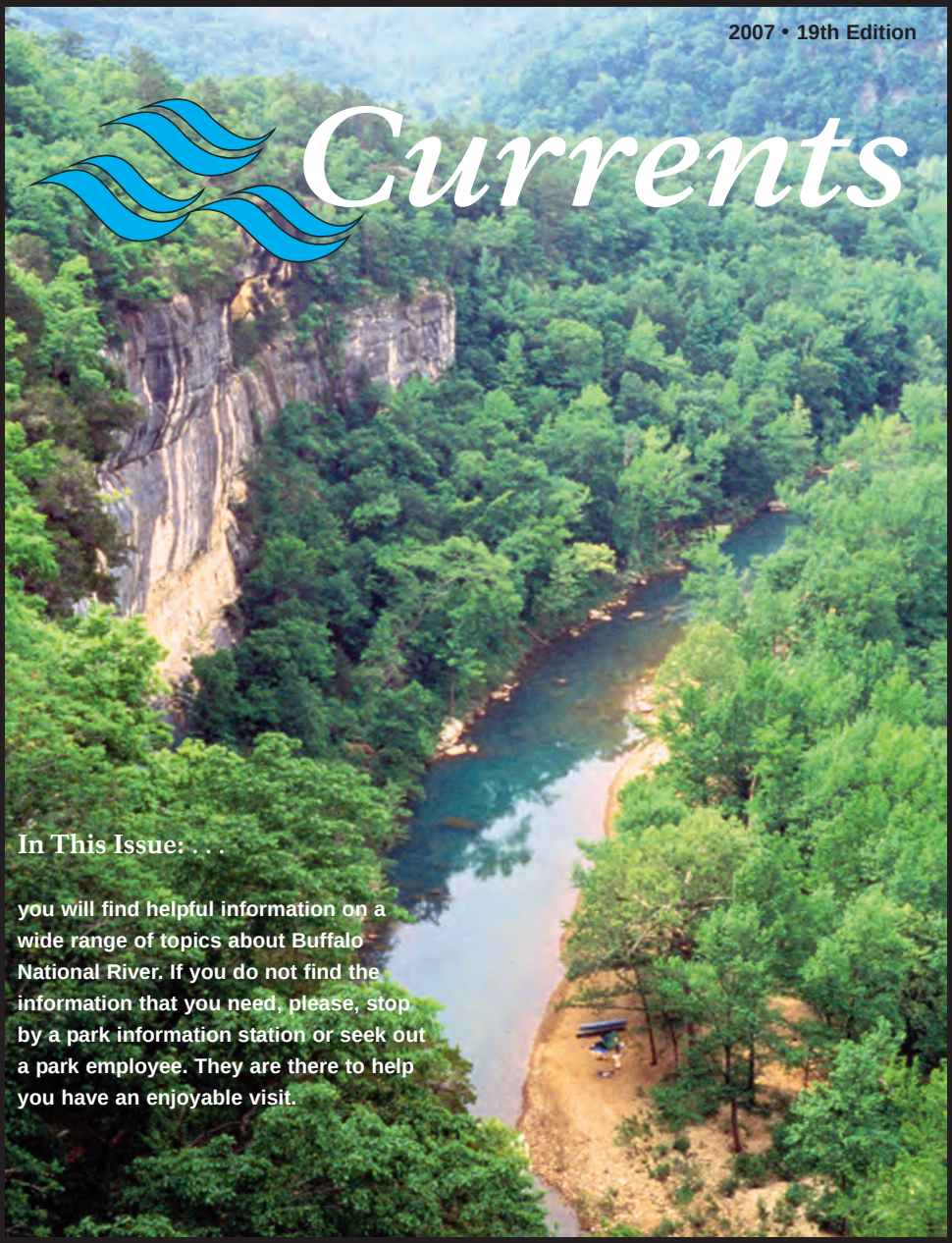
# Visitors Guide
# Buffalo National River
# Arkansas

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



2007 • 19th Edition

# Currents

## In This Issue: . . .

you will find helpful information on a wide range of topics about Buffalo National River. If you do not find the information that you need, please, stop by a park information station or seek out a park employee. They are there to help you have an enjoyable visit.

Welcome & Introduction 2 | Map & Guide 3 | Trail Use 4-5 | Horse Use 6 | Facilities 7
Camping 8-10 | River Use 11-13 | Canoe Rentals 14 | Safety 15-17 | Natural Resources 18-20
Cultural Resources 21-23 | Ranger Programs 24 | Support Your Park 25 | Jr. Rangers 26 - 27
Bulletin Board 28

## Welcome to the Buffalo

We extend a warm welcome to you in your visit to Buffalo National River. The natural and cultural resources of this national river exemplify the beauty and diversity which makes up the Ozark region of Arkansas. You will find a wild, free-flowing river that passes towering bluffs, pioneer homesteads and wilderness areas, dominated by a vast hardwood forest, verdant much of the visitor season. The river offers recreational pursuits like canoeing, fishing and swimming. Inspirational and educational opportunities are also available. It is indeed a place where you can get glimpses of an earlier way of life, whether that is seeing examples of prehistoric Native American presence in Ozark Bluff Dweller cultures or pioneer homesteads in this beautiful and rugged landscape.

We hope that you will enjoy your visit. Our desire is to make your visit a pleasurable experience, whether that is getting the area information you need, receiving assistance from one of our staff members, or finding the public facilities clean, orderly, and well maintained. If you choose to partake of our interpretive programs, our staff can help you learn more about this significant resource that is America's first national river.

Your comments and satisfaction are important to us. Please tell a park employee if you have any concerns, suggestions, or compliments to pass on to us.

Thirty-five years have passed since Buffalo National River was established "for the purposes of conserving and interpreting an area containing unique scenic and scientific features, and preserving as a free-flowing stream an important segment of the Buffalo River in Arkansas for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations."

The National Park Service, working with park neighbors and friends, manages the park to provide outdoor opportunities to all park visitors. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of many people the Buffalo River remains preserved for all Americans for future generations.

Kevin Cheri
Superintendent

Like sentinels standing strong, bluffs tower over the upper Buffalo River.

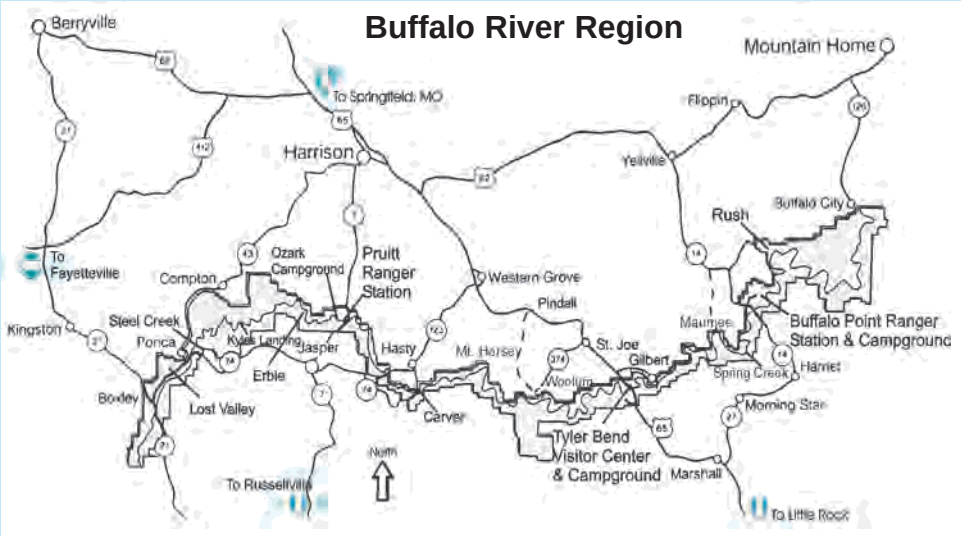
## An Introduction to the Park

The Buffalo River begins as a trickle in the Boston Mountains and flows 150 miles (241.5 km) to the east through the Ozarks and into the White River.

Following what is likely an ancient riverbed, the Buffalo flows past massive sandstone and limestone bluffs. The water temperatures and river levels change dramatically with the seasons, attesting that the river is influenced more by runoff and tributaries than by springs. Narrow and fast near its headwaters, the Buffalo gets wider and lazier the farther downstream it flows.

The river is wild and fully protected; 135 miles (217.3 km) within the park and the rest within national forest land. There are few roads which parallel the river and few accessible overlooks; therefore, the best way to see the park is by trail or by water.

This National River is managed as three districts. Each district has its visitor contact station and canoe concessions, and each is best reached by primary roads which cross the river. See the brief description of each district for more information.




## Upper River *(Upper Buffalo Wilderness to Mt. Hersey)*

The upper river is the largest of all districts, containing two wilderness areas and some of the most rugged terrain in the park. This section offers the largest number of river access points and the most challenging sections of river to float. In spring, it contains the most heavily used section of river, in fall, the most heavily used trails. The majority of the hiking trails are located within the upper district.

Lost Valley offers a memorable hike along Clark Creek to waterfalls and caves. Equally interesting is the Erbie Historic District, which contains many historic sites and the park's oldest structure, the Parker-Hickman log house, built around the late 1840s.

Pruitt Ranger Station is open part-time between Memorial Day and Labor Day for information.

## Middle River *(Mt. Hersey to Maumee)*

Sections of the middle river offer quiet, gentle floats through a pastoral setting and opportunities to enjoy the river's tranquillity. The Tyler Bend Visitor Center provides orientation and information about the river and all areas in the park. The facility offers an exhibit area and an auditorium where a variety of programs are shown. The visitor center is open year-round.

The Collier Homestead site at Tyler Bend represents an Ozark dwelling from the 1930s. An accessible trail to the homestead and nearby overlook is located here. The Buffalo River Trail can be intersected at the Collier Trailhead parking area. This trail joins with the Ozark Highlands Trail at Woolum, 15 miles (24 km) upstream from Tyler Bend.

## Lower River *(Maumee to Lower Buffalo Wilderness)*

The lower district contains the park's largest wilderness area and most remote sections of river. In addition, two heavily used sections of river, are located upstream and downstream of the park's most developed and popular summer campground. Buffalo Point offers campsites with water and electricity, and the only restaurant and rental cabins within the park.

Two popular attractions along the lower Buffalo are the Indian Rockhouse Trail and the Rush Historic District. Rush was a zinc mining community until the bottom fell out of the zinc market and the settlement became a ghost town.

Information is available at either of two Buffalo Point information stations. The upper station is open year-round. The lower station is open limited hours from Memorial Day through Labor Day.

## Hiking in the Park

There are over 100 miles (160 km) of maintained trails within the park. Some trails will accommodate hiker and horse use. However, for the safety of horses and for the well-being of ecologically-sensitive areas, certain trails are designated for foot traffic only and are blazed with white markers.

Trails blazed in yellow are hiker/horseback trails. The majority of trails in the park are open to horses. Trails are marked only at trailheads, at confusing intersections, and where the trails become easily overgrown in the summer. They are, for the most part, left natural and unmarked. For this reason, it is best to carry a trail map with you when you hike or horseback ride on an unfamiliar trail. Trail maps are available for sale at all visitor contact station locations.

Some trails require river crossings which may be impassable during high water. Stay on designated trails. Do not shortcut switchbacks.

Hikers should stand off the trail when they encounter horseback riders, allowing them to safely pass by. It is best to make your presence known with a friendly "hello" as the horse approaches. This lets the horse know of your location and prevents it from becoming startled.

Bicycles and pets are not permitted on any park trails.

### Buffalo River Trail

From Boxley Valley to Pruitt, the 37-mile (59.6 km) Buffalo River Trail (BRT) passes scenic overlooks, old homesites, and rugged wild areas which best characterize the park. Hiking is most strenuous between Boxley Valley and Erbie, where steep long upgrades lead to spectacular views of the river and imposing bluffs. Downstream of Erbie, the terrain gradually gives way to a gentler terrain that is more forgiving to hikers.

Unlike the Old River Trail, which follows the river more closely, the BRT does not have river crossings.

Trailheads to the Buffalo River Trail are located at the south end of Boxley Valley, Ponca Low Water Bridge, Steel Creek, Kyles Landing, Erbie, Ozark, and Pruitt Ranger Station. All trailheads but Ponca Low Water Bridge have overnight parking areas available.

Park trails can provide rewarding views.

The BRT also connects an 18.6-mile (29.8 km) section from Woolum to Tyler Bend, Highway 65, and Gilbert.

### Ozark Highlands Trail

The 165-mile (266 km) long Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT) extends from Lake Ft. Smith State Park to Richland Valley at Woolum. If you plan on hiking a section of the OHT which joins the park at Woolum, realize that both the Richland Creek crossing and the Woolum river crossing can be swift and deep in winter and spring. Because of the inherent danger of these fords, we recommend selecting an alternative route during these times.

A guide for the Ozark Highlands Trail, along with park trail maps, are available for sale at all visitor contact stations.

# Popular Buffalo River Hiking Trails

## *Lost Valley*

• **Lost Valley Trail** (2.1-mile round trip; 3.4 km) This trail begins at Lost Valley Campground. Features along the trail include waterfalls, towering cliffs, a large bluff shelter, a natural bridge, a cave, and spring wildflowers. The cave is about 200 feet long and ends in a large room with a 35 foot waterfall. Make certain each person in your group is equipped with a flashlight if you intend on entering the cave. You should always have multiple sources of light available.

## *Pruitt*

• **Ozark to Pruitt Trail** (2.6 miles; 4.2 km) Many wildflowers are in bloom along this trail from March through June.

• **Mill Creek Trail** (2.1-mile loop; 3.4 km) This trail begins at the east end of the Pruitt river access. This level trail follows Mill Creek through a lowland hardwood forest and features a pioneer homesite. This trail is best hiked before summer grasses take over the trail. Additional information is available at Pruitt Information Station or Park Headquarters in Harrison.

## *Tyler Bend*

Over six miles of trails are located at Tyler Bend. These loop trails begin at the visitor center, campground, and amphitheater and offer hikes ranging from 0.2 mile to 4 miles. Highlighting the trail network are scenic river views and an historic homestead. Free trail maps are available at the visitor center.

• **River Overlook Trail** (1.1-mile loop; 1.8 km) This trail begins at the Collier Homestead Parking Area at Tyler Bend. The loop trail leads you to the historic Collier Homestead and to river overlooks. The trail is accessible to wheelchairs for one-half mile, including the homestead and first overlook. The Buffalo River Trail can be reached from the Collier Homestead Parking Area.

## *Buffalo Point*

The Buffalo Point area trail system totals approximately six miles (9.6 km). Trailheads are located in the campground and along the road between the upper information station and restaurant. A map to these trails is available at the information stations.

• **Indian Rockhouse Trail** (3.5-mile loop; 5.6 km) Begin your journey to the Rockhouse, a large bluff shelter once inhabited by Indians, at the trailhead located between the information station and restaurant. The return trail is a strenuous uphill climb. A guide is available at the station.

• **Overlook Trail** (0.7 mile; 1.1 km) This easy hike will lead you to a beautiful overlook of the Buffalo River. Begin at the Indian Rockhouse trailhead.

• **Campground Trail** (1.3 miles; 2.1 km) This connector trail links the campground with the upper information station, the concession cabins and restaurant, and all other Buffalo Point trails.

• **Forest Trail** (0.7 mile; 1.1 km) This trail leads from the group campsites to the canoe launch area, and can be combined with the Campground Trail to make a loop hike.

## *Rush*

The Rush Historic District trails are easily reached from the Rush landing access road. Historic structures and mines are fenced off for your protection.

• **Morning Star Mine Interpretive Loop Trail** (0.3 mile; .5 km) This path passes the ruins of the Morning Star Mine buildings, including the remains of a blacksmith shop and a smelter. The smelter was built in 1886. Begin at the Morning Star Trailhead. Self-guiding wayside exhibits.

• **Rush Hiking Trail** (2.2 miles; 3.5 km) Begin your hike at either the Morning Star Trailhead or Rush landing. The trail is completed to Clabber Creek.

# Horse Use on Park Trails

One of the many ways to enjoy the Buffalo River is by horse. Designated trails for horseback riding are located in all districts of the national river. Numerous old roads, now closed to motor vehicles, provide riding opportunities for those willing to explore without the benefit of trail signs.

Two camping areas in the upper river are designated for visitors with horses. Steel Creek and Erbie are accessible by vehicle and provide basic facilities such as fire grates, toilets, and space for horse trailers. Both camps are located adjacent to horse trails. Steel Creek Horse Camp offers 14 sites and Erbie Horse Camp another 5 sites. Use is limited to 6 persons and 4 horses per site with a 7 day limit per stay; first-come, first-served.

Middle river horse users may camp overnight at Woolum. They are not permitted in other developed campgrounds or in the town of Gilbert. Visitors to the Lower Buffalo Wilderness Area may camp at Big Creek or Hathaway Gap Trailheads. Water for stock is unavailable and there are no facilities in these areas.

Horses can have a greater impact on trail surfaces than do hikers. Please keep horses off trails marked with a white blaze and designated for hiking only. These trails are steep, have steps and ledges, and are unsafe for horse and rider.

Large groups of riders cause greater harm to the landscape than do small groups. All trail users should make decisions and choose practices that will cause the least amount of damage and leave only short-term impacts on the environment.

## Horse Tips

1. Horses may not be tied directly to trees. A "high picket line" rigged outside of your camp area or hitch racks where provided prevents unneccessary damage to trees.

2. Traveling outside the established tread, to ride abreast or to avoid rocks or mud, breaks down the trail edge and widens the trail. It can also lead to the development of multiple trails.

3. Riders are responsible for removing or scattering horse manure from camp areas, trailheads, or loading areas.

4. Where available, camp in previously used sites on durable surfaces away from streams and trails.

5. Tie horses off the trail and away from wet or boggy areas. Rocky ground that catches a breeze will discourage insects and allow horses to stand quieter.

6. When you leave, there should be little or no evidence of your stay. "Pack it in, pack it out."

7. Recommended group size no more than 10 horses.

There are no authorized commercial horse outfitters operating at Buffalo National River.

Horse riders enjoy the many miles of park trails available to horses. Horse camps accommodate users for overnight stays.

# Cabins at Buffalo Point

Both rustic and modern cabins may be rented in the developed area of Buffalo Point. These cabins are very popular and should be reserved well in advance. The historic rustic cabins are over sixty years old and were constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Rustic cabins are available March 1 through November 30. Modern cabins are available year round. The restaurant is open from Memorial Day through Labor Day. Reservations are taken seven days a week from January 2 through November 30.

For more information and reservation policy, contact:

**Buffalo Point Concession**
**Buffalo National River**
**2261 Highway 268 E**
**Yellville, AR 72687**
**(870) 449-6206**

A typical rustic cabin available for rent at Buffalo Point.

# Access for All

Several facilities and many park programs are accessible to visitors with disabilities. The rugged Ozark terrain limits the park staff from making all campsites and trails accessible, however, access is provided wherever possible. Wheelchairs are accommodated on most accessible trails with some assistance necessary.

Lost Valley has a wheelchair accessible bridge over Clark Creek, providing access to an accessible campsite and a portion of the Lost Valley trail. An additional accessible campsite is also available in the area.

Erbie Campground offers accessible campsites in a open field setting. The nearby Ponds Trail and the Koen Interpretive Trail (U.S. Forest Service) are accessible.

The Tyler Bend complex is the newest and most accessible developed area in the park. A visitor center, select campsites, showers, and an outdoor amphitheater are all wheelchair accessible. A 1/4-mile (0.4 km) wheelchair accessible trail to the Collier Homestead and a river overlook are not too far away.

Buffalo Point has RV campsites with convenient electrical hookups and water at each site. Buffalo Point also offers accessible showers.

A brochure listing all accessible park sites is available at park information stations. For more information, call or write to park headquarters. TDD is available for the hearing impaired. The park TDD phone number is (870) 741-2884. For more information on the Koen Interpretive Trail, the phone number for the Ozark National Forest in Jasper is (870) 446-5122.

The Tyler Bend complex is the newest and most accessible area in the park.

## Campgrounds

Buffalo National River has 12 designated campgrounds. Most campgrounds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. However, Buffalo Point campground offers reservations for some sites, all pavilions, and group sites. Reservations are necessary for day-use picnic pavilions at Ozark and Tyler Bend and group campsites at Tyler Bend and Erbie. Since day-use pavilions are popular, it is advisable to reserve them early in the year. Camping beneath pavilions is not permitted. Please see the reservations box for more details.

As visitor use picks up in a given section of river, so does campground use. Over spring weekends, during peak floating season in the upper river, Kyles Landing and Steel Creek Campgrounds can be extremely crowded. Ozark Campground is popular throughout the spring and summer. With the exception of Erbie, campgrounds in the upper river are filled to capacity over Memorial Day weekend.

Tyler Bend fills to capacity during Memorial Day weekend, July 4th weekend, and many weekends throughout the spring and summer.

Buffalo Point can become full any day between Memorial Day and mid-August. It is the most crowded campground in the summertime.

Camping fees are generally charged from April through October, or when comfort stations are open. A self-registering system is employed at each fee campground. Campers should select a site and then immediately return to the campground fee station located near the entrance to the campground to complete the registration process. Campsite information is completed on the fee envelope, fee placed inside and then the envelope is deposited in the fee safe at the fee station.

The following guidelines will make your campground experience more enjoyable:

❖Campground stay limit is 14 days and no more than 30 days/ calendar year.

❖Quiet hours in campgrounds are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Generators may only be operated from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.

❖Six people are allowed per site.

❖Although dead and down wood in the park may be gathered for firewood, we highly recommend bringing your own pre-split wood from home. Wooded areas around campgrounds have been picked over for firewood.

❖To avoid insect and rodent problems, do not release waste water or scatter food onto the ground. Gray water may be dumped into rest room toilets.

❖Dogs must be on leash at all times in the campground. The leash cannot be longer than 6 feet. They are not allowed in public buildings or on trails.

| | **Reservations** | |
|---|---|---|
| Area | When | Call |
| Buffalo Point:<br>Campsites, Pavilions (3), Group Sites | Six months in advance (for dates April-October) | (877) 444-6777 or www.Recreation.gov (A reservation fee charged) |
| Tyler Bend:<br>Pavilion, Group Sites<br>Erbie:<br>Group Sites<br>Ozark & Lost Valley:<br>Pavilions | Beginning January 2 (for dates April-October) | (870) 439-2502 before October 1, 2007<br>**********<br>Call (877) 444-6777 or www.Recreation.gov after October 1, 2007 |

| Areas | Campsites | ♿ Campsites | Nearby Trails | ♿ Trails | Picnic Tables | Drinking Water | Fire Grates | Showers | Flush/ Vault Toilets | Water & Electricity | Dumping Station | Nearby Pay Phone | Picnic Pavilion | Campground Fee |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ♦Lost Valley | 15 | 2 | X | X | X | X | X | | F | | | X | Fee | Fee Charged |
| ♦Steel Creek | 26 | | X | | X | X | X | | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Kyles Landing | 33 | | X | | X | X | X | | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Erbie: | | | X | X | | | | | | | | | | |
| Drive-In Sites | 14 | 1 | | | X | X | X | | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Walk-In Sites | 16 | 1 | | | X | X | X | | V | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Group Sites | 5 | | | | X | X | X | | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Ozark | 30 | | X | | X | X | X | | F | | | X | Fee | Fee Charged |
| ♦Carver | 8 | | | | X | X | X | | V | | | | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Woolum | Open | | X | | | | | | V | | | | | No Fee |
| ♦Tyler Bend: | | | X | X | | | | | | | X | | Fee | |
| Drive-In Sites | 28 | 1 | | | X | X | X | X | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Walk-In Sites | 10 | 1 | | | X | X | X | X | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Group Sites | 5 | 1 | | | X | X | X | X | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Maumee South | Open | | | | | | | | V | | | | | No Fee |
| ♦Buffalo Point: | | | X | | | | | | | | X | | Fee(3) | |
| Drive-In Sites | 82 | 3 | | | X | X | X | X | F | X | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Walk-In Sites | 21 | | | | X | X | X | X | F | | | X | | Fee Charged |
| Group Sites | 5 | | | | X | X | X | | F | | | | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Rush | 13 | | X | | X | X | X | | V | | | | | Fee Charged |
| ♦Spring Creek | 14 | | | | X | | X | | V | | | | | No Fee |

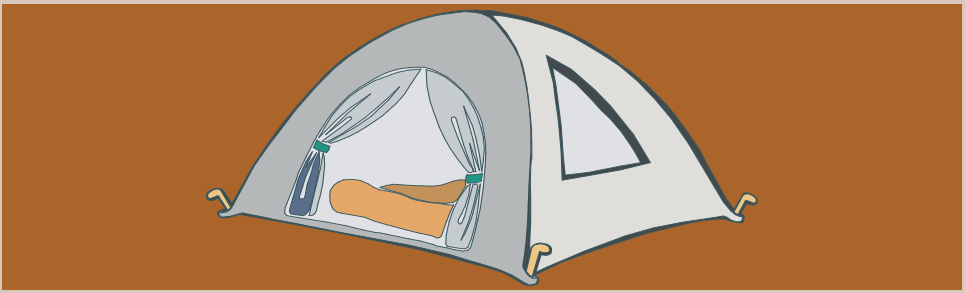
Call (870) 439-2502 or (870) 741-5443 for schedule of current camping fees.

## Camping in the Backcountry

Campers who desire a more primitive experience may camp anywhere within the park if at least one-half mile (0.8 km) from any developed area. A backcountry permit is not required. Camping is not permitted, however, in or near historic sites and buildings, in hayfields or pastures, or on private land or abandoned buildings. For a more enjoyable camping experience, we recommend camping out of sight of all trails.

When camping along the river, be prepared for the unexpected. Check weather and water conditions before and during your trip. Heavy or prolonged rains, which may be upstream and out of sight, can raise river levels rapidly. Rises of over a foot an hour can occur at any time of the year, and the river can rise more than 25 feet (7.6 m) in a single day.

Camp well above the water level and check the river periodically to be sure it is not rising. Pull your canoe and other gear well above river level. Always camp where you have an escape route to higher ground -- don't camp on islands or on gravel bars which are likely to become islands if the river begins to rise. Please practice Leave No Trace techniques.



# Leave No Trace

Visitation to Buffalo National River is nearly one million people per year. With this amount of use, we will have some impact on our surroundings. We can minimize our impact by following Leave No Trace techniques:

*Plan Before You Go*

❖Plan your trip for off-season, week days, or non-holiday times.

❖Repackage your food in lightweight pack-out or burnable containers. Do not burn plastic or paper lined with plastic or foil.

*On Your Way*

❖Stay on designated trails.

❖Do not cut across switchbacks.

❖Hike in small groups and spread out.

❖Don't make new paths around muddy areas or fallen trees. Report trail obstacles to park rangers so they may be removed as soon as possible.

*During Your Stay*

Camping:

❖Choose existing campsites in high-use areas.

❖In remote areas, choose sites that cannot be damaged by your stay. Large gravel bars and other areas with little natural vegetation are good sites in which to camp.

❖All campsites should be at least 100 feet (30.6 m) from any water source. This may not be possible when camping on gravel bars, so camp as far away from the river as you can. This is good practice in case of river rise, too.

❖Hide your camp from view. Camp away from trails.

❖Do not dig trenches around tents or build any camp structures.

Campfires:

❖Use a lightweight gas stove rather than a fire for cooking.

❖Use fire rings only if they already exist. Do NOT build new fire rings.

❖Use dead and downed wood, no larger than the size of your forearm.

❖Keep the campfire small and make sure it is out and completely extinguished before leaving.

Sanitation:

❖Wash dishes, clothes, and yourself away from natural water. Keep soap and all food scraps out of all water sources.

## What about..... You know?

If you must go to the bathroom where there are no nearby facilities, please follow these guidelines to minimize your impact on the water quality, wildlife, and beauty of the river.

Deposit human waste and toilet paper in cat holes.

It is best to dig cat holes in sandy or loamy soils. Cat holes are 6" to 8" deep (15-20 cm) and should be located at least 100' (30.6 m) from any water source. Thoroughly cover and disguise cat holes when finished.

# Planning a River Trip

When planning a river float trip, the type of experience you have depends on several factors, including the length of your visit, the season, and the stretch of river you choose to float. Your decisions can be influenced by factors such as temperature, river gradient and water level, and an individual's paddling ability. Together, these variables contribute to the success of your trip. The length of a float trip can range from hours to days, from 1 mile to 130 miles (1.6 to 208 km). Most visitors choose distances of eight miles (12.8 km) or less. Constant paddling does not always make for the most enjoyable trip; while planning your trip, don't forget to consider the time you wish to spend hiking along riverside trails, fishing, and swimming.

River levels can also drastically affect float times. In the spring, a 15- mile (24 km)float may take a little more than half a day. In the summer, the same trip can take two full days. Water levels on the Buffalo River fluctuate depending upon seasonal precipitation patterns. During average years, water levels are adequate for floating the entire river from November through May. With decreasing precipitation in June, the "floatable" portion of the river recedes in a downstream direction. From Tyler Bend to the confluence with the White River, adequate flows for canoeing usually exist year-round.

Though most sections of the river offer challenging rapids, river levels and river gradients can be an indicator of river difficulty. The upper Buffalo has a greater gradient (the river drops more feet per mile) than does the lower Buffalo. If this is your first canoe trip, we recommend that you start at Tyler Bend or downstream. Canoe outfitters and park rangers will gladly demonstrate basic canoeing strokes and provide river safety tips. Here are some to consider before your trip:

❖For cold water canoeing, be certain to pack an extra set of warm clothing in a dry bag and keep this and all bags secured to your canoe. Should you capsize, this prevents everything from floating downstream or sinking.

❖When camping, pull your canoe and gear well above river level and periodically check the river level to ensure it is not rising. Have an escape route to higher ground.

## Avoiding the Crowds?

River use along the Buffalo is not evenly distributed over the entire course of the river. Thirty percent of the river receives seventy percent of the canoe traffic. Four of the most used river segments are Steel Creek to Kyles Landing, Tyler Bend to Gilbert, Maumee to Buffalo Point, and Highway 14 Bridge to Rush. Peak river use begins in April and ends in August. The most intensive use occurs on the upper river from Ponca to Pruitt in April and May. On the middle and lower sections, river use peaks from June to July.

To avoid crowds in the spring, consider floating during the weekdays or floating on a lower section of river, such as Carver to Woolum. To avoid summer crowds, consider a trip early in the morning or during the middle of the week. A quiet, early morning trip will offer cooler temperatures, far more opportunities to see wildlife along the river banks, and better fishing. In the spring and late fall the middle and lower sections of river are seldom used.

**Motors are allowed on vessels upriver to Erbie Ford. Outboard motors are limited to 10 horsepower. Johnboaters must yield to all other watercraft.**

## River Distances

| River Access: | Ponca | Steel Creek | Kyles Landing | Erbie | Ozark | Pruitt | Hasty | Carver | Mt. Hersey | Woolum | Baker Ford | Tyler Bend | Hwy 65 Bridge | Gilbert | Maumee N | Maumee S | Spring Creek | Hwy 14 Bridge | Buffalo Point | Rush | Buffalo City |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Boxley | 6.0 | 8.7 | 16.7 | 22.3 | 27.8 | 29.9 | 36.7 | 40.9 | 47.7 | 56.3 | 67.2 | 71.5 | 72.6 | 76.9 | 88.5 | 89.0 | 93.7 | 98.3 | 99.7 | 107.2 | 131.4 |
| Ponca | | 2.7 | 10.7 | 16.3 | 21.8 | 23.9 | 30.7 | 34.9 | 41.7 | 50.3 | 61.2 | 65.5 | 66.6 | 70.9 | 82.5 | 83.0 | 87.7 | 92.3 | 93.7 | 101.2 | 125.4 |
| Steel Creek | | | 8.0 | 13.6 | 19.1 | 21.2 | 28.0 | 32.2 | 39.0 | 47.6 | 58.5 | 62.8 | 63.9 | 68.2 | 79.8 | 80.3 | 85.0 | 89.6 | 91.0 | 98.5 | 122.7 |
| Kyles Landing | | | | 5.6 | 11.1 | 13.2 | 20.0 | 24.2 | 31.0 | 39.6 | 50.5 | 54.8 | 55.9 | 60.2 | 71.8 | 72.3 | 77.0 | 81.6 | 83.0 | 90.5 | 114.7 |
| Erbie | | | | | 5.5 | 7.6 | 14.4 | 18.6 | 25.4 | 34.0 | 44.9 | 49.2 | 50.3 | 54.6 | 66.2 | 66.7 | 71.4 | 76.0 | 77.4 | 84.9 | 109.1 |
| Ozark | | | | | | 2.1 | 8.9 | 13.1 | 19.9 | 28.5 | 39.4 | 43.7 | 44.8 | 49.1 | 60.7 | 61.2 | 65.9 | 70.5 | 71.9 | 79.4 | 103.6 |
| Pruitt | | | | | | | 6.8 | 11.0 | 17.8 | 26.4 | 37.3 | 41.6 | 42.7 | 47.0 | 58.6 | 59.1 | 63.8 | 68.4 | 69.8 | 77.3 | 101.5 |
| Hasty | | | | | | | | 4.2 | 11.0 | 19.6 | 30.5 | 34.8 | 35.9 | 40.2 | 51.8 | 52.3 | 57.0 | 61.6 | 63.0 | 70.5 | 94.7 |
| Carver | | | | | | | | | 6.8 | 15.4 | 26.3 | 30.6 | 31.7 | 36.0 | 47.6 | 48.1 | 52.8 | 57.4 | 58.8 | 66.3 | 90.5 |
| Mt. Hersey | | | | | | | | | | 8.6 | 19.5 | 23.8 | 24.9 | 29.2 | 40.8 | 41.3 | 46.0 | 50.6 | 52.0 | 59.5 | 83.7 |
| Woolum | | | | | | | | | | | 10.9 | 15.2 | 16.3 | 20.6 | 32.2 | 32.7 | 37.4 | 42.0 | 43.4 | 50.9 | 75.1 |
| Baker Ford | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.3 | 5.4 | 9.7 | 21.3 | 21.8 | 26.5 | 31.1 | 32.5 | 40.0 | 64.2 |
| Tyler Bend | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.1 | 5.4 | 17.0 | 17.5 | 22.2 | 26.8 | 28.2 | 35.7 | 59.9 |
| Hwy 65 Bridge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.3 | 15.9 | 16.4 | 21.1 | 25.7 | 27.1 | 34.6 | 58.8 |
| Gilbert | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 11.6 | 12.1 | 16.8 | 21.4 | 22.8 | 30.3 | 54.5 |
| Maumee N | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 0.5 | 5.2 | 9.8 | 11.2 | 18.7 | 42.9 |
| Maumee S | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.7 | 9.3 | 10.7 | 18.2 | 42.4 |
| Spring Creek | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 4.6 | 6.0 | 13.5 | 37.7 |
| Hwy 14 Bridge | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 1.4 | 8.9 | 33.1 |
| Buffalo Point | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 7.5 | 31.7 |
| Rush | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | 24.2 |

## River Levels

River level readings indicate the condition of the river for recreation. Each reading is unique and pertains only to that area. Daily river readings may be obtained by calling any visitor contact station or (870) 741-5446, ext. 501. Real-time river levels can be found at the web sites:

**http://www.buffaloriverandrain.com**
or at **http://www.nps.gov/buff.**

## Definitions

**Very Low:** The river is dry in places.

**Low But Floatable:** The river moves slowly and many rocks are exposed. You may have to get out of your canoe several times.

**Ample Water for Floating:** The river moves at an average of 2 mph (3.2 kph), allowing canoes to float over most rocks.

**Experienced Floaters Only:** The river flows swiftly. Canoeing experience on swift moving rivers is necessary. All canoeists must possess good river canoeing skills and must be familiar with rescue procedures.

**DANGER Flood Stage:** The river flows outside its normal banks. Flood waters move quickly and carry debris. River conditions are hazardous even for highly skilled canoeists. Rental canoes will not put on the river at this stage.

**River CLOSED:** The river (or a section) is closed to all people and boats. This will be posted in cases of emergency.

## Buffalo Notes

What makes the Buffalo River turn turquoise? Suspension of minute rock particles causes this unique color. Weathered microscopic clay particles from shale outcrops are washed into the river during rains. Unlike silt, the fine, light clay particles remain suspended in the water for weeks. These suspended particles interfere with the passage of light. Light bounces among the suspended particles and separates into the colors of a rainbow. Of these colors, only blue and green are reflected, giving the river its turquoise color.

The physical and chemical conditions of the river "set the stage" for the plant and animal communities that can live there successfully. The amount of light directly striking the water contributes to the river's water temperature and the photosynthesis of plants, the primary food producers. Stream currents transport food and waste to and from stream-dwelling organisms. Rivers are dynamic systems influenced by factors within and outside of the river.

| Highway 74 Bridge/ Ponca Launch | Highway 7 Bridge/ Pruitt Launch | Highway 65 Bridge/ Tyler Bend Launch | Highway 14 Bridge/ Buffalo Point Launch | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Over 6.0' | Over 5.0' | Over 12.5' | Over 10.0' | DANGER Flood Stage |
| 5.0'-6.0' | 4.0'-5.0' | 8.6'-12.5' | 6.0'-10.0' | Exp'd. Floaters Only |
| 2.5'-4.9' | 2.1 '-3.9' | 4.6'-8.5' | 3.5'-5.9' | Ample Water for Floating |
| 2.0'-2.4' | 1.7'-2.0' | 3.6'-4.5' | 2.0'-3.4' | Low but Floatable |
| Below 2.0' | Below 1.7' | Below 3.6' | Below 2.0' | Very Low |

## Johnboat Rentals

Cotter Trout Dock
1-800-447-7538
(870) 435-6525
P.O. Box 96
Cotter, AR 72626

Rose Trout Dock
(870) 499-5311
P.O. Box 82
Norfork, AR 72658

Newlands Float Trips & Lodge
1-800-334-5604
(870) 431-5678
295 River Road
Lakeview, AR 72642

Woodsman's Sports Shop & Fishing Service, Inc.
(870) 499-7454
8014 Push Mtn. Road
Norfork, AR 72658

Buffalo River Outfitters, Inc.
1-800-582-2244
Rt. 1, Box 56
St. Joe, AR 72675

White Buffalo Resort, Inc.
(870) 425-8555
418 White Buffalo Trail
Mtn. Home, AR 72653

Wild Bill's Outfitter
1-800-554-8657
23 Hwy. 268 E
Yellville, AR 72687

Dillard's Ozark Outfitters, Inc.
1-800-423-8731
(870) 449-6619
12656 Hwy. 14 S
Yellville, AR 72687

Riley's Station- Outfitter & Hide-Away
1-888-533-2151
129 CR 640
Mtn. Home, AR 72653

## Canoe Rentals

### Upper River (Boxley to Carver)

Keller's Kanoes
(870) 446-2644
HC 73, Box 39
Marble Falls, AR 72648

Gordon Motel, Inc.
1-800-477-8509
(870) 446-5252
P.O. Box 60
Jasper, AR 72641

Lost Valley Canoe & Lodging
Highway 43
(870) 861-5522
Ponca, AR 72670

Riverview Motel Canoe Rental
(870) 446-2616
P.O. Box 352
Jasper, AR 72641

Buffalo Outdoor Center, Inc.
1 Main Street
1-800-221-5514
Ponca, AR 72670

Buffalo Adventures Canoe Rental
(870) 446-5406
HC 70, Box 136 A
Jasper, AR 72641

### Middle River (Carver to S. Maumee)

Buffalo Camping & Canoeing
(870) 439-2888 or 439-2386
RR 1, Box 193
St. Joe, AR 72675

Crockett's Canoe Rental
1-800-355-6111
(870) 448-3892
P.O. Box 26
Harriet, AR 72639

Silver Hill Canoe Rental
(870) 439-2372
Rt. 1, Box 48A
St. Joe, AR 72675

Buffalo River Outfitters, Inc.
1-800-582-2244
Rt. 1, Box 56
St. Joe, AR 72675

### Lower River (N. Maumee to Buffalo City)

1-800-537-2850
(870) 449-6636
538 Hwy 268 E.
Yellville, AR 72687

Dillard's Ozark Outfitters, Inc.
1-800-423-8731
(870) 449-6619
12656 Hwy. 14 S.
Yellville, AR 72687

Wild Bill's Outfitter
1-800-554-8657
(870) 449-6235
23 Hwy 268 E.
Yellville, AR 72687

NOTE: Sometimes phone numbers and businesses change. If there is no answer, go to www.nps.gov/buff or call 870-439-2502 for updated concessioner information.

Dress warmly and wear appropriate shoes.

Canoe rental businesses are permitted by the National Park Service to rent canoes and rafts and to provide shuttle services within Buffalo National River. These concessioners provide canoes, paddles, life jackets, mesh litter bags and shuttle service. For an additional fee, some outfitters will shuttle vehicles to a take-out point. Johnboat rental businesses are authorized to provide guided fishing trips. *We encourage you to contact our concessioners and shop for the services and rates you desire.*

Concession operations are limited to specific districts of the river. Your choice of canoe and johnboat rentals depends largely upon which section of the river you desire to float or fish.

If your float extends between two districts, you may select any outfitter within the two districts you will be floating. Any of the outfitters listed may provide services to all sections of the river if a four-day or longer trip is planned.

## River Etiquette

The State of Arkansas has legislated the following requirements to keep Arkansas waterways safe and beautiful:

❖The use of glass containers is prohibited within the banks of Arkansas' navigable waterways. They must be at least 100 feet away.
❖Coolers, ice boxes and other containers used for transporting food and beverages must be properly sealed (when using canoes, kayaks or tubes).
❖You must have a mesh container attached to the vessel suitable for collecting trash that can be securely closed.
❖Visitors are required to transport all of their refuse, waste and trash to a place where the materials may be safely and lawfully disposed.
❖When out of the cooler, beverages must be in a holder that floats or prevents the beverage from sinking.

## Low Water Bridges

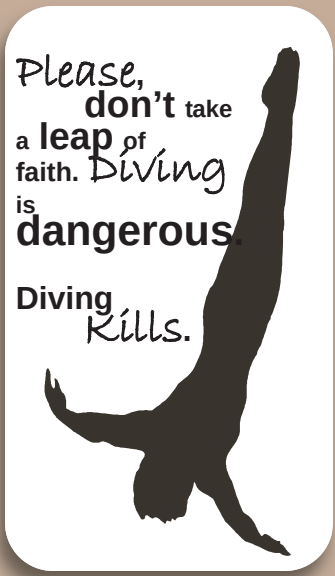
Low water bridges are just that, intended to be used when the water in the river or creek is low and will not cover your vehicle's tires. When the bridges are covered by water for a period of time, algae can begin growing on the concrete slabs and they can become slick. If you cannot see the concrete bridge through the water DO NOT cross. Vehicles can wash off flooded bridges, injuring or even drowning occupants, so if you are in doubt, do not cross. Take an alternate route and be safe. Turn around, don't drown.

## Beware of the Beautiful Bluffs

The beautiful bluffs along the Buffalo River can be very dangerous to climb. Slippery vegetation, wet spots, and crumbling rock add up to treacherous footing. People often feel compelled to scale the bluffs and then find themselves stranded or worse, falling. Diving from the bluffs is dangerous. Hidden rocks, shallow bottoms, tree roots and logs can lie under the water surface creating hazards to unsuspecting divers.

# PFD

What's a PFD? It is your personal floatation device, better known as your life jacket. If you are canoeing the river you are required to have one for each person in your canoe. In fact, all children under the age of 13 must wear their PFD. When the weather is hot and humid, many people neglect to wear their PFDs. They may sit on them or strap them to the thwart of the canoe. This defeats the purpose of the PFD. In an emergency, such as capsizing or hitting a low lying branch, you will not have time to put on your PFD. If you hit your head and are unconscious, you may drown. Wearing your PFD will give you a fighting chance. Insist on setting a new fashion trend; wear your PFD!



# Weather Wise.....

## From our Records

| Temperature & Precipitation | Ave. Daily Highs $^0$F | Ave. Daily Lows | Ave. Monthly Precipitation | Ave. Water Temperature |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| January | 49$^0$ | 27$^0$ | 3.2” | 42$^0$ |
| February | 54 | 30 | 3.0 | 42 |
| March | 62 | 36 | 3.4 | 46 |
| April | 72 | 46 | 4.7 | 60 |
| May | 80 | 53 | 5.5 | 68 |
| June | 88 | 63 | 4.8 | 76 |
| July | 93 | 66 | 3.0 | 77 |
| August | 93 | 65 | 3.3 | 80 |
| September | 86 | 57 | 3.8 | 71 |
| October | 75 | 46 | 3.7 | 60 |
| November | 60 | 35 | 3.2 | 53 |
| December | 51 | 24 | 2.7 | 45 |

### Buffalo Notes

Caves within Buffalo National River provide a fragile habitat for an array of sensitive creatures. A variety of animals depend upon the precise humidity and temperature found in these protected environments.

There are over 300 known caves within the boundaries of the park. About one third of these caves support bats. Twelve species of bats are found in the park, with three of these species on the endangered list.

Bat colonies are protected by closing the caves to all visitation for parts of each year. Please comply with signs posted at cave entrances. Violation of these closures is a serious offense; fines can be as high as $50,000 per disturbance.

For your safety, please stay out of caves unless you have the proper skills and equipment to safely negotiate them. A helmet and three sources of light are the minimum equipment for each person in any cave. Let someone know where you are going and when you plan to return.

### Hypothermia

Reduced body temperature caused by exposure to cold weather or water is known as hypothermia. Early warning signs of hypothermia are shivering, stumbling, disorientation, stupor or slowed speech. Get into dry clothing or a sleeping bag and take warm liquids and quick energy foods.

Dress for the weather conditions. If the combined air temperature and water temperature is less than 100$^O$F (37.7$^O$C), a wetsuit or other cold water protection is recommended. Carry extra clothes in a waterproof container and keep the container secured in the canoe in case of capsizing.

**To convert from Fahrenheit to Celsius, subtract 32 and divide by 1.8**

**Play safe, because conditions may be different from what you are used to encountering.**

# Ticks & Snakes

Just about every animal has its parasites. The tick is one example of an unwanted companion. Ticks are small external parasites found on birds, reptiles, and mammals, including us.

Once aboard their host, ticks bury the front part of their heads in the skin and begin feeding on blood.

Remove ticks with a pair of tweezers small enough to grasp only the head of the tick. Pull strongly and steadily to work the tick back out of your skin. Apply antiseptic to the wound.

Ticks should be removed as soon as discovered because they can transmit Lyme disease, Rocky Mountain spotted fever, and at least 15 other tick-borne diseases.

Should symptoms occur such as a red, circular "bulls-eye" rash appearing within days or weeks of a tick bite, flu-like chills or fever, fatigue, headaches and dizziness, or arthritic pain, consult a doctor immediately.

Whenever you have been in vegetated areas, it is important to take a close look at your clothes and skin for ticks. Check your ankles, behind your knees, all around your groin and beltline for these unwanted hitchhikers.

Wearing loose-fitting, long-sleeved shirts and tucking pant legs into boots may lessen the severity of chigger attacks. Insect repellents have proven somewhat effective, but winter is the most effective deterrent of all.

Most snakes within Buffalo National River are non-poisonous, although there are at least four species of poisonous snakes: the copperhead, the water moccasin (cottonmouth), the canebrake rattlesnake (timber rattler), and the pygmy rattlesnake.

Since many poisonous and non-poisonous snakes have similar markings, they can be easily misidentified. It is best to stay away from all snakes. Even non-poisonous snakes can give infectious bites.

Snakes are often found sunning themselves on rocks or logs. Or they may be found near their food sources. Old homesites, active with mice and rats, are favorites of many snakes. Water snakes often hide among tree roots and vegetation in the river and along riverbanks.

To avoid snake bites, wear boots when hiking and always look before sitting on or stepping over a log. Many snakes are active at night. Collect your firewood before dark and always carry a flashlight when walking around at night. Shoes are better protection than sandals, flip-flops, or barefoot.

If you are bitten by any snake, it is best to remain calm and seek medical assistance.

Snakes, like all living creatures, play an important role in nature's scheme and are best left alone for their sake and for yours. Please respect their role in maintaining a healthy environment.

## More Than Pretty Scenery

The Buffalo National River encompasses the diversity of the natural resources that are the Ozarks. This was acknowledged by a U.S. House of Representatives Committee Report (1972) that explained the basis for the establishment of the Buffalo National River. It stated, "Because it is a pure, free-flowing stream which has not been significantly altered by industry or man, it is considered to be one of the country's last significant natural rivers. It is not one single quality, but the combination of its size, its completeness, its wild qualities, and its associated natural, scenic, and historic resources that makes the Buffalo worthy of national recognition."

Entrusted with this resource of many qualities, the National Park Service must serve as wise steward. To care for the resources properly requires a knowledge of those resources.

The Buffalo is more than pretty scenery.

To this end, resource managers and researchers are continually adding to the inventory of known plant and animal species. Little is known of declining plant diversity due to habitat loss and other factors. Data on populations of reptiles and amphibians, black bear distribution, and migratory birds are lacking. Monitoring programs are in place for rare and endangered flora and fauna. The park will be initiating an All Taxa Biological Inventory which will involve the public in recording observations of park species so that when the database is taken as a whole, any significant trends in park populations will be evident.

Not only is it important to know what lives here now, but it is also important to get a sense of how these plants and animals might respond to changes in their environment. Researchers from several universities and government agencies are investigating the potential changes to streams from climatic change. Monitoring non-point source pollution and run-off, stream bank erosion, ground water influences and increased recreational impacts are a must.

Changes in land use and land cover throughout the river's watershed affect the physical and biological characteristics of the river. Significant conversion of forest lands to pasture, roads, and urban development will increase the rate at which rainfall runs down steep slopes. An increase in run-off would result in higher flood peaks, lower flows during the summer season, and greater sediment movement into stream channels. These changes would alter the physical structure of the

### Buffalo Notes

There are 74 species of fish found in the Buffalo River. However, only a handful are considered game fish: Smallmouth bass, catfish, and sunfish are sought by most anglers. The water is generally too warm in the summer for trout to survive except near the confluence with the White River.

Arkansas State fishing licenses are required for persons over the age of 16. When purchasing a license from a local outfitter, please ask for a current fishing booklet published by Arkansas Game & Fish Commission which lists size and limits. Smallmouth bass must be 14" and the limit is two per day.

Fish released soon after being hooked stand a good chance of survival if they are handled correctly. Here are some tips: Use artificial lures with a single hook and do not play a fish longer than necessary. Try to keep the fish in water as much as possible (when removing hook) and handle the fish by its mouth, and if the fish swallows a hook, cut the line as close to the hook as possible.

stream channel and the water chemistry. Ultimately, these are the characteristics which define suitable habitat for aquatic life; from algae and snails right up to predators like the smallmouth bass.

Fisheries management is a critical issue for the Buffalo. The goal is to preserve and restore natural ecosystem functions, provide diverse recreational angling opportunities for native species, and to establish baseline data on fish populations, distribution, and reproduction.

Natural resources often seem like pretty scenery, but their management can be quite complex. Research and monitoring help us better understand these resources so that humans won't adversely affect their preservation for future generations.

Eastern elk, a subspecies adapted to environmental conditions in the eastern hardwood forests, were native to the Buffalo River. This subspecies had vanished from the Ozarks by the 1840s, and is now extinct everywhere. Between 1981 and 1985, a total of 112 Rocky Mountain elk were released at five sites in Newton County by the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission.

Over 400 elk presently live in or adjacent to Buffalo National River in Newton and Searcy Counties. Surveys indicate that the introduced elk are reproducing. However, elk deaths due to poaching, injuries and disease will likely cause any increase in population to be slow.

Resource managers monitor the elk herds to understand how these elk have adapted to Ozark habitats.

Left to Right: river cooter, trumpeter swans, columbine, salamander, and jack-in-the-pulpit.

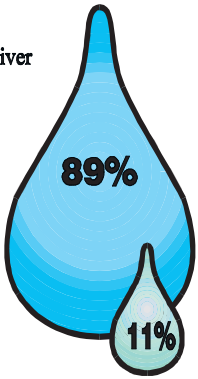
## The Most Important Resource

Unquestionably, the Buffalo River remains one of the cleanest and healthiest rivers in our nation. It is not free from pollution, however, nor the potential impacts from an altered watershed.

The river's watershed is comprised of 840,000 acres (342,667 hectares), with only 11 percent within the boundaries of the park. Nearly 90 percent of the water flowing into the Buffalo is beyond National Park Service control.

The park staff conducts an intensive water quality monitoring program to track the status of the river. Trends indicate pollution is increasing. We have learned that tributaries tend to have higher concentrations of pollutants than the river. This suggests that most degradation originates from sources beyond our boundaries.

**The boundaries of Buffalo National River contain only 11 percent of the total 1,300 square mile watershed. The river's water quality, then, is highly dependent on surrounding land management practices.**




The Buffalo River carries thousands of canoeists each year. These visitors can heavily impact the river's banks and gravel bars. Even if you don't see large numbers of other people on your trip, you are likely to camp or rest where hundreds of others have before.

Restroom facilities are provided at most road-accessible launch sites along the river. There are long stretches of the river, though, without any facilities. Please dispose of human waste as described elsewhere in this booklet.

Rental canoes are provided with mesh trash bags for collecting solid waste such as cans and paper. Use of these bags or something similar will help reduce litter along the river. Remember to tie the bags into your canoe just in case you capsize.

Protection of the Buffalo's water quality depends on an effective partnership of all those who live, work and recreate in the river's watershed. When it comes to protecting a treasure like the Buffalo River, we should make decisions as if we all lived downstream.

# Buffalo River's Historic Landscapes

William Villines' home in Boxley Valley, circa 1914.

The hills and valleys of the Buffalo River have been home to generations of mountain families. Their houses, schools, churches, and industries are testament to their survival and enterprise amidst harsh terrain. A typical Buffalo River farm may include buildings from two separate centuries, while buried beneath the soil are indicators of cultures even older.

Historic permanent settlement along the Buffalo began in the late 1820s. Settlers cleared land for fields and homes, built communities, witnessed first hand the fighting of the Civil War, were part of population migrations and emigrations, and experimented with a multitude of industries to provide for themselves and the region, from mining and timbering to recreational activities and modern businesses. They preserved their heritage in oral tradition, spoken and in song, and kept the "old ways" long into this century.

Parts of the past are found everywhere along the river: in place names for settlers long gone (the Tylers of Tyler Bend, for example); an anchor bolt remains from a swinging bridge washed away by the flooding river; a stone fence along an abandoned field, or an old chimney surrounded in the spring by still blooming daffodils. When you encounter these things, think of those who passed here before you. But for your safety, and for the preservation of these artifacts, please do not enter abandoned structures, remove old machinery or equipment, or carry cultural pieces of any kind away from their present location. Leave the cultural landscape intact for all to enjoy.

Many of the park's interpretive areas are historic buildings, sites and districts that are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

## Upper River

**Boxley Valley.** The seven-mile long Boxley valley is a historic district within the park, but also an active community of private homes, farms, and churches. Respect the rights of the residents while you are in the valley. Park owned historic structures open to visitors along the upper river are:

**James A. "Beaver Jim" Villines sites.** Beaver Jim (1854-1948) was locally renowned for his ability at trapping beaver. He was born in a log house, a portion of which still stands at the intersection of highways 43 and 74. Descendants remodeled the old house for farm use. Beaver Jim's home after he married is located near the Ponca river access and reached by a short walk. The double pen log house and its outbuildings are typical of a nineteenth century Buffalo River farm. The oak section of the house was constructed about 1854; Beaver Jim added the cedar section after he moved to the farm in the 1880s.

**Parker-Hickman Farmstead Historic District.** The centerpiece of this farm is the finely crafted cedar log house, built in the 1840s by the Parker family. The house design reflects their North Carolina ancestry. The house is the oldest historic building in the park. The Hickmans, the last owners of the farm, lived here until 1978. A log barn, smokehouse, WPA outhouse, and other buildings complete the farm.

**Erbie Historic Zone.** One of the earliest settlement areas along the Buffalo, known as Erbie when the post office was established. The Erbie Church, built in 1896, was the community center. It still stands today. Hiking trails lead to other community sites.

## Middle River

**Collier Homestead.** Although the Homestead Act was passed in 1862, Sod and Ida Mae Collier could still use its provisions in the 1930s to acquire this Ozark farm. A log house, smokehouse, and cistern built by the Colliers, and a barn, remain at the site, which is accessed from the Tyler Bend road, or from the hiking trail.

## Lower River

**Buffalo River State Park Historic District.** Buffalo Point is the former Buffalo River State Park, developed in the 1930s as a project of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). The CCC constructed the road system and retaining walls, pavilion #1, the lodge next to the restaurant, and the rustic cabins. Rock came from a quarry on the Indian Rockhouse trail. The rustic cabins, which have original interiors and furnishings, are the most historically intact CCC cabins in the state. Rentals are handled through the park concessioner.

**Rush Historic District.** Along the last three miles of the road to the Rush river access are the structures, foundations, and sites of the once thriving town of Rush. Established in the 1880s when zinc ore was found in the nearby hills, Rush was at its largest during World War I. The community continued, but finally faded in the 1960s once the school and post office closed. The self-guiding Morning Star Mine Interpretive Loop Trail winds through the Morning Star processing mill area and past the 1886 smelter built in hopes of extracting silver. The abandoned mines are dangerous and entry is prohibited. Entrances are fenced, or closed with welded gates.

Zinc miners of Rush

Morning Star Mine and community buildings.

## You Are Being Robbed!

**Lost Forever.** What if you learned that there were over 300 felony crimes committed in a three-county area that could not be adequately investigated or prosecuted? How would you feel if you learned that these crimes were typically committed by people associated with drug use? Would it make any difference to you if you knew that these crimes destroyed cemeteries and removed items thousands of years old? Would you feel any better if the number was reduced to 150, or is it still unacceptable? 75? Still too many?

Archeological sites are being looted all along the Buffalo River at an alarming rate. Most of the affected sites are in bluff-shelters although many open sites are also involved. Damage ranges from a few small pits to the wholesale digging of shelters, with many hundred cubic feet of soil involved.

**What do the looters have to gain?** Artifacts may be sold on the internet for as little as $10 to as much as $1,000, depending on the age and condition of the object. Typically, the older the artifact, the more it is worth. Historic artifacts, too, have a price tag: Civil War items associated with specific battles or places are among the most valuable.

**What do you have to lose?** Even with the many high tech innovations that aid the archeologist in the understanding of past cultures, it is still dependent on the quality of information available from the archeological site. Imagine if you found one piece of a jigsaw puzzle lying in a parking lot and you tried to understand the whole picture it represented. Sometimes we are lucky enough to find more than one piece of the puzzle, and occasionally, some of these pieces may fit together permitting a more complete picture of the past. The equation is simple: no pieces - no picture. If looters continue to rob sites of their content, we will never have the ability to understand the events of the past.

**What are we doing about it?** Buffalo National River has instituted an aggressive program to fight archeological site looting. Law Enforcement specialists are working closely with archeologists to understand the distribution of sites, and to make regular inspections of site condition. Remote sensing devices and cameras have been placed in critical areas. A site steward program utilizing local citizens for site monitoring has been established. An interdisciplinary team has been created for quick response to looting incidents on park lands in Arkansas and Missouri.

**What can you do?** Be aware of the looting problem. Discourage illegal digging and collecting on Federal lands. Encourage stronger state laws. Do not buy artifacts from any source. Understand that looting is a felony crime under the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979. We are enforcing this law, and with your help we can stop this activity before there is nothing left to loot.

**What if I see someone looting a site?** If you suspect that someone is digging a site, leave immediately. Do not put yourself in danger. Past experience tells us that looters are usually armed and are often using drugs. Contact a Buffalo National River ranger as soon as possible with information detailing your encounter. Especially important is the precise location, date, time, and description of persons and vehicles involved.

Visitor reports have led to the apprehension of individuals involved in looting our park and country's cultural heritage.

## Ranger Programs

## Join Us!

Attending a ranger-led interpretive program can increase your understanding and appreciation of Buffalo National River. Park rangers lead activities throughout the park free of charge. Listed in the next column are visitor information services and interpretive offerings for each district of the park. Additional programs may be offered, which can include children's programs, guided canoe floats, guided walks, auto tours, and special talks and demonstrations. Current program schedules and information are available at the contact stations and on bulletin boards around the park.

Upper Buffalo District

**Pruitt Ranger Station** - Days and hours vary. Check locally.
**Park Orientation Video** - 17 min., shown by request at the Pruitt Ranger Station.
**Evening Program** - Available seasonally, Saturdays. Times, topics and location posted locally.
**Children's Programs** - Sundays at Ozark Campground.
**Additional Programs** offered. Consult local postings.

Middle Buffalo District

**Tyler Bend Visitor Center** - Memoral Day to Labor Day, 8:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m. Off-season days and hours may vary.
**Park Orientation Video**- 17 min., shown by request.
**Evening Program** - Offered seasonally, Friday and Saturday at the Tyler Bend Amphitheater. Times and topics are posted locally.
**Water Activities -** Weekends at Tyler Bend Campground.
**Additional Programs** offered. Consult local postings.

Lower Buffalo District

**Buffalo Point Ranger Station** - 8:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.
**Buffalo Point Campground Contact Station** - Check locally.
**Park Orientation Slide Show** - Shown on request at the Ranger Station during business hours.
**Evening Program** - Offered nightly, Memorial Day to Labor Day at Buffalo Point Amphitheater. Times and topics posted locally.
**Additional Programs** offered. Consult local postings.

## Artist-in-Residence

The Artist-in-Residence Program provides an opportunity to a qualified professional visual or performing artist, composer, or writer to spend a three week residency at Buffalo National River seeking inspiration for their work. The artist may demonstrate their work to the public through a program or workshop and be willing to donate a sample of their work inspired by their stay in the park. Applications must be postmarked by January 31 of each year. For more information on this program, write Artist-in-Residence, Buffalo National River, 402 N. Walnut, Suite 136, Harrison, AR. 72601 or visit our web site at: www.nps.gov/buff.

Judy Pelt, Texas

Margaret Leonard, Maine

Randy Haney, Texas

## Volunteer!

Volunteers in Parks (VIPs) work side-by-side in partnership with National Park Service employees. Individuals who have a strong desire for protection and preservation of park resources may wish to volunteer their time and talents with Buffalo National River.

Volunteer opportunities exist at the visitor and information centers at Pruitt, Tyler Bend, and Buffalo Point Ranger Stations. VIPs may work with the historian on research and restoration projects, with the natural resource manager on monitoring projects, and with interpreters in sharing the park story with visitors. A select number of Campground Hosts are needed each year to provide assistance to campers. Volunteers also help with the maintenance of park facilities.

Experiences range from one-time projects to on-going positions involving several hours per week.

Help support and preserve this park by becoming a VIP. For more information, please call Buffalo National River at (870) 741-5443 or write to VIP Coordinator, Buffalo National River, 402 N. Walnut, Suite 136, Harrison, AR 72601 or visit our web site at: www.nps.gov/buff and click on the Volunteer link.

## Many Thanks!

Nearly one million visitors find their way to the Buffalo National River each year. Attracted by the Ozark scenery, a beautiful river, and outdoor recreational opportunities, visitors enjoy the resources this area has to offer. This popularity can put pressure on the park resources that attracted visitors to this area in the first place. To protect these resources, your park camping fees are put to work repairing, researching, maintaining, and developing resources and facilities.

Congress authorized the Federal Lands Recreation Enhancement Act to reverse the deteriorating scope and quality of park facilities and address natural and cultural resource issues. Prior to this program, parks were only able to be reimbursed for the actual cost of collecting fees, with the bulk of the money collected returned to the general fund of the federal government. Now, Buffalo National River keeps 100% of camping and pavilion fees, and competes for additional funds available from the fee program. Over $1.5 million have been put to work in the park since 1998.

New picnic tables, park signs, and repainted facilities are benefits of this program. Recycling bins, new comfort stations, and the upgrading of interpretive trails and educational materials are projects recently completed.

National Park Service staff and volunteers work hard to protect the resources of Buffalo National River. Now you are a partner in this important work. Thanks to you park facilities and programs are improving and visitors can continue to experience this treasure for generations to come.

Youth Conservation Corps members worked on cemetery restorations.

Outdated vault toilets have been replaced by new flush toilets.

New wayside exhibits at Rush assist visitors on the Morning Star Mine Interpretive Loop Trail with maps and information about this historic area.

# Calling All Junior Rangers!

So you want to become a Junior Ranger! It might be challenging at times, but we hope you will have fun completing your training. These pages provide activities that can help you learn more about our park and the wildlife that lives here. To become an official Junior Ranger ask a Park Ranger or other staff members.

## Word Search

LIFE JACKET
RUSH
SNAKES
OZARKS
CANOE
CAMPING
SWIM
TICK
LEAD
ZINC
HIKE
CAVES
BUFFALO RIVER
KINGFISHER
BLUFF SHELTER
ENDANGERED BATS
POISON IVY

R N S G T P O I S O N I V Y L
S E E Z L P O W C B X R I E M
H U K J I N K O P L M S A R U
S T A B D E R E G N A D N E K
K I N G F I S H E R V G D T F
R W S E R H D X C T F T I L Y
A Q A Z F D I E E Y M C B E C
Z I C A N O E K B K K L O H A
O C V F S Q C T E U P I Y S V
R B U F F A L O R I V E R F E
W A D G J J L N U V C Z X F S
Q S D E G C J L S W I M N U V
E T F U N O P K H S T E O L I
M I L I Y E H O R H R D J B V
L T Z E C A M P I N G C X T M

## Scavenger Hunt Bingo

A good ranger is one who knows a lot about the park. To learn more about Buffalo National River, achieve "bingo" two times. For each "bingo" you must answer five questions in a row, down, across or diagonally in different rows (a total of eight to ten answers). You may ask park employees for help, but each employee can only answer two questions. Most answers can be found in the park map and guide or the *Currents*. If you are up to the challenge, can you answer all the questions?

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| What should you always wear to protect yourself while in a canoe? | What historic mining town near Buffalo Point was once a home to thousands? | How long is Buffalo National River? | How many National Park Sevice sites are in Arkansas? | What Native American tribes once lived here? |
| What animal is on the National Park Service arrowhead? | Name the two places at Buffalo National River that were once state parks. | How many wilderness areas are designated in Buffalo National River? | What "king" lives along the river? | What year was Buffalo National River established? |
| Name two metals mined along the Buffalo River. | What is the tallest bluff along the river? | Free Space | The tallest waterfall in the Midwest is in the park. What is its name? | Name three things you can do at Buffalo National River. |
| How many dams are on the Buffalo River? | What blood-sucking parasite burries its head in your skin to snack? | What is the name of Buffalo National River's longest cave? | Name two kinds of fish that live in the Buffalo River. | When did the first people live along the Buffalo River? |
| What are the three kinds of endangered bats living in this area? | Besides a bathing suit, what should you wear while playing in the river? | Name two of the four poisonous snakes that live in the park. | What kind of animal lives in holes along the riverbanks? | Name the poisonous plant that can make you itch. |

# Share Your Experiences

To become a Junior Ranger you need to attend at least two ranger-led programs. After the program, write about two things you learned from that program. Then ask the ranger conducting the program to sign in the space provided.

Program Title

Park Ranger Signature and Date

Two things I learned from this program:

1.

2.

Program Title

Park Ranger Signature and Date

Two things I learned from this program:

1.

2.

## Service Project

Park Rangers serve the visitors of Buffalo National River in a variety of ways. As a Junior Ranger in training, you will need to conduct a service project to help visitors better enjoy the park. Go to any visitor center or ranger station or talk with a ranger to receive your assignment*. Once you have completed the assignment, have the ranger sign below.

Describe your project:

Park Ranger Signature and Date

* If a ranger is not available, then help us pick up litter in the campground, picnic area, or along the river.

## Completing the Training

Once you have completed the four parts of the Junior Ranger training (Word Search, Scavenger Hunt Bingo, attend two ranger-led programs, and complete a service project), you are a qualified Junior Ranger. Take this booklet to any visitor center or ranger station for verification. The ranger will give you an official stamp and issue your certificate of completion. If you will be staying in the park, your certificate will be issued at the next evening program. Congratulations on a job well done!

**Junior Ranger Pledge**

*"I give my pledge as a Junior Ranger to care for and protect the natural and cultural resources of our National Parks."*

# The Bulletin Board

## Emergencies

To report an emergency, telephone: Searcy County Sheriff at toll-free **1-888-615-6580** or dial “0” for an operator and ask for the Searcy County Sheriff.

## Hunting and Fishing

Hunting and fishing are allowed in the park in accordance with Arkansas state regulations. Valid Arkansas hunting and fishing licenses are required. Trail users are advised to wear brightly colored clothing during hunting seasons. No hunting in campgrounds, developed areas, or shooting over the river or trails. The Arkansas Game and Fish Commission can be reached at 501-223-6300.

## Pets

Leashed pets are welcome on park roads and in campgrounds. Park regulations prohibit taking pets on maintained trails, in buildings, or in amphitheaters.

## Glass Containers

Glass containers are prohibited on the river, on trails, within 100 feet of any stream or river bank, and in caves.

## Park Features

Everything in the park is protected by law and is to be left unchanged for others to enjoy. Let photographs and memories be your only souvenirs.

## Off-Road Driving

Off-road use of any vehicle is prohibited. Bicycles are not permitted on any trails.

## How to Reach Us

| | |
|---|---|
| Park Headquarters | (870) 741-5443 |
| Pruitt Ranger Station | (870) 446-5373 |
| Tyler Bend Visitor Center | (870) 439-2502 |
| Buffalo Point Ranger Station | (870) 449-4311 |
| TDD/ Hearing Impaired | (870) 741-2884 |

*Currents* is produced by the National Park Service. The staff of Buffalo National River designed and wrote the material in this booklet.

The National Park Service is entrusted with preserving the Buffalo River of northwest Arkansas as a free-flowing stream, protected from development and pollution and interpreting the scenic and scientific features of the area for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

**Comments?**

**Write to:** Superintendent
Buffalo National River
402 N. Walnut, Suite 136
Harrison, Arkansas 72601

**Web Site:** www.nps.gov/buff
**E-Mail:** buff_information@nps.gov

2007

**EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA**

**National Park Service**
**U.S. Department of the Interior**

**Buffalo National River**
**402 N. Walnut, Suite 136**
**Harrison, Arkansas 72601**