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**For Immediate Release**

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**FIND Outdoors Names New Education Director**

**Pisgah Forest, NC** - FIND Outdoors, a 48-year-old education and recreation nonprofit in western NC, has recently named Clay Wooldridge as the new Education Director effective January of 2021.

“Education is at the forefront of our mission and who we’ve become as a nonprofit for almost a half-century,” said Natalie Britt, President/CEO of FIND Outdoors. “Clay will be able to build on and advance our education platform for all of our FIND locations and that prospect is extremely exciting.” Wooldridge will take over the position from Adam DeWitte, a 13-year veteran of the nonprofit, who will be stepping into a larger role for the organization.

FIND Outdoors began as a “Friends of” group for the Cradle of Forestry in Pisgah Forest, NC in the early 1970’s, but over the years adopted a strong ethic in helping to connect the public to the outdoors through managed recreation areas, visitor centers and campgrounds. Today, the nonprofit conducts programs, tours and special events in its 21 locations and works closely with the Natural Inquirer to provide school-age children and visitors with free lesson plans and activities based on scientific research.

“The Education Director is the glue that holds these programs together to create an ongoing learning environment for our 850,000 visitors,” added Wooldridge. “It’s a huge job to be the face of an organization that’s as important as FIND Outdoors. There are so many new program subjects to discover and offer our visitors.”

Wooldridge, currently the Cradle of Forestry Director, is well-suited to make this transition thanks to his background in a wide range of educational settings, including his beginnings as a naturalist in environmental education centers in Alabama, California and Pennsylvania. The experience of teaching outdoors led him to spend many years working as a field instructor in Western North Carolina. After reaching the level of Master Instructor, Wooldridge moved into the traditional classroom setting as an

8<sup>th</sup> Grade teacher in Durham, NC, earning him professional accolades such as finalist for Charter School Teacher of the Year in 2012.

“Working at the Cradle of Forestry and learning more about FIND truly enhanced my excitement for creating new opportunities at our sites and blending my love of the outdoors and education into something unique.” Wooldridge noted. He is slated to begin the new role in January of 2021 while helping to transition a new candidate for Cradle of Forestry Manager.

DeWitte agreed that Wooldridge was the right person to fill his shoes after watching him in action at the Cradle during a class visit. “His energy and ability to connect with the students is something to admire,” DeWitte noted. “I feel that he can take that gift and create something special at our other sites and propel us forward in a big way.”

FIND Outdoors will continue to offer socially-distanced and safe programming at its sites moving into the 2021 season and will look to Wooldridge to expand opportunities and create educational experiences for all. “I feel that my career has led to this point and I can’t wait to get started,” Wooldridge concluded.

### ***About FIND Outdoors***

FIND Outdoors, formerly Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association, is a 48-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 850,000 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.