Welcome To Rush

In the 1880s farmers on Rush Creek discovered zinc ore, and soon the "rush" to Rush began. Claims were staked out along the Rush Valley and that of neighboring Clabber Creek. By the 1890s the mining boom was well established and miners and investors arrived from all over the country. The most famous mine at Rush was the "Morning Star", which awed observers with its quarry-like production of ore. Around the Morning Star Mine, a community of homes and businesses developed. This community endured until the 1960s.

The heyday of the mining district came during World War I. All of the mines were in full operation, producing zinc for the war effort. As the war wound down, so did the market for zinc. Soon the valley seemed a ghost town in comparison to the busy years of several thousand inhabitants. A mining revival in the 1920s was short-lived, but "free-oreing" supported local miners until World War II. During the 1940s several of the processing mills were dismantled for salvage.

Until the closing of the post office in the 1950s, Rush maintained a community identity. Gradually, the remaining inhabitants left, until Rush became known as a ghost town. Today the Rush mining district is part of Buffalo National River. Rush is entered on the National Register of Historic Places as a significant site in the history of mining in Northern Arkansas.

For Your Safety

In 1984, a mine safety inspector from the Office of Mine Safety and Health Administrations and park staff conducted an on-site inspection of the mines. The team found several hazards including large, loose ceiling rocks, deep pits, water-filled pits, and several tunnels showing signs of recent cave-ins. Over the last several years, the ceilings and walls of the mines have weakened even more.

As a result of this inspection and the further deterioration of the mines' stability, fencing and gates have been installed. As a bonus, since humans are no longer entering the mines, bats are utilizing them for breeding and roosting. For this reason, the park uses specially designed gates that allow ease of entrance for our bat population. Remember, however, human entry into the mines is strictly prohibited.

Visiting Rush

Parking areas and interpretive signs are located near the smelter and at Rush landing. Water and restrooms are located at Rush landing and at Rush campground. Rush campground is primitive. Beware of low water crossings during high water. All sites are walk-in, equipped with a cooking grill, lantern post and picnic table. A fee is charged.

The Rush area can be viewed along a driving route or by walking the indicated trails. Because Rush is also a major river access point with heavy seasonal travel, we urge you to use caution when driving or walking, especially near the low water crossings. The Rush Mountain hiking trail crosses steep and rocky terrain. Completed portions are indicated on the brochure map.

The park boundary is indicated on the map. Respect the private property adjacent to the park. Use caution as you explore the mining history of the Rush valley. Ruins and foundations abound. It is illegal to remove any artifacts from the area. The mines are fenced off for you safety. Do not enter the mines!

Since before recorded time, people have inhabited the Rush valley for one reason or another. Whether it be to find shelter from a storm, pieces of chert for tool making, fresh water for pack animals, deer meat to feed a family, or zinc ore to sell to the highest bidder. Many of these people have left signs of their presence, which enables us to hear their stories of struggle, success, and survival. If artifacts in the area are disturbed or collected, then that story is lost forever. Please help in safeguarding their memory by protecting the historic sites from vandalism and theft of artifacts.

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Rush Historic District

Touring Rush

This is a brief tour of several sites important in the history of Rush. The numbered points are keyed to the map. Begin your tour as you drive past the ghost town.

1. Rush "Ghost Town." The houses in this row date from about 1899. They were built of a simple board and batten construction; clapboard siding was added to some at a later time.

2. Taylor-Medley Store. Here Bill Taylor (and later Lee Medley) sold goods, distributed mail, and performed marriages. The store operated until the 1950s.

3. Livery Barn Site. Built in the 1890s, this structure was burned by arson in 1998.

4. Smelter. This stone structure (the oldest in Rush) was constructed in 1886. The claim-holders of the Morning Star Mine built the smelter for silver extraction. The test fire did not show silver in the ore, and it was no longer used.

5. Blacksmith Shop. This structure was built in 1925 during the mining revival. Part of the forge remains.

6. Mine Level. A hiking trail along the mine level to Rush Landing begins here, passing several mine entrances. The entrances are fenced off and gated for your safety and that of the bat populations that now use the mines for shelter. It is unsafe for you to enter the mines.

7. Morning Star Processing Mill. The first processing mill in Rush was built here in 1898. The remaining foundation piers are from the remodeled mill of 1911. A gravity tram system moved the ore from the mining level to the mill for crushing.

8. Tailings. Tailings were the final residue from the concentration process at the mill. Follow the walk down the tailing mound to the parking lot, or loop back.

9. Hicks Store. This once two-story, rock-walled store was built in 1916 and reflected the prosperity of the period. It was remodeled into a residence in the 1960s. In 1982 record flooding of the Buffalo reached to this building.

10. Boiling Springs. Before the mining era, a gristmill operated below here on Rush Creek. The volume of the spring varies. During periods of drought, the streambed is dry above this point.

11. McIntosh Mine. Several handsome buildings once stood in this area, including a hotel with a splendid porch, all part of the McIntosh Mining Company. Remains of the processing mill are in the overgrowth.

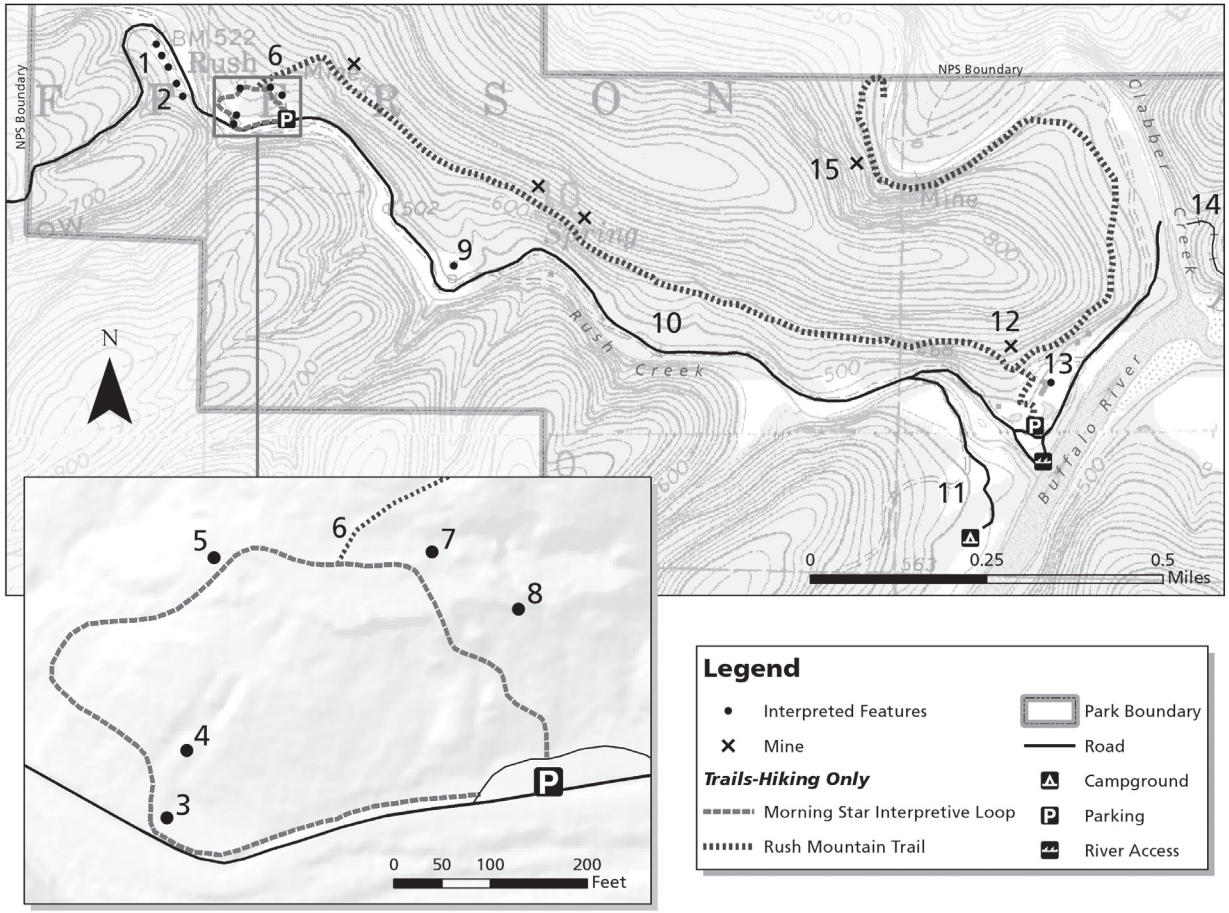
12. "New Town". During World War I the entire area from Rush Creek across the present campground was a booming village. With the decline of mining after the war, the town was virtually deserted. The Edith and Yellow Rose processing mills sat to the west of the town.

13. White Eagle Mine. One of the earliest mining ventures was at the mouth of Rush Creek in the 1880s. The mill ruins are visible at the perimeter of the parking lot. A hiking trail leads from the parking lot to Clabber Creek.

14. 1960s Mining. A processing mill was brought in from Missouri in the late 1950s to process ore from several reopened mines. The venture was short-lived.

15. Ore Wagon Road. Ore from the Rush mines was transported by wagon to the White River where it was loaded on barges. After the railroad reached Buffalo City in 1903, freight cars carried the ore.

16. Monte Cristo Mine. This mine was first active in the early 1900s. The old engine in front dates from the 1960s mine reopening. This mine contains dangerous hidden shafts and pools of water. **Do not enter!**



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