground & RV Park**, Mile Post 188.7 Glenn Hwy, Glennallen, 99588. Phone (907) 822-3199, email [info@northernnightscampground.com](mailto:info@northernnightscampground.com), website [www.northernnightscampground.com](http://www.northernnightscampground.com). RV notations: 2022 Coast special discount available May and August. Rate includes 2 adults per site. Additional charges: Tax. Season: May 15-September 15.

**Tok RV Village & Cabins**, 1313.4 Mile Alaska Hwy, Tok, 99780. Phone (907) 883-5877, email [camp@tokrv.net](mailto:camp@tokrv.net), website [www.tokrv.net](http://www.tokrv.net). RV notations: 2022 Coast special discount rate available May, June & September. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Tax. Season: May 15-September 20.

#### GEORGIA

**Cecil Bay RV Park**, 1787 Old Coffee Rd, Cecil, 31627. Phone (229) 794-1484, email [cecilbayrvpark@gmail.com](mailto:cecilbayrvpark@gmail.com), website [cecilbayrv.com](http://cecilbayrv.com). RV notations: 2022 Coast 20% discount. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Add'l adult \$5, add'l child \$5, add'l vehicle \$5, tax 13%. Season: Year round.





## IDAHO

**Wagonhammer RV Park & Campground**, 1826 Hwy 93N, North Fork, 83466. Phone (208) 865-2477, email wagonhammerrv@gmail.com, website www.wagonhammercampground.com. RV notations: 2022 Coast rate \$35.70 available May, September & October. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Tax 6%.

## MONTANA

**Fairmont RV Resort**, 1700 Fairmont Rd, Anaconda, 59711. Phone (406) 797-3505, email fairmontrvpark@aol.com, website www.fairmontrvresort.com. RV notations: 2022 special Coast member rate. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Add'l adult \$7, add'l child \$4, pets \$2, add'l vehicle \$5, tax 8%. Season: Year round.

## NEW MEXICO

**Midtown Mountain Campground & RV Park**, 302 Mechem Dr, Ruidoso, 88345. Phone (575) 964-8555, email rv@midtownmountaincampground.com, website www.midtownmountaincampground.com. RV notations: 2022 Coast 15% discount available November thru February. Rate includes 2 adults per site, full hook-ups. Additional charges: Add'l adult \$2.50, pets \$1.00, add'l vehicle \$5. Season: Year round.

## NORTH DAKOTA

**Jamestown Campground**, 3605 80th Ave SE, Jamestown, 58401. Phone (701) 252-6262, email jamestown.campground@yahoo.com. RV notations: 2022 Coast rate \$27 - \$36. Rate includes 2 adults per site. Season: May 1-October 1.

## YUKON TERRITORY, CANADA

**Caribou RV Park**, Mile 904/KM 1403 Alaska Hwy, Whitehorse, Y1A 7A1. Phone (867) 668-2961, email info@caribou-rv-park.com, website www.caribou-rv-park.com. Season: May 1-September 30.

## GOOD NEIGHBOR PARK UPDATES

### GEORGIA

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No longer have a dump station, video rentals or accept visitor mail

## GOOD NEIGHBOR PARK TERMINATIONS

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I’M NOT HAPPY.”**

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Chairman and CEO  
Camping World and Good Sam







**RESORT TYPE:** Deluxe

**LOCATION:** Clermont, Florida

**SEASON:** Year-round

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.beesrvresort.com](http://www.beesrvresort.com)

## Bee's RV Resort

### Stay Active At "The Friendliest Resort Around"

Located 20 miles from Orlando, at the intersection of two major highways, The Bee's RV Resort in Clermont, Florida is known as "the friendliest resort around". For fun, the Magic Kingdom, EPCOT Center, Disney's Animal Kingdom, Sea World, and Universal Studios are within an hour drive. But there's no reason to ever leave the Bee's with its jam-packed activity calendar and excellent amenities.

Visit the Beehive Activity Center, where you can play cards, dominoes, board games, line dancing or watch the ladies quilt. Have an idea for an activity? The resort will help you organize it! There's also a book trading area where you can exchange books you've read for a new-to-you book. Try card or candy bingo: different, fun ways to play bingo. Traditional bingo is played on Tuesdays and Fridays.

The full activity calendar includes street golf (a favorite), petanque, dances, crafts, concerts, and more. The most popular outdoor activity is a new RC racetrack with

organized races twice a week, drawing a crowd with each race.

Other activities include a lighted shuffleboard court, a nature walking trail, and a solar-heated pool. There is something to do almost every night with dances, concerts, ice cream socials and cookouts. You can hang up your apron because the HoneyPot Eatery serves up family favorites.

In addition to the friendly atmosphere, RVers enjoy 30- or 50-amp full hook up service, 24-hour coin laundry, hot showers, hi-speed wi-fi, pull-through sites, LP gas service, and post office boxes with mail forwarding service. The resort will even deliver your packages to your RV.

Nearby Lake Louisa State Park is 4,500 acres of beautiful, real Florida with guided horseback rides and kayak eco-tours, kayak, canoe and bike rentals, fishing, hiking, biking, camping, and swimming.







**coast to coast**  
classic

**RESORT TYPE:** Classic

**LOCATION:** Bullhead City, Arizona

**SEASON:** Year-round

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.coloradoriveradventures.com](http://www.coloradoriveradventures.com)

## Sunrise Adventures-Ridgeview

**Packed with onsite and offsite activities**

Sunrise Adventures - Ridgeview is located less than a mile from the captivating Colorado River in Bullhead City, Arizona and is directly across the border from Laughlin, Nevada, where ten casinos offer 24-hour gaming, restaurants, exciting entertainment and much more. The resort is located less than two hours from Las Vegas, and one hour from the famous London Bridge in Lake Havasu City.

But there's no need to ever leave the resort. If you feel like being social, the Sunrise Adventures - Ridgeview clubhouse is the perfect setting. You'll be blown away by its stunning views of the Colorado River and Laughlin strip. Whether your game is poker, farkle, cribbage or Mexican train, the clubhouse is always buzzing with others who want you to join in. If karaoke is more your style or maybe an ice cream social, the clubhouse is the hub for all planned weekly activities.

Ready for some daily water aerobics? Feel like swimming

some laps? Or would you rather just soak in the jacuzzi and relieve those tired traveling bones? Whatever it is you're looking for, the sparkling heated swimming pool and jacuzzi will not disappoint. Come on over and take the plunge. The water's perfect.

If you feel like taking a trip without your RV or you're the kind of traveler who wants to make things super easy, Ridgeview has the perfect vacation rental for you. Newly remodeled park models, lofted cottages, and travel trailers are the easiest way to seize the RV lifestyle without any complications. Whether you're looking to accommodate your whole family or just the two of you, the rentals will fit the bill.

Winter, spring, summer, or fall – Bullhead City/Laughlin is the area for all seasons. The area is known for 360 days of sunshine a year that allows numerous outdoor recreation activities year-round.







**coast to coast**  
premier

**RESORT TYPE:** Premier

**LOCATION:** Glen Rose, Texas

**SEASON:** Year-round

**WEBSITE:**  
[www.tresriosrvpark.com](http://www.tresriosrvpark.com)

## Tres Rios RV Resort

A true destination resort with three rivers

When choosing a destination, RVers look for a variety of options. Weather is always a consideration. If the RVer is active, then the number of nearby activities is important. And, if the RVer is an angler, a canoer, a boater, or just enjoys water activities, then nearby water is a must. This makes Tres Rios RV Resort in Glen Rose, Texas, the place to be.

Water is a huge draw to the resort. Tres Rios is named for the three Texas rivers that converge on the resort's southern point—the Brazos River, Paluxy River, and Squaw Creek. The Brazos is popular for tubing, kayaking, and canoeing. The Paluxy is known for numerous dinosaur footprints found in its bed near Glen Rose. The three rivers assure visitors of water fun year-round. Not only are the waters great for fishing—the Brazos River is home to 44 fish species—but the area is a magnet for a large number of bird species including blue herons and bald eagles. Warblers, cranes, plovers, peregrine falcons,

woodpeckers, and sandpipers are present throughout the year.

The resort is known for its special events and local area events such as the annual music festival, blue bonnet festival and regularly scheduled arts, crafts, and antique shows. Tap your toe at the Blue Grass Music Hall. The resort has 50 years of history as a successful YMCA summer camp.

Onsite, enjoy large pull-through sites, full hookups, and free Wi-Fi. Keep your children or grandchildren happy in the kids club and playground. Pick up a game of horseshoes, volleyball, or basketball. Take your fuzzy friend to the Bark Park where they can play and bark.

Hang up your apron and order from the onsite café. Or if you choose to travel without your rig, rent one of the riverside cabins.







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& PREMIER  
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ONLY



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# FLOWER POWER

America's Top Ten Botanical Gardens





## FLOWER POWER

Story by Dave G. Houser

Photos provided by each Botanical Garden

If poet Ralph Waldo Emerson was right when he said, “the earth laughs in flowers,” then get ready for a chorus of laughter as botanical gardens across the nation burst forth in blossom this spring.

The cultivation of ornamental gardens goes back a very long time. The Hanging Gardens of Babylon, for example, were one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World. The enchanting Gardens of Versailles, laid out by French King Louis XIII in the 1630s, are seen by many experts as having set the world stage for formal gardens.

Here in the United States, we can thank three early presidents for the establishment of the country’s first public botanical garden in 1820. George Washington, Thomas Jefferson, and James Madison all were instrumental in creating what would become the

United States Botanic Garden on the National Mall in Washington, D.C.

You may notice that some gardens are named botanic and others botanical. No worries, because the two words are synonymous. Botanical, however, is the more common usage.

In addition to public botanical gardens—to be found in nearly every state—there are formerly private gardens at the estates of some of America’s business and industrial pioneers that are now open for all to enjoy. We’ll visit several of them in the following article—along with a roster of other top gardens across the country—beginning in Florida, home to the nation’s largest concentration of botanical gardens

### Vizcaya Museum & Gardens – Miami, Florida

No doubt Florida’s most classy gardens, Vizcaya recreates the glorious French- and Italian-style gardens of the 17th and 18th centuries, exuding both elegance and fantastical whimsy.

Built between 1914 and 1922 by retired International Harvester executive and conservationist James Deering, Vizcaya is set on a magnificent 50-acre estate that features almost 10 acres of formal Italian and French-





*Beautiful wisteria vines become the roof at Naples Botanical Garden.*



*A photographer's view of Vizcaya Museum and Gardens, photo by Robin Hill.*

style gardens designed by famed international landscape architect Diego Suarez.

The Fountain Garden features a plaza with a fountain from the Italian village of Sutri and, hidden among the strangler fig trees, Suarez added a two-story “Secret Garden,” where cactus flowers and succulents bloom in pots built into the stucco walls.

[www.vizcaya.org](http://www.vizcaya.org) • 305-250-9133

### **Naples Botanical Garden – Naples, Florida**

This 170-acre tropical paradise features designs from a team of internationally celebrated landscape architects and includes examples of gardens typically cultivated in Florida, Brazil, Asia, and the Caribbean—and an expansive Water Garden graced with water lilies, lotus, and papyrus.

Dedicated to the cultivation and preservation of plants that grow between the 26th parallel north and the 26th parallel south, Naples Botanical Gardens features seven ecosystems including mangroves, marshes, and pristine forests where hundreds of animal species and more than 300 species of exotic and native plants thrive.

In 2017, just eight years after opening, the Naples Botanical Garden became the youngest to win the

Garden of Excellence award from the American Public Gardens Association.

[www.naplesgarden.org](http://www.naplesgarden.org) • 239-643-7275

### **United States Botanic Garden – Washington, DC**

Founding fathers Washington, Jefferson, and Madison first floated the idea of a garden on the National Mall in the late 1700s. It was created in 1820, formally established in 1850 and eventually moved to its current location in 1933. It has remained a small garden, occupying just a few square blocks, but it is a serene and scenic green space in the shadow of the Capitol, and it provides a home to more than 10,000 plant specimens.

Among its features is a conservatory containing desert and tropical environments and laboratories devoted to environmental, horticultural, and botanical education.

[www.usbg.gov](http://www.usbg.gov) • 202-225-8333

### **New York Botanical Garden – The Bronx, New York**

One of the world’s foremost botanical gardens, the New York Botanical Garden (NYBG) spans more than 250 acres including some 50 acres of old growth forestland and another 50 acres of well-groomed gardens. Collectively it serves as a repository of more than a million species of living plants.





*Palms Garden at New York Botanical Garden.*



*Tulips in bloom at Cheekwood Botanical Garden and Museum.*



*More tulips in bloom at Coastal Maine Botanical Garden.*



*Azaleas in bloom at the Biltmore Estate.*

A National Historic Landmark now celebrating its 125th anniversary, NYBG is home to America's largest Victorian-era conservatory—the Enid A. Haupt Conservatory, where guests can explore both desert and tropical landscapes. The garden's public education programs in horticulture and plant science serve nearly a million people annually. [www.nybg.org](http://www.nybg.org) • 718-817-8700

### **Coastal Maine Botanical Gardens – Boothbay, Maine**

Founded in 2007 on 300 waterfront acres skirting Boothbay Harbor, Coastal Maine Botanical Garden (CMBG) is the nation's newest major botanical garden. Its colorful array of "pocket theme" gardens and brilliantly landscaped network of walking paths appear so mature that they seem much older.

A busy schedule of special events is aimed at achieving the garden's mission to "inspire meaningful connections among people, plants, and nature through horticulture, education and research."

[www.maine gardens.org](http://www.maine gardens.org) • 207-633-8000

### **Cheekwood Botanical Garden & Museum – Nashville, Tennessee**

Cheekwood originally served as the private estate of Nashville's Cheek family, founders of the Maxwell House

coffee brand. Family descendants offered the property to local civic groups as a site for a botanical garden and art museum. It opened as such to the public in 1960.

Set on 55 acres, Cheekwood features 11 separate gardens plus the Carrell Woodland Sculpture Trail, which is a combination art and nature trail that can be enjoyed any time of year.

[www.cheekwood.org](http://www.cheekwood.org) • 615-356-8000

### **Biltmore Estate – Asheville, North Carolina**

Completed in 1895, George Vanderbilt's 250-room chateau (America's largest house) is as impressive today as it was more than a century ago. The same can be said for the surrounding grounds and gardens, designed by Frederick Law Olmstead, who also created New York City's Central Park.

Biltmore's lush landscape—a combination of forestland, meadows, waterways, and both formal and informal gardens—is a living tribute to Olmstead's design genius. Particularly notable here are the Rose Garden, featuring 250 varieties, and the Italian Garden with its elegant statuary and water features. Spring is the most popular time to visit—to experience the explosion of color—especially at the Azalea Garden.

[www.biltmore.com](http://www.biltmore.com) • 800-411-3812





*You have an opportunity to take a magical carriage ride while visiting the gardens at the Biltmore Estate.*



*Sunset at Desert Botanical Garden.*





*Cactus blooms are glorious at Desert Botanical Garden.*



*The Tea House viewed from the Tea Garden after a rain at Portland Japanese Garden, photo by Tyler Quinn.*

### Fort Worth Botanic Garden – Fort Worth, Texas

Dallas' often-overlooked sister city is home to one of the country's finest and most diverse botanical gardens. The 109-acre property features 22 specialized gardens, ranging from a cactus garden to a backyard vegetable garden.

All in all, it is home to more than 2,500 species of plants. Notable here is the Japanese Garden, where visitors can wander among koi ponds, stone bridges, waterfalls, and towering stands of bamboo. Popular, too, is the 10,000-square-foot Rain Forest Conservatory, filled with more than 700 species of tropical plants. The complex also serves as a center for advanced botanical exploration and discovery under the direction of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas.

[www.brit.org](http://www.brit.org) • 817-392-5510

### Desert Botanical Garden – Phoenix, Arizona

A stroll through this vast 140-acre desert garden with its five walking trails, permanent trailside exhibits, and special events transforms the visitor experience into one of discovery and learning about the Sonoran Desert and its surprisingly diverse plant life. Experts have described it as the world's most spectacular living collection of desert plants.

More than two-thirds of the world's cactus species are represented in the garden's collection. Of particular note (attention Tequila lovers) is the garden's Agave collection—186 of the 212 known species of the genus—making it the world's most prominent Agave collection.

In 2017 the garden opened a new 3,200 square-foot butterfly exhibit that incorporates a caterpillar nursery and emergence chamber that allow visitors to view all stages of a butterfly's life.

Temperatures here can exceed 100 degrees many months of the year, so don't forget a hat, sunscreen, and water for your visit.

[www.dbg.org](http://www.dbg.org) • 888-314-9480

### Portland Japanese Garden – Portland, Oregon

It's the most Zen spot in the city of Portland, and this peaceful 12-acre spread is widely recognized as one of the most beautiful and authentic Japanese gardens in the world (Japan included).

Japanese gardens differ distinctly from most other botanical gardens owing to their meticulous, detailed design and layout. They employ flowers, pagodas, bridges, rocks, and streams to reflect nature in idealized





*Peggy Rockefeller Rose Garden at New York Botanical Garden.*



*Walled Garden and Conservatory, Biltmore Estates.*

form.

Portland's garden has five sub-gardens. Strolling Pond Garden is the largest with multiple pagodas and whimsical bridges circling a pond. The Natural Garden features a blissful environment of moss and ferns surrounding streams and waterfalls. The Flat Garden is notable for its azaleas and evergreens spread out over a lush green lawn.

The two most popular and distinctive gardens are the Japanese Tea Garden with its functioning tea house and the Sand and Stone Garden comprised of weathered stones and wave-like expanses of white sand.

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*Orchids blooming at Naples Botanical Garden.*



*World Deserts at the United States Botanical Garden.*





# *Mysteries of* **THE OUTER BANKS**

North Carolina's Islands





*The Outer Banks is perfect for families to spend time at the beach.*



*Our Litten tents while camping at Cape Hatteras. My brother and I are pictured.*

## MYSTERIES OF THE OUTER BANKS

Story by Dee Litten Whited

More than 30 years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, a group of 117 weary men, women, and children waded ashore and made history on Roanoke Island, North Carolina, in July 1587. They established the first attempted settlement of its kind in the Americas.

Recruited by Sir Walter Raleigh, among these settlers was John White, his pregnant daughter, Eleanor Dare, her husband Ananias Dare, and the Native American chief Manteo, who had become an English ally during a previous visit in Britain.

They unloaded their belongings and supplies and repaired an old fort previously erected on the island. On August 18, 1587, Eleanor Dare gave birth to a daughter she named Virginia, thus earning the distinction of being the first English child born on American soil. Ten days later, John White departed for England promising to return with more supplies. It was the last time he

would see his family.

Three years later, John White returned to Roanoke Island on his granddaughter's third birthday only to find the settlement deserted, plundered, and surrounded by overgrown brush. On one of the palisades, he found the single word "CROATOAN" carved into the surface, and the letters "CRO" carved into a nearby tree. White took the carving as a sign that the colonists had moved inland to Croatoan, the home of Chief Manteo's people south of Roanoke in the Outer Banks in present-day Hatteras Island.

Before he could make further exploration, however, a hurricane arose, damaging his ships and forcing him back to England. Despite repeated attempts, he was never able to raise the funding and resources to make the trip to America again. Raleigh had given up hope of settlement, and White died many years later. The 117 pioneers of Roanoke Island had vanished into the great wilderness and into folklore. Their collective fate is subject to many theories and controversies.

To learn more about the drama of this mysterious disappearance, attend The Lost Colony outdoor drama, which takes place in an open-air amphitheater on Roanoke Island. The play has been running almost every





*Scene of the Lost Colony production on Roanoke Island.*



*Take the Outer Banks National Scenic Byway for a great drive.*

summer since 1937. The drama recounts the story of the entire English Roanoke Colony.

Before those 117 settlers contemplated coming to the area, it was inhabited by Native Americans. Some archeologists believe that the Outer Banks were inhabited for well over a thousand years by Native Americans, with small branches of larger tribes, such as Algonquins, Chowanog, and Poteskeet. One might think that life on a sandbar before electricity, roads, and any access to the mainland might be tricky, but the original inhabitants were able to flourish and survive on the islands of the Outer Banks precisely because of their unique geographic features.

Stretching 200 miles across four barrier islands that separate mainland North Carolina from the Atlantic Ocean, the Outer Banks (also known as OBX) offers a diversity of landscapes, from pristine protected beaches to marshes to stunning gardens to seriously large sand dunes. In addition to one of the oldest and most mysterious histories in the United States, there are a plethora of things to do.

Hundreds of years later, it was to these barrier islands that the Litten clan started exploring and camping beginning in the 1960s. We four kids acted like wild

Native Americans, not just because we always believed we descended from a fierce tribe. (Unfortunately this was proven to not be the case, causing me great sadness.)

We were simply equipped with Army surplus tents and sleeping bags, white gas stoves, firewood, and some musical instruments. My father loved the sand and the sea and my mother was an intrepid shell collector. We were allowed to explore the sand dunes and gently lapping ocean to our hearts content. Before we knew the dangers, my older brother and I would see who could get the deepest tan. We were all good swimmers, but my younger brother preferred digging deep holes in the sand and playing army. In the evenings, under a large tarp and a lively wood fire, we'd sing accompanied by guitars and a wash-tub bass. Our camping neighbors often brought chairs and joined in the singing. My father was in heaven.

Although I would have much preferred sleeping in a comfy motorhome, there was something to be said for our primitive campsite and the get-back-to-nature feeling of sleeping on the sand.

Decades later, the pull of the Outer Banks and Cape Hatteras still calls to us. One of my brothers plans an annual trip to the area with his five children, their





*Sea turtles also call the area home and lay their eggs in the sand each year.*



*The Bodie Island Lighthouse at sunset.*



*The Cape Hatteras Light Station with its distinctive black and white spiral pattern.*

spouses and children. Another brother decided that camping there on his honeymoon was perfect. Another regularly rents a vacation house on the island.

## PLAN YOUR VISIT

Maybe it's time for you to discover the magical pull of the islands and their mysterious history. You may want to start at the Cape Hatteras National Seashore. These 44-square-miles are America's first designated National Seashore. It's also famous as the nesting grounds for sea turtles. White-tail deer, harbor seals, and a myriad of birds of all shapes and sizes inhabit the protected lands as well.

If you're a fan of lighthouses, be sure to visit Cape Hatteras Light Station—the tallest brick lighthouse in the U.S. and possibly the world—which boasts the distinctive black and white spiral pattern on its exterior. You'll recognize Bodie Island Light Station by its black and white horizontal stripes. Look for it just north of Pea Island National Wildlife Refuge.

The islands that make up the seashore have been home to Native Americans, farmers, watermen, enslaved people, lighthouse keepers, surfmen, and many others who continue to shape the heritage of the area. The people have witnessed events that include hurricanes,

the death of Blackbeard the pirate, Civil War battles, the construction of its now famous lighthouses, the birth of the United States Coast Guard in the lifesaving stations, hundreds of shipwrecks, the building of dunes by the Civilian Conservation Corps, scientific strides in weather forecasting, U-boat attacks, and much more.

One of the most infamous examples of a resident was a privateer known by two pseudonyms—"Edward Teach" and "Blackbeard". We don't precisely know where or when he was born, but he probably served as a privateer in Queen Anne's War before turning to piracy. While Blackbeard's career as a pirate captain likely lasted only two years, he gained a reputation as one of the most intimidating and fearsome pirates of the time.

## GUARDIANS OF THE SEA

Throughout history, the watery perils that exist off North Carolina's coast have endangered mariners as well as any ocean-going passengers. Hundreds of ships have fallen prey to formidable currents, fierce storms, and shifting shoals in the infamous "Graveyard of the Atlantic." The construction of lighthouses on the Outer Banks, therefore, was crucial to protect both lives and commerce against the hazards of the sea.

The two tall coastal lights were built in the 1870s to warn





*My nephew Aaron Litten catching a wave, photo by Warren Litten.*



*A sunset walk along the edge of the ocean is a favorite activity.*





*A four-legged visitor to the site of Orville and Wilbur Wrights' first flight.*



*A sculpture of Orville Wright flying the world's first controlled, powered, heavier-than-air flight.*

ships traveling along the Outer Banks of the dangerous shoals along the islands. The Ocracoke Lighthouse, a harbor light at the southern end of the seashore, was completed in 1823 as a light to mark Ocracoke Inlet and Silver Lake.

Today, these three light stations, so called because they have multiple buildings including a lighthouse and a keepers' dwelling, still serve as active aids-to-navigation along the Cape Hatteras National Seashore.

Originally, the position of lightkeeper was often a political one, meaning that early keepers were frequently people not qualified for the job. It soon became apparent that a different type of personnel was needed to ensure that the lights were properly maintained for the safety of the mariners. Although they worked for little pay or benefits, the lightkeepers, often mariners themselves, understood the importance of the lighthouses and the job of the keeper.

## 12 SECONDS THAT CHANGED THE WORLD

In 1903, the Outer Banks became well known because two young men from Dayton, Ohio, made history there. The region met their criteria for privacy, steady winds, and wide-open non-vegetated spaces. It was here in Kitty Hawk with its massive windswept dunes that they

set up camp, obtaining the freedom to experiment with and perfect their flying machines.

After more than four years of hard work and experimentation, it only took Orville and Wilbur Wright 12 seconds to change the world. On December 17, 1903, at 10:35 a.m., Orville Wright made the world's first controlled, powered, heavier-than-air flight.

Perched atop Big Kill Devil Hill, the Wright Brothers Monument is one of the most iconic features of both Wright Brothers National Memorial and the Outer Banks.

The Visitor Center is home to a museum featuring models and actual tools and machines used by the Wright brothers during their flight experiments including a reproduction of the wind tunnel used to test wing shapes and a portion of the engine used in the first flight. In one wing of the Visitor Center is a life-size replica of the Wright brothers' 1903 Wright Flyer, the first powered heavier-than-air aircraft in history to achieve controlled flight. A full-scale model of the Brothers' 1902 glider is also present, having been constructed under the direction of Orville. Adorning the walls of the glider room are portraits and photographs of other flight pioneers throughout history.

What better place to fly a kite than on the beaches near





*Flying kites is fun for the whole family.*



*Paddle boarding is just one option at play in the Outer Banks.*



*Take your first flight off the dunes.*



*Playing in the sand is one of the favorite activities for young visitors.*

where the Wright brothers successfully flew the first airplane?

## MORE TO DO

Horses have been documented on Ocracoke since the first European settlers came to stay in the 1730s. There have been as many as 300 horses on Ocracoke. While small and powerful, they are full-grown horses that are often called or referred to as Banker ponies as their range included most of the Outer Banks.

Legend has it that the “Banker” horses of Ocracoke were left here by shipwrecked explorers in the 16th or 17th century. European ships commonly carried livestock to the New World. If a ship ran aground near the coast, animals were thrown overboard to lighten the load so that the ship could be re-floated. The livestock was often left behind when the ship again set sail.

In the late 1950s, Ocracoke Boy Scouts cared for the horses and had the only mounted troop in the nation. By law, the free-roaming animals were permanently penned in 1959 to prevent over-grazing and to safeguard them from traffic after the highway was built in 1957. The remaining herd has been cared for by the National Park Service since the early 1960s.

If you're interested in helping to care for the remaining herd, Outer Banks Forever, Cape Hatteras National Seashore's official philanthropic partner, manages an adopt-a-pony program at <https://obxforever.org/adoptapony>.

The Outer Banks National Scenic Byway traverses one of the nation's great wild and scenic coastal landscapes encompassing the unique maritime culture of 21 coastal villages. The U. S. Department of Transportation found the traditional maritime culture along the Byway worthy of the National Byway designation in October 2009. The byway stretches over 138 driving miles and 25 ferry-riding miles along barrier islands, Pamlico Sound and two inlets and through coastal villages.

Two national wildlife refuges, Pea Island and Cedar Island, highlight this coastal region's world-famous stopover for migrating songbirds and waterfowl. Each summer, scores of coastal birds find the beaches of Cape Hatteras National Seashore the ideal place to find mates, nest, and raise their young. As you spend your day at the beach, keep an eye and ear open for these beach-nesting birds.

## ANIMAL LIFE

Every year a cycle of life occurs on the Cape Hatteras





*You may want to help care for the ponies by donating to Outer Banks Forever.*



*You may see black bear at Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge.*



*My favorite bird is the brown pelican, photographed by my husband L. Michael Whited.*



*Who can resist a pony? One of the Bankers ponies.*

National Seashore when female sea turtles return to the beaches where they were hatched to deposit eggs into a nest dug into the sand, which will hatch to start the next generation of sea turtles. The nesting process can take between 1-3 hours to complete. A couple of months later, the nests seem to boil over as tiny turtles struggle out of their shells, out of their nest, and, out into the ocean.

Don't be put off by the name, but Alligator River National Wildlife Refuge is a great place to see local residents of the Outer Banks. It is roughly 28 miles from north to south and 15 miles from east to west. Alligator River Refuge was established to preserve and protect a unique wetland habitat type—the pocosin—and its associated wildlife species. The diversity of habitat types include high and low pocosin, bogs, fresh and brackish water marshes, hardwood swamps, and Atlantic white cedar swamps.

Considered among the last remaining strongholds for black bear in eastern North Carolina and on the mid-Atlantic Coast, the Refuge also provides valuable habitat for concentrations of ducks, geese, swans, wading birds, shorebirds, American woodcock, raptors, American alligators, white-tailed deer, raccoons, rabbits, quail, river otters, red-cockaded woodpeckers, and migrating

songbirds. It serves as the core area for re-establishing the red wolf back into the wild.

### GET YOUR EXERCISE

Forget Hawaii and California because on the East Coast, the best place for surf is on the Outer Banks, and this region is renowned as one of the best surfing destinations from New York to Florida. Surfers from all over the country and the world flock to the Outer Banks for the annual Eastern Surfing Association tournament, or just after a storm swell, to paddle out to the Atlantic and enjoy some of the best waves on the coast.

With more than 70 miles of Atlantic Ocean coast, you can stretch your legs, let your mind wander, and find your own place to enjoy the sand and waves. There are access ramps, boardwalks, and parking lots throughout the park that make it easy to find your special place to stroll.

The mysterious Outer Banks is a 24/7, all-seasons vacation stop. Follow my Litten clan and make it a regular destination.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

[www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm](http://www.nps.gov/caha/planyourvisit/basicinfo.htm)





# Visit *Southern* West Virginia

An Outdoor Adventures Playground





Entering TreeTops Canopy Tour for ziplining.



Ziplining at Adventures on the Gorge.

## VISIT SOUTHERN WEST VIRGINIA

Story and Photos by Richard Varr

A thin mist shrouds the treetops as the rising sun starts to filter through the dense forest. It's just after 8 a.m. and my pace along the trail begins to hasten as we head to the adventure I've been anticipating all week. The air is fresh; the coolness, crisp and my nerves—well, shaky. That's because I'm going to jump off a treetop canopy high above the forest floor for the first time

Yes, it's my first time ziplining, and it seems that the natural beauty of this Southern West Virginia forest with its towering hemlock, magnolia, silver maple and black birch trees is a great introduction. Strapped in a secure harness, I hear the clinks of the safety gear as my guide hooks me to the two overhead zipline cables between the trees. And then comes the command: "Go!" I take the courageous step and my glide builds speed, with the zipping sound of my pulley wheels quickly intensifying. What seems like only several seconds later, my speed diminishes as I reach the next treetop platform with

what I'm proud to say is a perfect landing.

A beginner no more, I'm now thrilled to do it again and again. That's because my TreeTops Canopy Tour with the Adventures on the Gorge outdoor resort includes traversing 10 ziplines, five treetop rope bridge walks, and three short hikes, all made easy—and safe—thanks to my guides whose first priority is to tether guests to safety cables for each trek. "There's still a sense of adventure even after all these times," says guide Matthew Cook. "Every trip is different."

Adventures on the Gorge skirts the edges of the New River Gorge National Park and Preserve, the country's newest national park established in December 2020 with the redesignation of what was the New River Gorge National River. Located near Fayetteville, the park and preserve's total area stretches 53 miles along the New River (despite the name, one of the world's oldest rivers) while encompassing more than 70,000 acres of forested canopy within its dramatically sloping river valley. With tranquil lakes, challenging whitewater rapids, and crisscrossing trails leading to commanding views, the park has become one of the state's premier recreational spots for hiking, fishing, rock climbing, rafting, kayaking, horseback riding and, yes, ziplining.





*Rhododendron, the state flower of West Virginia, adds color to the green mountains.*



*Overlooking the New River Valley and Gorge is a great place to meditate.*

Yet one activity unique to this park is the walk underneath the spectacular New River Gorge Bridge, one of the highest and longest single-span arch bridges in the world. Completed in 1977, the bridge stretches 3,030 feet, extending U.S. Route 19 over the New River. The Bridge Walk is a mile-and-a-quarter trek including trails to reach the bridge and a more than half-mile jaunt on a two-foot-wide catwalk just below the roadway. Linked to a safety cable, walkers have a breathtaking view of the river more than 870 feet below.

Many of the hikes within the park lead to exceptional bridge and river views. At Adventures on the Gorge, I join a hike along the Endless Wall Trail as light rain pitter-patters against the leafy canopy, making the trail slippery and muddy. “The tall conifers around you are Eastern Hemlocks, considered the redwoods of the east,” points out hiking guide Brenna Craig. “They grow one inch in diameter every 10 years, so it takes quite a while to get this tall.”

Along the way, we pass rhododendrons, the State Flower of West Virginia, with their pink and white blooms. We also see metal tags on trees indicating their age, some more than 200 years old. The hike’s highlight comes when we reach a clearing with views of the New River below, where rapids peak over rocky stretches and wispy

clouds dip deep into the valley. “On rainy days you can see the fog coming over the gorge,” points out guide Rocky McDonald. “Sometimes you can see isolated thunderstorms with it raining on that side of the gorge, but not on this side.”

What makes the New River even more unique is, like Egypt’s Nile River, it flows from south to north. Thus, to reach one of its more turbulent waterfalls from the landmark New River Gorge Bridge, we drive in a direction that’s upriver, or south, for an hour and a half to Sandstone Falls. The drive includes an eight-mile stretch along River Road, the park’s only scenic riverside roadway. I’m surprised to see the falls are not tall, but instead more than 1,500 feet wide where the river drops from 10 to 25 feet, with cascading torrents crashing against rock islands.

On the southern edge of the national park, the town of Hinton, listed on the National Register of Historic Places, is further upstream along sloping riverside hills. I notice the distinctive late 19th-century and early 20th-century neoclassical Gothic Revival and Victorian churches and buildings, but what catches my eye is a brightly-colored wall mural with a smoke-spewing locomotive. The mural hints at Hinton’s historic past, founded when the Chesapeake and Ohio Railway Company laid track





*The statue serves as a tribute to West Virginia coal miners at the State Capitol Complex in Charleston.*



*Miner's house at the Exhibition Coal Mine in Beckley.*



*Log house and barn at the Exhibition Coal Mine in Beckley.*

snaking along the New River and built a depot at Hinton's location in the early 1870s. Trains opened the region to commerce and development, transporting incoming residents, lumber and coal as mining developed.

This history comes to life at the Hinton Railroad Museum with displays of photos, train logs, and other memorabilia donated by area families of former railroad workers. The most notable exhibit is an extraordinary wooden railroad model and figurines display running the length of the museum. The lead figure, a strongman wielding two hammers, represents local legend John Henry who challenged his ability to dig tunnels through rock against the new steam drill.

"The railroad was building a tunnel through the mountain and wanted to introduce a steam drill for efficiency, which meant a lot of people would have probably been laid off," explains Hinton tour guide Gayle Vest. "John Henry said I can do it faster and better than the steam drill." With a 10-pound hammer in each hand, Henry was victorious, but with a sad twist. "He was able to drill a hole 14 feet in the same time the steam drill could only go nine feet," continues Vest. "John Henry won the contest, but he died soon thereafter of exhaustion."

West of the National Park, the Exhibition Coal Mine in

Beckley offers a detailed look into West Virginia's coal mining history. Pickaxes and other digging tools hang from the walls of the central museum, and visitors can tour relocated 1920's buildings from mining communities. A cramped, three-room house on the property was typical for miners' families. The church with its varnished wooden floors and pews served the community not only for worship, but for social and business gatherings.

The highlight of my visit, however, was the underground tour of an actual coal mine open from around 1890 to 1910. We boarded a tram that chugged amidst dimly lit chipped rock walls with wooden cross beams above us. "All the work in this mine was done by hand. There was never electricity in this mine when it was working," says Don Barrett, a former miner who now leads tours. "Miners were expected to load 10 tons a day, paid 20 cents a ton. That was \$2 a day. They used animals to pull the coal outside on wooden rails."

"Everything we owned came from the company store. That's why they owned our souls in the company store," Barrett laments of the hardships. "We were raised in a four-room house—eight kids, mom and dad in four rooms. My dad worked in the mine for over 50 years. I worked 23 years and that was enough for me."





*A dramatic view of the New River Gorge Bridge.*



*The main street of Hinton.*





*Lincoln statue at the West Virginia State Capitol in Charleston.*



*Outside the beautiful Greenbrier Hotel.*

The complex also features the Youth Museum with interactive exhibits and a planetarium, while the Mountain Homestead showcases 19th-century Appalachian frontier life with eight reconstructed log cabins including a general store, weaver shed with a giant loom, and blacksmith shop. “All their time and energy went into survival,” explains an exhibit attendant.

The circular Tamarack Market—a Beckley landmark with its red roof and spires—is a shopper’s dream for those wanting authentic West Virginia arts and crafts. In fact, more than 2,800 artisans from the state’s 55 counties sell their goods there—cutting boards in the shape of the state, for example, jewelry, t-shirts, pocketknives, crafted chairs, furniture, and food products. Fine art galleries and workshops featuring artisan demonstrations are also within the facility standing just a few miles from where Interstate 64 and Interstate 77 merge.

East of the National Park and beyond Lewisburg sits The Greenbrier, a colossal 710-room world-class resort with its plush lobbies and lounges. But what may be the most interesting highlight of this National Historic Landmark is what’s buried deep below the hotel’s West Virginia Wing—what was one of the country’s best-kept secrets during the Cold War. Built from 1958-61 during the Eisenhower Administration, the so-called U.S.

Government Relocation Facility remains a remarkably well-preserved maze of tunnels and rooms and is open for tours. Dug 720 feet deep, the facility’s 153 rooms on two floors are where Congress would have slipped away in the event of a real nuclear threat or blast in nearby Washington, D.C.

Rooms include 18 dormitories with original bunk beds, a power plant to meet the needs of 1,100 people for 40 days, a 12-bed clinic with an operating room, and a kitchen with a 60-day supply of food. A somewhat cramped auditorium-like chamber is where Congress would have met if an actual nuclear event did occur. The tour, which emphasizes the basic accommodations with little privacy and no luxury, begins by entering through an 18-ton blast door on the hotel’s lower level. Other entrances are secured with massive 25- and 30-ton blast doors.

What amazes me most about the Relocation Facility, however, is how it was kept a secret for more than 30 years until the *Washington Post* exposed the truth in 1992. Employees were sworn to secrecy and, except for congressional leaders, most members of Congress didn’t know about the bunker, says tour guide Ernestine Atkinson. “We’re mountain people and we know how to keep secrets,” she admits. “We’ve been doing this for years.”





*Check out where the miners had dinner while working in a coal mine.*



*Railroad figurines at the Hinton Railroad Museum.*



*More railroad figurines at the Hinton Railroad Museum.*



*Shop at Tamarack Market in Beckley for West Virginia treasures.*

If traveling to Charleston, just over an hour's drive west of the New River Gorge Bridge, a stop at the State Capitol complex is worth a visit. Off the shores of the Kanawha River, the Capitol's copper and gold leaf dome is a glittering landmark reaching even higher than the U.S. Capitol.

Outside the front entrance stands a statue known as Abraham Lincoln Walks at Midnight, depicting a somber 16th president cloaked in a long robe. It's suggested his humble look might be symbolic of the country's strife during the Civil War. In fact, it was during Lincoln's term when West Virginia became a state in 1863, formed in part when northern counties broke off from secessionist Virginia and remained loyal to the U.S.

A must see within the Capitol complex is the West Virginia State Museum, its 26 discovery rooms highlighting prehistoric through modern-day history. Exhibits range from stone arrowheads and weapons and uniforms from two world wars to a recreated coal mine and diorama of the New River Gorge Bridge at twilight. Catching my attention are frontiersman Daniel Boone's late 18th-century musket and walking stick, as does what the museum believes could possibly be the noose used to hang abolitionist John Brown for his pre-Civil War siege at Harpers Ferry.

History buffs might also like to see South Charleston's Criel Mound, a Native American burial site dating back to the second century B.C. and listed on the National Register of Historic Places. It's now part of a municipal park often used for community fairs and carnivals.

My visit was a great opportunity to learn more about West Virginia's natural beauty, history and culture, recalling a quick lesson from Adventure on the Gorge's hiking guide Brenna Craig. "To get the Appalachian accent correct, you have to say Appalachia (ap-a-latch-a)," she told me. "We don't say Appalachia (ap-a-lay-cha)". If you say that, we'll throw an apple at ya!"

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

<https://wvtourism.com> • <https://adventuresonthegorge.com/>





## RV REVIEW

REVIEW AND PHOTOS BY HOWARD J ELMER

### Thor Tranquility Class B with Off-Road Capabilities

It's nice to see that some RV shows are returning; like the long-running Hershey, Pennsylvania, RV Show. Scanning the list of RVs that were shown there I happened on a new Class B from Thor that is just a bit different than most. What caught my attention was the fact that this Mercedes Benz Sprinter-based Class B features 4WD. This is how Thor describes its newest fleet addition.

"Tranquility emanates an adventurous lifestyle with off-road capabilities. The Mercedes-Benz Sprinter 2500 passenger van with a 4x4 platform and optional all-terrain tires improves road adhesion and handling to any destination. With 188 horsepower and 325 pound-feet of torque, the six-cylinder diesel engine provides more than enough power through all weather conditions, even while towing on the 3,500-pound hitch. With its compact size and easy-to-drive features, Tranquility stands out from others in its class."

Certainly, the added capability of 4WD opens up new territory for the RV explorer. It adds a drive-mode and also increases ride height, perfect for the backcountry. I actually drove the 4WD Sprinter on abandoned British Columbia logging roads a few years ago. Those rough roads traversing the mountains showed off just how

sure-footed the 4WD Sprinter was. Certainly as good as any 4WD pickup truck I've ever driven.

In addition to the 4WD platform, every Sprinter comes with standard Mercedes Benz features like: top-mounted LED light bar with a cover, keyless entry, a back-up monitor, and adaptive cruise control and hands-free control of Apple CarPlay and Android Auto on the large 10.25-inch multimedia screen. It's also integrated with the tilt and telescoping steering wheel's control buttons.

Tranquility is offering two floor plans, 19P and 19L, both of which feature the 4x4 chassis. Each has an enclosed wet bath, ample kitchen, and forward seating. The 19L is built with a Froli sleep system. The rear sleeping area features a fixed bed and large pull-out side trays. The 19P floor plan by contrast has a rear bench-style seat with seat belts for three that electronically folds into a sleeping area. Each version has its uses based on the number of people you want to transport.

Both floor plans have Tecnoform Euro-style cabinetry, available in either "Metallic Gray" or "Radiant Silver," with corresponding cool-tone interior décor.

Despite appealing to off-grid adventures, the Tranquility is fully equipped with all of your kitchen must-haves, including a refrigerator, dual-burner gas cooktop, convection microwave oven, stainless steel sink with a





cover, solid surface countertops, and a fold-out exterior table.

At the end of the day a warm shower is what you might want after hiking the trails, and it's exactly what you'll get. Tranquility uses the Truma Combi water heating system. This space-efficient unit provides almost instant hot water on demand.

Each version of Tranquility also has a cassette toilet, ideal for boondocking. You don't have to seek out a traditional dumping station because your black tank is portable.

The smaller size of this Class B is enhanced with rear and entryway screen doors and large opening side windows that provide fresh air and plenty of natural light. This makes the transition from indoor to outdoor living seamless.

Outside an exterior table folds out directly underneath the Thule-powered patio awning. Portable or wall-mounted, a JBL Flip speaker plays high-quality audio, once connected via Bluetooth to a favorite device or smartphone.

The models highlighted in the Hershey RV Show were also shown with an off-the-grid 190-watt solar panel to help maintain a charge on the Re (Li)able lithium battery package. The system's 400-Ah lithium battery

comes with a Balmar 170-amp alternator on the Sprinter which delivers plenty of charging capabilities even at idle.

Other infotainment and connectivity features include Winegard Connect 2.0, working as your Wi-Fi extender, 4G hotspot, and TV antenna. With these you can quickly dial into a work conference call or upload the video of your adventure to YouTube. Also, Winegard provides connectivity for watching shows and movies on Tranquility's 24-inch TV in the living room, which is cable TV-ready and satellite-ready. Other devices can remain charged thanks to the electronics station and USB charging ports. Tranquility also comes with a standard Thule bike rack with room for two adult-size bicycles.

It's interesting to see the direction some RV design is taking. What's evident in a unit like the Tranquility is the manufacturer's goal to meet a need. More and more new RVers are coming to this pastime with non-traditional wants—and what they want to do is get off the beaten track without giving up any of the tech and conveniences they would expect at home. As for Thor and other like-minded manufacturers, they have been paying attention to the trends. In other words, they are not trying to lead the market with new products like the Tranquility, they are responding to it.





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