



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ozark National Scenic Riverways

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Ozark National Scenic Riverways News Release

For Immediate Release

May 17, 2012

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Thanking America's Armed Forces Active Duty U.S. Military Offered Free Entrance to All National Parks

Van Buren, MO – To show our appreciation for those who serve in the U.S. Military, on May 19 – Armed Forces Day – the National Park Service will begin issuing an [annual pass](#) offering free entrance to all 397 national parks for active duty military members and their dependents.

“We all owe a debt to those who sacrifice so much to protect our country,” said interim Park Superintendent Bill Black. “We are proud to recognize these brave men and women and hope that a visit to this or any national park will offer an opportunity to unwind, relax, rejuvenate, and just have fun with their families.”

Active duty members of the U.S. Military and their dependents can pick up their pass at the Ozark National Scenic Riverways Visitor Contact Station in Van Buren, Monday – Friday 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. Beginning Saturday, May 26th, the Visitor Contact Station in Van Buren will be open daily from 8:00 am – 4:30 pm. Memorial Day weekend will also seasonally open Visitor Contact Stations near Eminence, Missouri at the Alley Spring General Store and Round Spring from 8:30 am – 4:30 pm. Annual passes will also be available at these locations. Active duty members and their dependents must show a current, valid military identification card to obtain their pass. More information is available at www.nps.gov/findapark/passes.htm.

This military version of the America the Beautiful National Parks and Federal Recreational Lands Pass also permits free entrance to sites managed by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, and the U.S. Forest Service. The pass is also available at these locations.

“Through the years, military members, especially those far from home in times of conflict, have found inspiration in America’s patriotic icons and majestic landscapes, places like the Statue of Liberty and the Grand Canyon that are cared for by the National Park Service and symbolize the nation that their sacrifices protect,” said National Park Service Director Jonathan B. Jarvis. “This new pass is a way to thank military members and their families for their service and their sacrifices.”

National parks and the military have strong ties going back to the establishment of Yellowstone as the world’s first national park in 1872. The U.S. Cavalry watched over America’s national parks and did double duty, serving as the first park rangers until the National Park Service was created 44 years later. During World War II, many parks were set aside for the training and care of military personnel. Today, dozens of national parks commemorate military battles and achievements.

About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America’s 397 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. Learn more at www.nps.gov.

For more information, phone (573) 323-4236 Monday through Friday during business hours or visit the park’s website at www.nps.gov/ozar. 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.

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