



N O R T H L I T T L E R O C K
PARKS and RECREATION DEPARTMENT
Recreation Division

NEWS RELEASE

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North Little Rock restores historic waterfall at The Old Mill

NORTH LITTLE ROCK, AR (Monday, September 16, 2019) - Visitors to The Old Mill at T. R. Pugh Memorial Park at 3800 Lakeshore Drive in North Little Rock will now be greeted with the relaxing gurgle of a waterfall - a sound that hasn't been heard in the park since the early 1940s.

The City of North Little Rock, the North Little Rock Parks and Recreation Department, Friends of the Old Mill and Master Gardeners will host a ribbon cutting ceremony on Wednesday, September 18, 2019, at 11:30 a.m., to celebrate the newly restored cascading waterfall at the Old Mill. North Little Rock Mayor Joe A. Smith and Parks Director Terry Hartwick will speak. The park will be closed Monday, September 16, and Tuesday, September 17, for maintenance.

Repairs to the waterfall include new piping that pulls water from the lake below the Old Mill to maintain a consistent water flow. By restoring this feature, the Old Mill is closer to its original design. To save energy, the City of North Little Rock will only run the waterfall during the park's operational hours.

As far as the North Little Rock History Commission can tell, the waterfall has not been operational since the late 1940s or early 1950s. The estimated timeframe comes from hearsay and the memories of longtime North Little Rock residents, although, "they also claim to remember when The Old Mill was a working mill," jokes Bert Turner with Friends of the Old Mill. Though contracted and built in 1933 by neighborhood developer Justin Matthews to look like an authentic, abandoned 800s gristmill, The Old Mill was never functional.

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“The Old Mill is one of our oldest and most memorable landmarks in North Little Rock, and our work is never done to improve and maintain the park for the enjoyment of locals and visitors,” said Terry Hartwick, Director of North Little Rock Parks and Recreation.

The park is free and open daily to the public, so exact number of visitors has not been tracked. However, thanks to Facebook insights, the North Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau can at least get a rough estimate.

“An estimated 300,000 people are within two miles of The Old Mill each year – and that’s only tracking people who have Facebook,” said Stephanie Slagle, Marketing Director for the North Little Rock Convention & Visitors Bureau. “Surprisingly for a residential neighborhood, almost a quarter of visitors to The Old Mill were not locals. It confirms what we already know and what we hear from our visitors almost daily: The Old Mill is truly a hidden gem.”

In July, The Old Mill entered the TripAdvisor Certificate of Excellence Hall of Fame, for more than five years of consecutive Certificates of Excellence. A National Historic site, The Old Mill was also voted #2 Best Arkansas Attraction in the 2018 *USAToday’s* 10Best Reader’s Choice Awards and won a *TripSavvy* Editors’ Choice Award.

For more information, visit NLRPR.org or find The Old Mill on Facebook.

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