



You can find quiet places for reflection and exploration on the Buffalo River. © TIM ERNST

A River Nestled in the Arkansas Ozarks

How did a river surrounded by the progress of civilization escape impoundment, impairment, and change? To preserve the Buffalo as a free-flowing stream, Congress designated it a national river in 1972. Floating the Buffalo can give you a feeling of the wilderness once

embracing this country. The Buffalo is nestled in the Arkansas Ozarks, which are bounded on the north, east, and south by the Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas rivers, respectively. To the west lies open prairie.

The earliest maps of the region showed the Buffalo River as a tributary of the White River. It is believed to have been named for woodland bison found in this area. They were later extirpated. Originating high in the Boston Mountains, the Buffalo drops steadily to its confluence with the White. The gradient is steeper and water runs faster along the upper river, leveling and slowing as the river runs its course. In some places, long quiet pools between rapids disguise its vertical travels. The land's wildness and isolation are dramatized by a side trip into any number of hollows flanking the river. One can imagine that some have not been frequented since they served as guerrilla hideouts during the Civil War.

This park has many prehistoric and historic cultural sites, some dating back over 10,000 years. These sites

range from terrace village sites, to bluff shelters once occupied by Archaic Indians, to cabins built by early settlers. In Boxley Valley, Ozark farmers still live in harmony with the land. Other areas, like the Parker-Hickman Farmstead in Erbie, the historic mining district near Rush, the 1930s Collier Homestead at Tyler Bend, and the Civilian Conservation Corps structures at Buffalo Point mark the progression of Buffalo River history. Trails in these areas lead you back in time to an era when the natural and cultural worlds were one.

The meaning of the Buffalo River today is not difficult to discern. It is reflected in the faces of people enjoying the river's recreational challenges. It rises in the spirits of people immersed in this landscape's beauty. It finds its measure among the families who celebrate, with periodic riverside reunions, their multiple generations living in the area. Exhilaration and enthusiasm, relaxation and recreation. Here these merge with living tradition as thoroughly as the wild and free running Buffalo River merges with its ancient Ozarks setting.



Buffalo River from Big Bluff



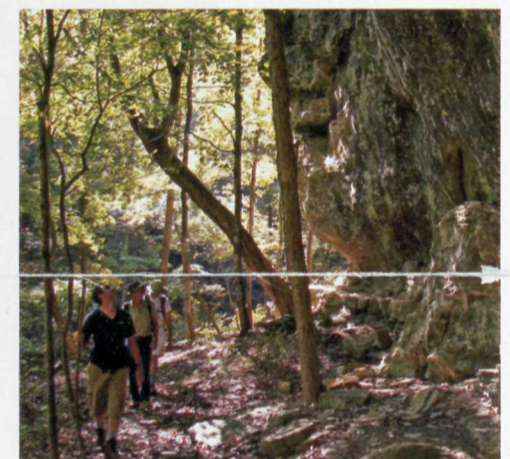
Collier Homestead near Tyler Bend



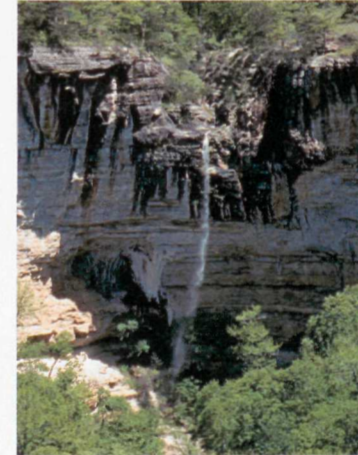
Rock formations amid autumn blaze

Scenic Landscape Formations

The Ozark's highest river bluffs, some reaching as high as 440 feet, consist of sandstone, limestone, and dolomite. Towering over the Buffalo National River, these multicolored cliffs have been sculpted over the centuries by erosion. Today they sharply accent the Buffalo and its surrounding wild mountain beauty. The park's geology, with its numerous caves, cliffs, sinkholes, waterfalls, springs, and interesting rock formations, typifies the Arkansas Ozarks.



Hikers on the trail to Indian Rockhouse



Hemmed-in Hollow



Reflection of Skull Rock on a fall day

Nature Along the River

Plant and animal species of the Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast coexist in the Ozarks. Armadillos, roadrunners, and tarantulas live with lichens characteristic of arctic tundra. Differences in elevation (from 375 to 2,385 feet), moisture, exposure, and soil types allow more than 1,500 plant species to live here. The river boasts over 70 species of clearwater fish. White-tailed deer,

raccoon, opossum, bobcat, mink, bear, and beaver are common. Elk populations have slowly increased since their introduction to this area in 1981, and sightings are common on the upper and middle river.



Hognose snake



White-tailed deer



Purple coneflower

Hunting and Fishing the Buffalo

Hunting An Arkansas hunting license is required, and state and National Park Service regulations apply. Respect the rights of private property owners who have homes and livestock within the park boundary. Rangers can provide current information on seasons and regulations.

Hunting seasons Non-developed sections of the park are open to hunting under Arkansas Game and Fish Commission regulations. Hunting, in one form or another, may occur from early September until April and from mid-May to mid-June (squirrel only). Anyone going into the woods during hunting season should use caution and wear bright clothing. Hunter orange is recommended. This is especially important during gun deer season in November and during spring turkey season.

Fishing The Buffalo River is a favorite with anglers. Long pools and shallow riffles provide excellent opportunities for fishing. The Buffalo and its tributaries comprise one of the nation's richest areas in total number of fish species. Popular fish are the smallmouth bass, catfish, Ozark bass, and a variety of panfish. Favored traditional methods of fishing are from the bank or boat. Float fishing is most common on the lower (eastern) half of the river. Fishing is governed by state and National Park Service regulations. An Arkansas fishing license is required. Catch and release of smallmouth bass is encouraged (with artificial lures, barbless hooks, and careful handling).

Smallmouth and largemouth bass The smallmouth is so named because, in contrast to the largemouth, its upper jaw does not

extend beyond the eyes (*see diagrams*). Although smallmouth bass up to five pounds are occasionally caught, most are in the one- to two-pound range. A smallmouth bass in the Buffalo reaches a length of six to seven inches by its second summer. It may take four years or more for the fish to attain the legal size before you can add it to your stringer. Please ask for fishing regulations at park ranger stations.



Smallmouth bass
Jaw to mid-point of pupil



Largemouth bass
Jaw past eye

Boat Floats, Wilderness Walks, Ozark Vistas, and More

Getting Here Use U.S. 65 or Ark. Rtes. 7, 14, or 21 to get to the park. Little Rock and Fayetteville, Ark., and Springfield, Mo., are two- or three-hour drives from the park. These central Ozark Mountains boast many scenic and recreation areas.

Accessibility Buffalo River country is steep, rugged, and remote, but park management makes every effort to make the park and its programs accessible to all. The Tyler Bend Visitor Center is accessible for mobility and hearing impaired persons. An Accessibility Guide to programs and facilities is available at the visitor center or ranger stations or by contacting the park. There is a TTY-equipped telephone at park headquarters.

Camping Twelve campgrounds are accessible by car and are open on a first-come, first-served basis. Tyler Bend and Buffalo Point campgrounds

offer restrooms, showers, and trailer dump stations. Camping fees are charged at most campgrounds from April through October. Buffalo Point has water and electrical hookups and fills most evenings from Memorial Day to Labor Day. Arrive before noon to find a site. From November through March, services at Tyler Bend and Buffalo Point are limited to drinking water and vault toilets. Dates may vary from year to year. Camping is limited to 14 consecutive days.

All group sites and pavilions in the park can be reserved. Also, some sites at Buffalo Point may be reserved; visit www.Recreation.gov or call 1-877-444-6777.

Campgrounds from Lost Valley to Rush Landing are excellent locations for beginning or ending float trips. All have toilets. The steep roads to Steel Creek and Kyles Landing are not recom-

mended for large trailers, buses, or motorhomes. Campground quiet hours are from 10 pm to 6 am.

Accommodations Food service and lodging are available in Harrison, Jasper, Yellville, Marshall, and other communities near the park. Within the park, Buffalo Point has concessioner-operated rental cabins and a restaurant. Contact: Buffalo Point Concession 2261 Hwy. 268 E., Yellville, AR 72687, 870-449-6206.

Hiking Buffalo National River offers wonderful hiking opportunities. Trail guides are available at the visitor center and ranger stations or by contacting the park. Short, day-use trails are located at Lost Valley, Tyler Bend, Buffalo Point, and Pruitt Ranger Station. More difficult trails are in the Ponca and Lower Buffalo wilderness areas. Hikers can also walk the traces of former roads, which are shown on USGS topographic

maps. Hiking is best in winter when foliage is down and snakes, ticks, and chiggers are dormant. Use caution and wear bright clothing in the woods during hunting season. Dogs are not permitted on park trails and must be on a leash in developed areas.

Interpretive Programs Interpretive programs at Buffalo Point, Tyler Bend, Pruitt, Ozark, and other locations in spring and summer include campfire programs, guided walks and hikes, guided canoe floats, and Ozark folk music. Check at park information stations for schedules.

For a Safe Visit Common sense is your best protection against accidents. Make sure you and your children realize that this is a natural area with hazards. • The river is great for swimming, but never swim alone or during high water. There are no lifeguarded swimming areas. • Diving is

extremely dangerous because of unseen rocks and logs beneath the water's surface. • Climbing riverside bluffs, with their loose and crumbly rocks, can be hazardous. A fall from a bluff means certain injury, and getting medical help is difficult, dangerous, and may take several hours. • Watch out for poisonous snakes, ticks, and chiggers. • All animals, plants, geologic features, and cultural sites and artifacts are protected by law. • Boil all water that is not from an approved source. • Bury all human waste at least 100 feet from water. Carry out all garbage. • No ATV use is allowed in the park. Firearms must be unloaded and cased or broken down when in a vehicle.

To report emergencies or criminal activity 24 hours a day, call 1-888-615-6580 or 911.

More Information River guides, topographic maps, and books exploring the region's natural and cultural history are sold at the visitor center, ranger stations, and park headquarters in Harrison.

Buffalo National River is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. The National Park Service cares for these special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage. To learn more, visit www.nps.gov.

Buffalo National River
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River access point
Distances between river access points are shown on the diagram below. Average floating time at "ample floating level" is about two miles per hour.

Buffalo National River Authorized Area
Private property exists within the authorized area. Please respect owners' rights.

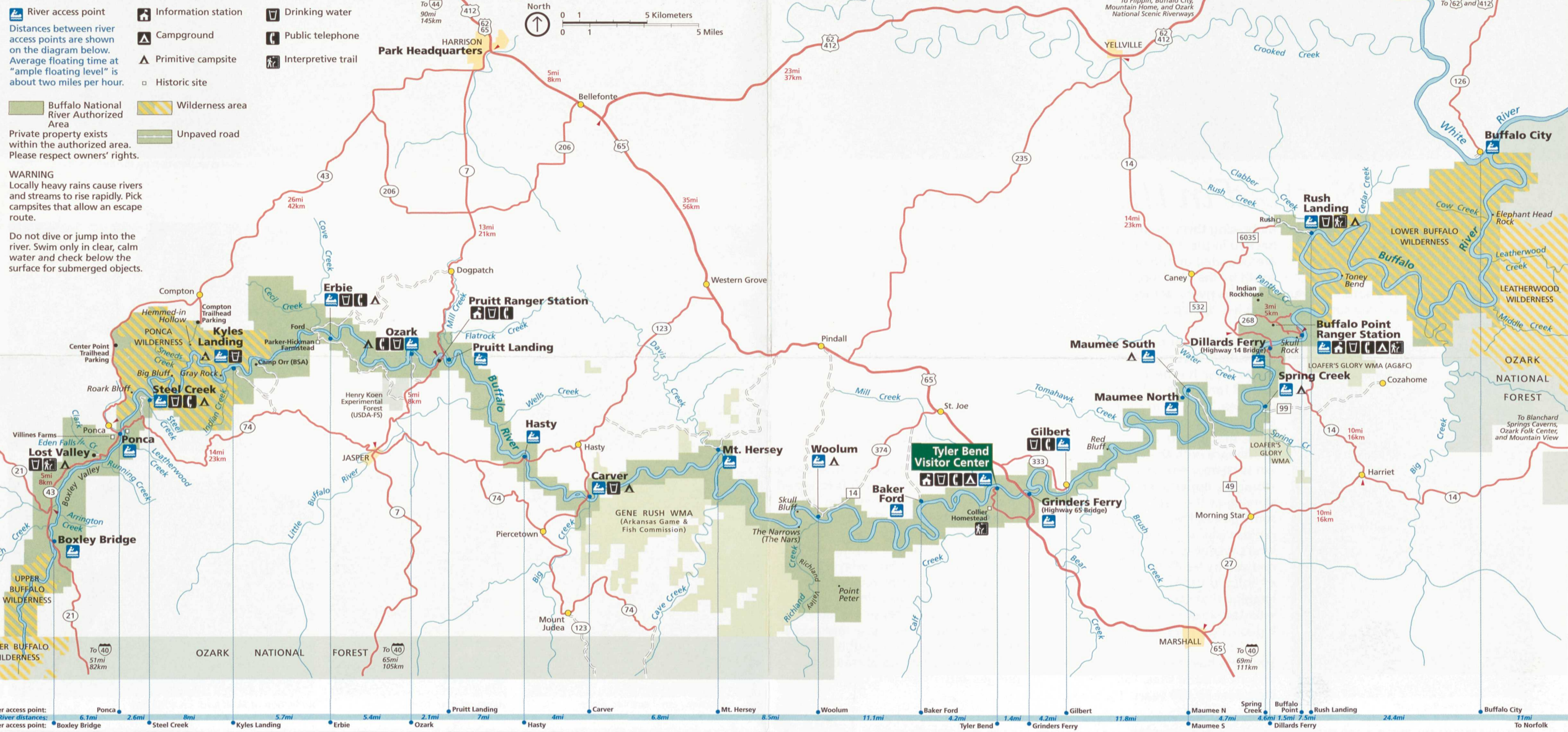
WARNING
Locally heavy rains cause rivers and streams to rise rapidly. Pick campsites that allow an escape route.

Do not dive or jump into the river. Swim only in clear, calm water and check below the surface for submerged objects.

Information station
Campground
Primitive campsite
Historic site

Drinking water
Public telephone
Interpretive trail

Wilderness area
Unpaved road



Floating the Buffalo

Few experiences can compare to a float trip down the Buffalo. Clean waters, high bluffs, wooded hillsides, and myriad seasonal wildflowers conspire to turn staunch city lovers into nature enthusiasts. Inexperienced beginners can float slow-moving river sections, and canoes may be rented nearby.

Between Carver and Woolum, and downstream of Rush Landing, the river offers a near-wilderness experience. Choices for length of float trips also abound. You can make half-day floats; a 10-day, 120-mile expedition; or anything in between. Boat motors under 10 h.p. are allowed upstream only to the Erbie boat launch.

Before Setting Out Check with a ranger about river conditions before you set out. Canoeing experience is recommended for the section upriver of Pruitt. This stretch offers exciting whitewater and is usually floatable in winter and spring only.

Visitation to the area between Ponca and Kyles Landing is generally high, especially on weekends. Except during high water, the river below Pruitt Landing has relatively calm



A serene stretch of the Buffalo.



Whitewater challenges paddlers on the upper river.

pools, periodic riffles, and only occasional fast water.

Concessioners Authorized concessioners rent canoes and offer shuttle services. They provide everything needed for a trip—canoe, paddles, life jackets—except personal gear and food. Their brief talks are designed to get you and their canoe safely through the rapids and down the river. Concessioners can also provide shuttle services to and from river put-in and take-out points.

Guided johnboat fishing trips are available on the middle and lower river. On these trips, the concessioners can provide all gear and food. For information, contact the park for a list of canoe and johnboat concessioners.

River Safety Observe river warning signs and water safety regulations. • A Coast Guard-approved life jacket is required for all occupants of a vessel and must be worn by children under 13. Wear it for your protection. • Glass containers are

not permitted on or near the river. • Keep gear in waterproof containers; stow it low and balanced in your canoe. • If you capsize, stay on the upstream side of the canoe to avoid being pinned between the canoe and river obstacles.

• Stay off the river during floodwater. When rising water threatens, camp where you can move to higher ground and pull your canoe well out of the water. River rises of a foot or more per hour are common.



Great blue heron