



Kentucky Department of Parks News Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Carter Caves Hosting Three Hiking Presentations in April

OLIVE HILL, Ky. – Carter Caves State Resort Park will host adventurer Andy Niekamp in April for three presentations about trails, hiking and the outdoors.

Niekamp, a park volunteer from Dayton, Ohio, is the lead adventurer for Outdoor Adventure Connection. He has backpacked more than 13,000 miles, has hiked the Appalachian Trail three times, and is leader of the Dayton Hikers group.

The three presentations are free to the public and will be held at the Carter Caves lodge. Arrive early and enjoy dinner at Tierney's Cavern restaurant. There will be all-you-can-eat catfish for \$9.99 a person or Little T's sandwiches (catfish, chicken or cheeseburger) for \$6.95.

Here's a brief description of the three presentations:

Title: Denver To Durango. A 500 Mile Hike On The Colorado Trail April 8 at 7 p.m.

Description: Take a 500-mile journey from Denver to Durango on the Colorado Trail through the beautiful Rocky Mountains with photos and narration as Andy Niekamp recounts his 2013 summer hike. The Colorado Trail is Colorado's premier long-distance trail and travels through the spectacular Rocky Mountains amongst peaks with lakes, creeks and diverse ecosystems. It traverses six wilderness areas and eight mountain ranges topping out at 13,271 feet. The average elevation is over 10,000 feet, and it rises and falls dramatically. Learn how Andy endured sun, heat, rain, wind, hail and snow to complete this six-week hike.

Title: Thru Hiking The Buckeye Trail - A 1,400 Mile Journey Around Ohio April 15 at 7 p.m.

Description: In the spring of 2011 Andy Niekamp set out on a hiking journey on Ohio's Buckeye Trail. The goal of his hike was to hike on the Buckeye Trail for as long as it was fun. Over 1,400 miles and 88 days later Niekamp returned to Dayton on the Buckeye Trail, the longest circular trail in the nation, after completing the entire Buckeye Trail. Andy is the seventh person to complete a through-hike of the Buckeye Trail. His presentation will take you on a foot journey around Ohio. His beautiful photos and

narrative will inspire you to hike on the Buckeye Trail. Come get acquainted with Ohio's backyard trail.

Title: 7,800 Miles On A 2,200 Mile Trail. Lessons Learned From An Appalachian Trail Long Distance Hiker

April 22 at 7 p.m.

Description: Since 1994 Andy Niekamp has hiked 7,800 miles on the Appalachian Trail (AT), a continuous footpath that runs through 14 states from Springer Mountain in Georgia to Katahdin in Maine. He has been awarded three "2,000 miler" certificates by the Appalachian Trail Conservancy, which is conferred on hikers who have completed the entire AT; and he is a Life Member of the Appalachian Trail Conservancy. His average hike on the trail is 10-15 miles per day, but he has walked up to 40 miles in one day. He labels himself as a chronic section hiker of the AT. He finds each successive end-to-end hike gets easier and more enjoyable and his favorite areas of the trail are the southern Appalachians, New Hampshire and Maine. Most of Andy's AT hiking is solo, but occasionally he has friends join him for short sections, and he has met many interesting people along the way. The presentation includes photos and tips and advice about hiking the AT. Andy says, "The physical and mental demands of long distance hiking are a great way to recharge one's internal batteries and get a fresh look on life." Long-distance hiking is the closest thing Andy has found to a "fountain of youth."

Carter Caves State Resort Park features a lodge and vacation cottages. The lodge restaurant offers a variety of food for breakfast, lunch and dinner daily. There's also hiking, camping, horse camping, golf, mini-golf, fishing, horseback riding, gem mining and cave tours. The park in northeastern Kentucky is four miles off Interstate 64 between Grayson and Olive Hill (Exit 161). Call 1-800-325-0059.

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Andy Niekamp on the Appalachian Trail

The Kentucky State Park System is composed of 49 state parks plus an interstate park shared with Virginia. The Department of Parks, an agency of the Tourism, Arts and Heritage Cabinet, operates 17 resort parks with lodges -- more than any other state. For more information on Kentucky parks, visit our website at <http://www.parks.ky.gov>