



Reacquaint Yourself with Mother Nature in These Hidden-Gem Locales

July 9, 2020 – Whenever the team at [Mindy Bianca Public Relations](#) dreams about the opportunity to travel again, we often talk about some of our favorite **outdoor destinations** (being members of a travel PR agency, we never expected to be spending so much time at home)! We imagine many of you may be feeling the same way and we'd love to hear about what places you're dreaming about visiting, too! Today we're taking a few minutes to highlight MBPR's client destinations where Mother Nature really puts on a show:



Coastal Louisiana

A quintessential visit to coastal Louisiana should arguably include (at least) a trifecta of outdoor experiences. For the [five regions along Louisiana's coast](#) that we work with, we believe those things should be a **swamp tour, fishing and birdwatching**. The region's scenic (and gator-filled) swamps can be experienced in a number of ways, including by boat, kayak and even a bird's-eye view via air tours. (Personal note: We think of swamp tours as a rite of passage. My first swamp tour was in [St. Tammany Parish](#) on a kayak and I'll never forget the moment my guide casually mentioned to me that I should slap the water with my paddle if a gator gets too close. I thought she was kidding!) The opportunities for fishing along the coast are as varied as they are robust. Anglers can choose from freshwater, brackish or saltwater fishing. And they can opt for pier fishing, surf-fishing, inland charter fishing or deep-water fishing in the Gulf of Mexico. With liberal catch limits and a year-round "season," fishing on the Louisiana coast is most certainly an unrivaled experience. Located on the Mississippi Flyway, the Louisiana coast is also home to incredibly diverse birdwatching opportunities. The [Creole Nature Trail](#) in Lake Charles, which is in the southwest region of the state, is home to more than [400 bird species](#), including raptors, waterfowl, wading birds and

shorebirds. Another great area for [birdwatching](#) is in Jefferson Parish on Grand Isle, **Louisiana's only inhabited barrier island.**

Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama

Twin treasures located right on the Gulf Coast, [Gulf Shores and Orange Beach, Alabama](#) provide visitors with countless ways to discover **32 miles of sugar-white sandy beaches**, the clear waters of the Gulf of Mexico and **exciting eco-friendly adventures**. The 6,150-acre [Gulf State Park](#) is an especially good place to get a handle on this fascinating region that's home to **nine different ecosystems** and a 28-mile Backcountry Trail for biking and hiking. Another eco-activity in the destination is a guided nature walk with the naturalists at Gulf State Park Nature Center, where visitors learn about the area's unique biodiversity and the park's impressive conservation efforts. During a [Dolphins and Wildlife Kayak Tour](#), visitors learn about the habitat of the bottlenose dolphin and other local wildlife as they traverse the waterways of Bon Secour Bay. The three-hour guided excursion is available year-round and is perfect for all experience levels.

Upstate South Carolina

We represent [five tourism partners](#) based in the northwestern part of South Carolina – the part collectively known as the “Upstate.” This mountain region is home to **incredible natural wonders, pristine lakes and outdoor adventure** in the Palmetto State. Among the natural wonders here is something you can't find anywhere else in the universe: The Blue Ridge Escarpment, a **geographical phenomenon** of the southern Appalachian Mountains where the mountains plummet more than 2,000 feet in less than a half mile, straight into the piedmont below. This dramatic shift creates something to behold: a unique sight that the Cherokee nation dubbed “[The Blue Wall](#).” Thanks to the Blue Wall's abrupt change in elevation across the region, Lake Hartwell Country has the **highest concentration of waterfalls in the country**. It's home to more than [300 waterfalls](#), 100 of which are publicly accessible. Speaking of water, among the sparkling lakes in the region, [Lake Hartwell](#) is incredible in both size and beauty. Perfect for anglers and recreation enthusiasts alike, the lake “reels in” nature lovers with its 56,000 acres of water and 962 miles of shoreline. On land in Anderson County, the [Fants Grove](#) trail system is part of Clemson Experimental Forest and offers 35 miles of trails for hiking, biking and horseback riding. More biking awaits in the bicycle-friendly communities of [Spartanburg](#) and [Oconee County](#). From vast trail systems to great road rides, there's a route for all levels of adventure to experience. For an adrenaline rush, visitors can take a **guided white-water rafting trip** down the Chattooga River, the only National Wild and Scenic River in South Carolina and Georgia.

Allegheny County, “The Mountain Side of Maryland”

Maryland may be a small state, but it sure offers plenty of opportunities to enjoy the great outdoors ... especially in Allegheny County, known as “[The Mountain Side of Maryland](#).” At [Rocky Gap State Park](#), which is **home to more than 3,000 acres of public land** and the 243-acre Lake Habeeb, visitors can **hike, bike, enjoy water activities** and more. Offering spectacular views in every season, the [Great Allegheny Passage](#) is a 150-mile, nearly level rail-trail that connects Cumberland, Maryland, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. Biking or hiking along the trail, travelers can check out dozens of iconic views and structures, including Mile Marker 0 in Cumberland (the location where the Great Allegheny Passage meets the historic C&O Canal Towpath National Park that leads to Washington, DC, 184 miles to the east), the fossil-filled Bone Cave (where The Smithsonian Institution conducted an excavation between 1912 and 1916), and the Mason-Dixon Line. A favorite pastime in this destination is floating down the Potomac River amidst Allegheny County's 60,000 acres of majestic nature, where

visitors can paddle through the wide, meandering turns of the Paw Paw Bends (named for the fruit trees that used to be so prolific in this area), a section of which is protected as state wildlands.

Branson, Missouri

Nestled in the lakeside beauty of the Ozark Mountains, [Branson, Missouri](#) may be best known for its theaters and live entertainment, but just minutes from the bright lights is an **unexpectedly amazing outdoor destination**. There are endless ways to explore nature here – hiking, mountain biking, horseback rides, ATV and Jeep tours, even thrilling ziplines and mountain coasters! This is also a **golfer's paradise**. In fact, Tiger Woods selected Branson as the home of his first-ever public golf course, [Payne's Valley](#). Branson is also home to **a trio of pristine lakes** – Table Rock, Taneycomo and Bull Shoals – that boast sparkling water and plenty of fun. Water sports enthusiasts can swim, water ski, wakeboard, tube, boat, sail, scuba dive, jet ski, parasail, kayak and fish at these three outdoor gems. Table Rock Lake boasts 43,000 acres of crystal-clear water and more than 800 miles of shoreline. The smallest of the three lakes, Lake Taneycomo, has just 40 miles of shoreline, but it's one of the best trout-fishing lakes in the country because it's stocked with 750,000 rainbow and brown trout each year. Finally, Bull Shoals Lake features a whopping 94,000 acres of water, perfect for scuba diving, fishing and many other lake-related pursuits.

Whether you're planning to travel soon or in the distant future, near or far, we hope you're able to enjoy the great outdoors. If one (or more) of these destinations piqued your interest, let us know!

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MEDIA CONTACT

Sara Martin

Mindy Bianca Public Relations

sara@mindybiancapr.com

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Lake Hartwell Country

Visit Lake Charles