

Ozark

National Scenic Riverways



Monday, August 18, 2014

Riverways Reflections

This weekend we will be celebrating the 50th anniversary of the establishment of Ozark National Scenic Riverways. In August 1964 the “enabling legislation” that established the park was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson. This was the first successful national legislation enacted to preserve a river in its free-flowing condition, and was the model for the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968. It was the culmination of the joint efforts of local residents, community leaders, politicians, and environmentalists to save the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers from suffering the fate of hydroelectric dams that befell other Ozark rivers. Thanks to their passion and dedication, we are continuing to enjoy the rivers as they envisioned a half century ago.

The formal anniversary program will be held on August 23 at 6:00 p.m. Bring a blanket or lawn chair to the Depression Era Cabin near Big Spring to enjoy guest speakers and the historic film *Forever Yours*, which features a trip down the Current River by Leonard Hall, one of the activists who fought to preserve the rivers. Musical entertainment will be provided by Alex Riffle and the Stiff Riffs.

We will continue to celebrate the 50th anniversary with other special events and with an employee reunion to be held on Sunday, October 12. All former employees are invited and we are asking for help to make sure we don't miss anyone. We've had the great fortune to work with so many wonderful folks from our local communities over the years. If you or someone you know worked for the Riverways, please contact park headquarters to make sure we have your correct mailing address. Invitations with reunion details will be mailed soon and we don't want to miss anyone. We hope to see many of you there.

The project to rehabilitate Alley Mill is still continuing to go very well. Much of the work has been completed, but there are still a few tasks remaining, including the construction of the accessible walkway into the mill. The mill will continue to be open on weekends from now until the Haunting in the Hills event on October 11. We are hopeful all work will be completed by that date.

The hot, dry summer weather has kept the rivers busy recently. The past several weekends have been big for our campgrounds and concessions. I want to express my appreciation to all of our park concessioners. They are valuable partners who help the National Park Service meet the needs of our visitors. Recently a new concession contract was awarded to Eugene and Eleanor Maggard for Akers Ferry Canoe Rental. The Maggard family has operated the store and ferry at Akers for many years. Concession contracts were also recently awarded to Shane and Kim Van Steenis for Alley Spring Canoe Rental and Two Rivers Canoe Rental, and to Stacy and Michelle Smith for Current River Canoe Rental and Carr's Canoe Rental. Each of these concession contracts was issued for a 10-year term to provide canoe and tube rentals with shuttle services, camp store and retail merchandise, and firewood sales. The combined years of experience that these longstanding concessioners bring to the table equals many years of providing quality visitor services.

We are still planning to begin work on the restoration of Big Spring Lodge and Cabins in 2015. The prospect of renewing and revitalizing these wonderful historic structures and the entire Big Spring Historic District is very exciting! While the lodge and cabins will be closed for an extended period in order for major renovations to take place, the rest of the Big Spring area will be open as usual. This includes Big Spring, the campground, pavilions, boat ramp, and trails. We understand that the thought of the lodge and cabins being unavailable is disappointing to many, but this will allow the entire project to be completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

As summer winds down, I hope to see many of you out enjoying the rivers. For more information about upcoming activities, call park headquarters at (573)323-4236 or visit the park's Facebook page or website at www.nps.gov/ozar for regular updates. Be safe and enjoy your park!



Superintendent Bill Black

Ozark National Scenic Riverways preserves the free-flowing Current and Jacks Fork Rivers, the surrounding natural resources, and the unique cultural heritage of the Ozark people. For more information, visit www.nps.gov/ozar or Facebook.

Comments? Write to:

Superintendent
Ozark National Scenic Riverways
P. O. Box 490
Van Buren, Missouri 63965

Phone

573-323-4236

E-mail

ozar_superintendent@nps.gov

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

