

About Hot Springs

The city's name came from the mineral-rich spring water bubbling forth from 47 natural hot springs at a rate of nearly a million gallons a day. The native Indians held the springs as sacred, and the Spanish explorer Hernando De Soto bathed in them, in 1541. In December 1804, a year after the Louisiana Purchases, President Thomas Jefferson commissioned naturalist William Dunbar and chemist George Hunter to study and report on the wonderful hot springs that were part of the new addition to the nation. The area was designated the first federally protected area in the United State in 1832. Later when the National Park Service was created, Hot Springs became a national park. It has the distinction of being the smallest of the national parks consisting of 5,500 acres, but it is one of the most visited vacation destinations in the southern United States

Downtown Hot Springs is actually located in the park. The downtown historic is one of the most beautifully restored landmarks in the country. The Victorian architecture, bathhouse Row, the Arts District and the Antiques District, plus fine restaurants and entertainment await you. The Fordyce Bathhouse is now a museum with a rich history, stained glass and bathing areas. Two of the historic bathhouses are open for bathing: the Buckstaff and the Quapaw.

Hot Springs is located in the larger area known as the Diamond Lakes Region—Lakes Hamilton, Ouachita, Catherine and DeGray. So if you want to combine the conference with fishing, boating, sailing, hiking, bird watching or rock hunting, then opportunities abound. The diamond lakes tag stuck not only because of the four sparkling lakes, but also because the area is home to the only diamond mine in the United States. Located in Murfreesboro, the mine is open to the public.

There is even thoroughbred racing in the spring and games of skill every day at Oaklawn. While the live racing season is over in mid April, simulcast races are broadcast at Oakland on Central Avenue year round.

Being Gardeners and lovers of green and growing things, we have planned a time for conferees to visit Garvan Woodland Gardens—Arkansas' Botanical Garden. The garden is on 210 acres abutting Lake Hamilton. It was bequeathed by Verna Garvan to the University Of Arkansas School Of Architecture for creation and maintenance into perpetuity of a woodland garden.

Expect to be Wowed by the seven beautiful gardens on tour Friday, June 11 and Saturday, June 12. Give in to the temptation to purchase daylilies at the Regional Auction, the Hot Springs Daylily Society's Boutique and from the Hot Water Raffle. And expect to be entertained and informed by feature speaker Lee Pickles. See you in Hot Springs.