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**For Immediate Release**

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**FIND Outdoors Set to Open the Cradle of Forestry for the 2021 Season**

**Pisgah Forest, NC** - FIND Outdoors, a 49-year-old local nonprofit specializing in visitor center, campground and retail management, is excited to open the Cradle of Forestry for the 2021 season alongside the US Forest Service in a safe and thoughtful manner the week of April 19th. Hours of operation are Wednesday through Sunday from 10:00 – 4:00pm, with amenities that are sure to capture the spirit and adventure of the “birthplace of modern forestry.”

“The Cradle of Forestry is where it all began for this organization,” stated President and CEO Natalie Britt of the opening. “Our history, our passion and our mission have surrounded this one site since our inception in 1972, and we couldn’t be more thrilled to open back up for another incredible season!”

Nestled in the Pink Beds Valley within Pisgah, the Cradle of Forestry is the birthplace of science-based forest management dating back to the time of George and Edith Vanderbilt, who owned the property. The 6,500-acre heritage site was Created by Congress in 1968 to “preserve, develop, and make available to this and future generations the birthplace of forestry and forestry education in America.”

Today, this western NC destination is jointly managed by the US Forest Service and FIND Outdoors and sits along highway 276, a North Carolina Scenic Byway. Visitors will find the opportunity to explore the past, present and future of environmental sustainability and stewardship through interpretive trails, interactive exhibits, public events, crafting demonstrations and special events. In addition, the Forest Discovery Center holds indoor exhibits, a gift shop and the Cradle’s newest exhibit – the Citizen Science Lab.

“I look forward to locals and visitors alike discovering and reacquainting themselves with the Birthplace of Modern Forestry in America,” said Cradle Manager Christy Ralston. “Pisgah National Forest has such an amazing history – one that brings together both science and

recreation for amazing multi-use opportunities for everyone!”

The US Forest Service has been working closely with FIND Outdoors staff to safely open the Cradle the '21 season with amenities that include over three miles of paved, interpretive trails, bathrooms, gift shop, and all of the spirit that makes the site truly unique. As trends continue to improve through the pandemic, staff will safely and thoughtfully open more experiences to the public such as the exhibit hall, programming, and the chance to explore the new Citizen Science Lab for budding young scientists.

“The safety of our visitors, staff and volunteers is at the forefront of every move we make going forward,” said Britt of the reopening. “We can’t wait to get the Cradle rolling since before the pandemic, but you can rest assured that your safety is our priority.”

The Cradle of Forestry is located on Highway 276 North in Pisgah National Forest, approximately 11 miles from the intersection of 276 and 64. To learn more about the Cradle and plan your adventure, visit the website and sign up for the Cradle of Forestry newsletter at [www.cradleofforestry.com](http://www.cradleofforestry.com) or call 828-877-3130. Look for more updates and information on the Cradle’s Facebook and Instagram pages.

### **About FIND Outdoors**

FIND Outdoors, formerly the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association, is a 49-year-old 501(c)3 nonprofit based in Pisgah Forest, NC. We serve over 850,000 visitors annually with a mission that promotes educational, recreational and interpretive opportunities about forest and water resources, natural history and the Cradle of Forestry in America. FIND Outdoors proudly manages campgrounds, visitor centers, sales outlets and educational facilities in four National Forests in North Carolina, Georgia and Indiana and the Northwest Trade Post on the Blue Ridge Parkway. FIND accomplishes its mission by providing exceptional outdoor experiences through partnership opportunities for the health, safety and education of all visitors to local and regional public and private lands.