



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

NPS / DALE DOMBROSKI

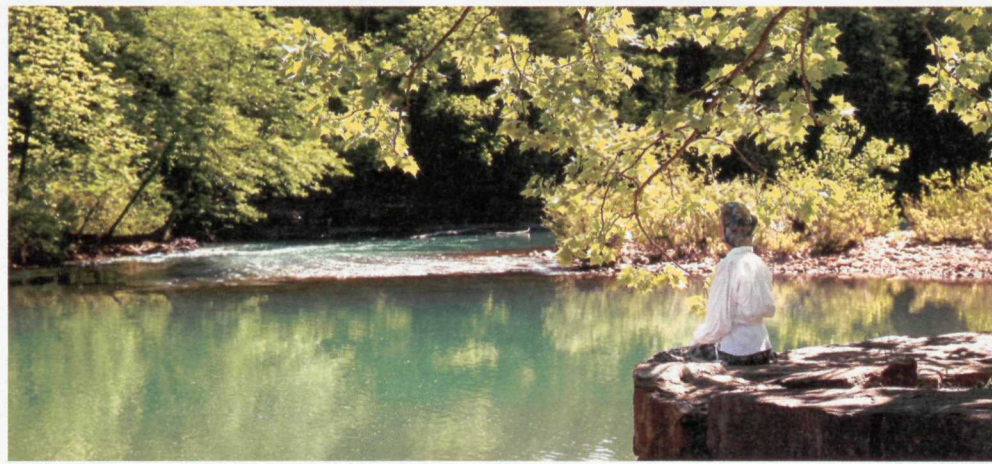
## A River Nestled in the Arkansas Ozarks

How did this river escape impoundment, impairment, and massive change? To preserve the Buffalo River as a free-flowing stream, Congress designated it as America's first national river in 1972. It nestles in the Arkansas Ozark Plateau, which is bounded on the north, east, and south by the Missouri, Mississippi, and Arkansas rivers. Earliest maps called this the "Buffaloe Fork of the White River," no doubt for now-extinct woodland bison. Originating high in the Boston Mountains, the Buffalo drops steadily to its confluence with the White 151 miles to the east. The gradient is steeper and the water faster on the upper river, but the river levels out and slows down over its course. Long, quiet pools between rapids disguise its vertical fall.

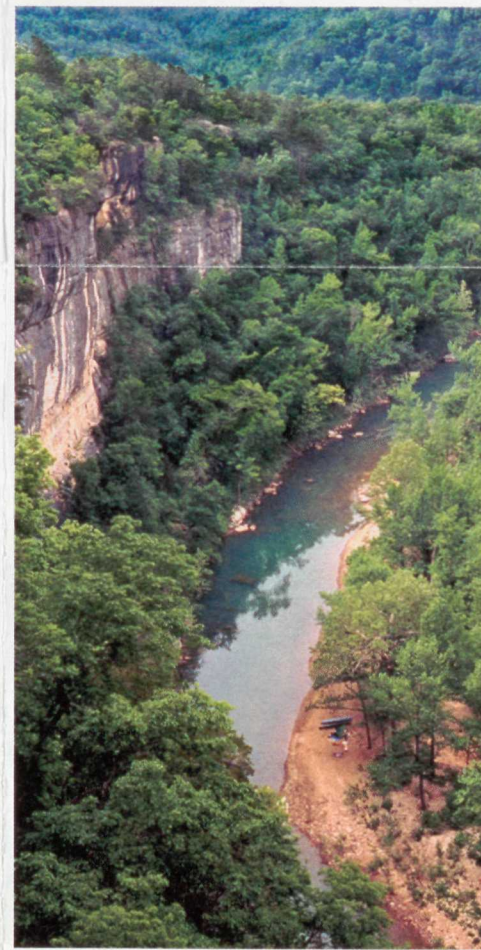
Side trips to hollows flanking the river dramatize this land's wildness and isolation. Some of the many prehistoric and historic cultural sites are 8,000 years old. There are village sites on river terraces, seasonal bluff shelters of prehistoric hunters and gatherers, and farmsteads of the Mississippian people who raised corn on floodplains or of ancestral Osage Indians who hunted along the Buffalo in historic times. Remains of early settlers' cabins abound. In Boxley Valley you can see traditional farming. Other places—like Parker-Hickman Farmstead in Erbie, the 1920s Collier Homestead at Tyler Bend, and Rush Mining District and Civilian Conservation Corps structures at Buffalo Point—illustrate conspicuous events or the threads of Buffalo River history.



Collier Homestead near Tyler Bend  
NPS / MARK ROBINSON



Erbie Rock  
NPS / DALE DOMBROSKI



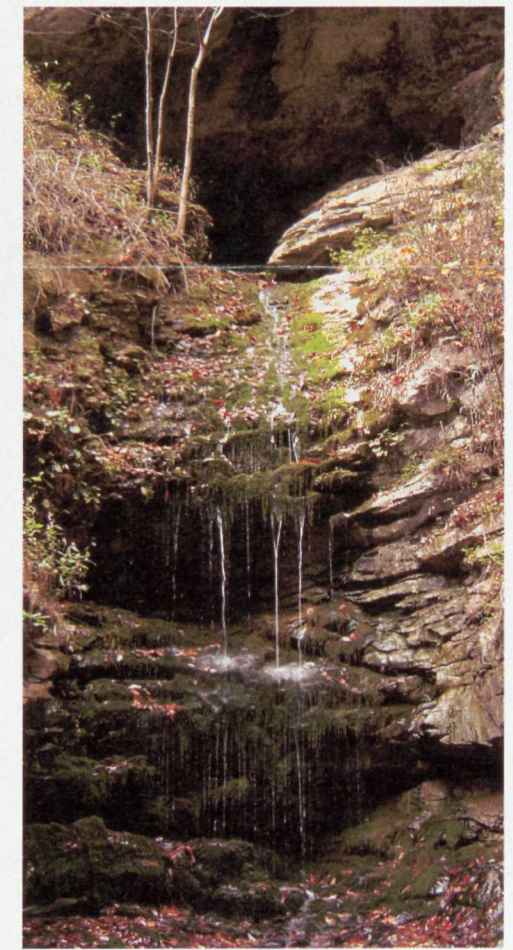
Buffalo River from Big Bluff  
NPS

### Scenic Landscape Formations

The Ozark's highest river bluffs—up to 500 feet high—are sandstone, limestone, and dolomite. Centuries of erosion sculpted multicolored cliffs to accent the Buffalo River and its setting within wild mountain beauty. Its caves, cliffs, sinkholes, waterfalls, springs, and often intriguing rock formations typify Arkansas Ozarks geology.



Reflection of Skull Rock on a fall day  
NPS / APRIL WOOD



Eden Falls  
NPS

### Nature Along the River

Plant and animal species of the Southwest, Northeast, and Southeast coexist in the Ozarks. Armadillos, roadrunners, and



White-tailed deer  
NPS / MARK ROBINSON



Juniper hairstreak butterfly feeding  
NPS / CAVEN CLARK

tarantulas live with lichens found in arctic tundra too. The range of elevations (375 to 2,385 feet), moisture, exposure, and soil types support over 1,500 plant species. The river boasts 74 species of clearwater fish. White-tailed deer, raccoon, and opossum are frequently seen, but the bobcat, mink, bear, otter, and beaver are more elusive.

### Elk on the Buffalo River

In the 1980s the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission introduced Rocky Mountain elk to Newton County. Elk were not released in the park, but they quickly moved into its maintained hayfields and remote woods along the Buffalo River. Now the growing herd (estimated at 500 elk) is both a tourist attraction and a park management concern. Elk-viewing is popular in October and November in Boxley Valley. Be alert then to heavy pedestrian and vehicle traffic.

Elk Cow  
NPS / DALE DOMBROSKI



### Hunting and Fishing

Arkansas hunting and fishing licenses are required, and state regulations apply. Find regulations specific to the Buffalo River at a park contact station or at [www.agfc.com](http://www.agfc.com), the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission website. Respect the rights of the private property owners with homes and livestock in the park.

**Hunting** Non-developed park areas are open to hunting—mostly deer and turkey. Various hunting seasons may occur from early September to April and mid-May to mid-June (squirrel only). Anyone in the woods in hunting season must use caution and wear bright clothing—hunter orange is recommended—especially in November's gun deer season and spring turkey season. All nongame species are protected.



Turkey  
NPS / MARK ROBINSON



Smallmouth bass  
NPS / DAN FEASER

**Fishing** The Buffalo River is a favorite with anglers. Long pools and shallow riffles offer excellent fishing. The Buffalo and its tributaries are among the nation's richest waters in number of fish species. Anglers favor smallmouth bass, catfish, Ozark bass, and a variety of panfish. Most people fish from the bank or a boat. Float fishing is common on the river's lower, eastern half. Catch-and-release of smallmouth bass—with artificial lures, barbless hooks, and careful handling—is encouraged.

# Ozark Vistas, River Float Trips, Wilderness Walks, and More

**Getting Here** Use US 65 or AR 7, 14, or 21 to get to the park. Little Rock and Fayetteville, AR, and Springfield, MO, are two- or three-hour drives from here. The central Ozark Mountains boast many public scenic and recreation areas.

**Camping** The 11 campgrounds reached by car are open first-come, first-served. Some Buffalo Point campsites can be reserved. The Tyler Bend and Buffalo Point campgrounds offer restrooms, showers, and trailer dump stations seasonally. Most Buffalo Point sites have water and electrical hookups. Mid-March through mid-November, fees are charged at most campgrounds and a reservation is recommended. From November through March, services at Tyler Bend and Buffalo Point are limited but dates may vary. Camping limit is 14 consecutive days. All park group sites and pavilions must be reserved. Make all reservations at [recreation.gov](http://recreation.gov) or call 1-877-444-6777. Campgrounds from Steel Creek to Rush Landing are excellent for beginning or ending float trips.

All have toilets. The steep roads to Steel Creek and Kyles Landing are not recommended for trailers, buses, or motor homes. Campground quiet hours are 10 pm to 6 am; use generators only in developed areas and there only between 8 am and 8 pm.

**Accommodations** Harrison, Jasper, Yellville, Marshall, and other communities offer food service and lodging. In the park, Buffalo Point has concession rental cabins and a restaurant open seasonally. Contact: Buffalo Point Concessions, 2261 Hwy. 268E, Yellville, AR 72687, 870-449-6206 or [www.buffalopoint.com](http://www.buffalopoint.com).

**Horseback Riding** Horseback riding is permitted on many park trails. In the Lower Buffalo Wilderness the trail loop from Hathaway Horse Camp to Cow Creek, from Cow Creek along Buffalo River to Cook Hollow, and then back to Hathaway Horse Camp is a special-use zone. Horses are restricted to established trails there and also

in the Ponca Wilderness. Elsewhere, horse and stock use is allowed on abandoned roads, gravel bars, old traces, backcountry trails, and shoulders of roads open to motor vehicles. Horses and pack animals are not allowed on frontcountry trails or in areas designated closed to horses. Primitive camping facilities that accommodate trailers are near Steel Creek and Erbie and at Woolum.

**Hiking** The park offers wonderful hiking. Find trail maps at the visitor center, ranger stations, or online. Short, day-use trails are at Lost Valley, Tyler Bend, Buffalo Point, and Pruitt Information Station. More difficult trails are in the Ponca and Lower Buffalo wilderness areas. You can also walk the traces of former roads. Hiking is best in winter when foliage is down, but ice may pose a hazard then. In hunting season, use caution and wear bright clothing in the woods. Dogs, cats, and other pets are not allowed on park trails, in designated wilderness areas, or in park caves except as follows: In the Ponca Wilderness, pets on

a six-foot leash are permitted on gravel bars up to 25 feet from the water's edge. Three designated trails allow pets on a six-foot leash—Lost Valley (AR 43), Mill Creek (AR 7), and Forest Trail (Buffalo Point)—see map.

**Interpretive Programs** Interpretive events in spring and summer at Buffalo Point, Tyler Bend, Pruitt, Ozark, and elsewhere include campfire programs, guided walks and hikes, guided canoe floats, and Ozark folk music. Get a schedule at any park information station.

**For a Safe Visit** Common sense best protects you against accidents. This is a natural area with hazards. • Don't count on cell phone coverage in the river corridor. • The river is great for swimming, but never swim alone or when the river level is high. There are no lifeguarded swimming areas. • Diving is extremely dangerous—rocks and logs lie unseen below the surface. • Loose, crumbly rocks or winter ice can make climbing riverside

bluffs hazardous. A fall from a bluff is certain injury; getting medical help is difficult, dangerous, and may take hours. • Boil all water not from approved sources. • Bury all human waste at least 100 feet from water. Carry out all garbage. • ATV use is prohibited in the park. • Park fire-arm regulations conform to Arkansas regulations; firearms are prohibited in public buildings. • Consult the Superintendent's Compendium on the park website for any special regulations or restrictions. • To report emergencies 24 hours a day, call 1-888-692-1162 or 911.

**To Enrich Your Visit** River guides, topographic maps, and books that explore this region's great wealth of natural and cultural history are sold at the visitor center and ranger stations. Except for the sale of Access, Senior, or Annual permits, no visitor services or sales are offered at park headquarters in Harrison.

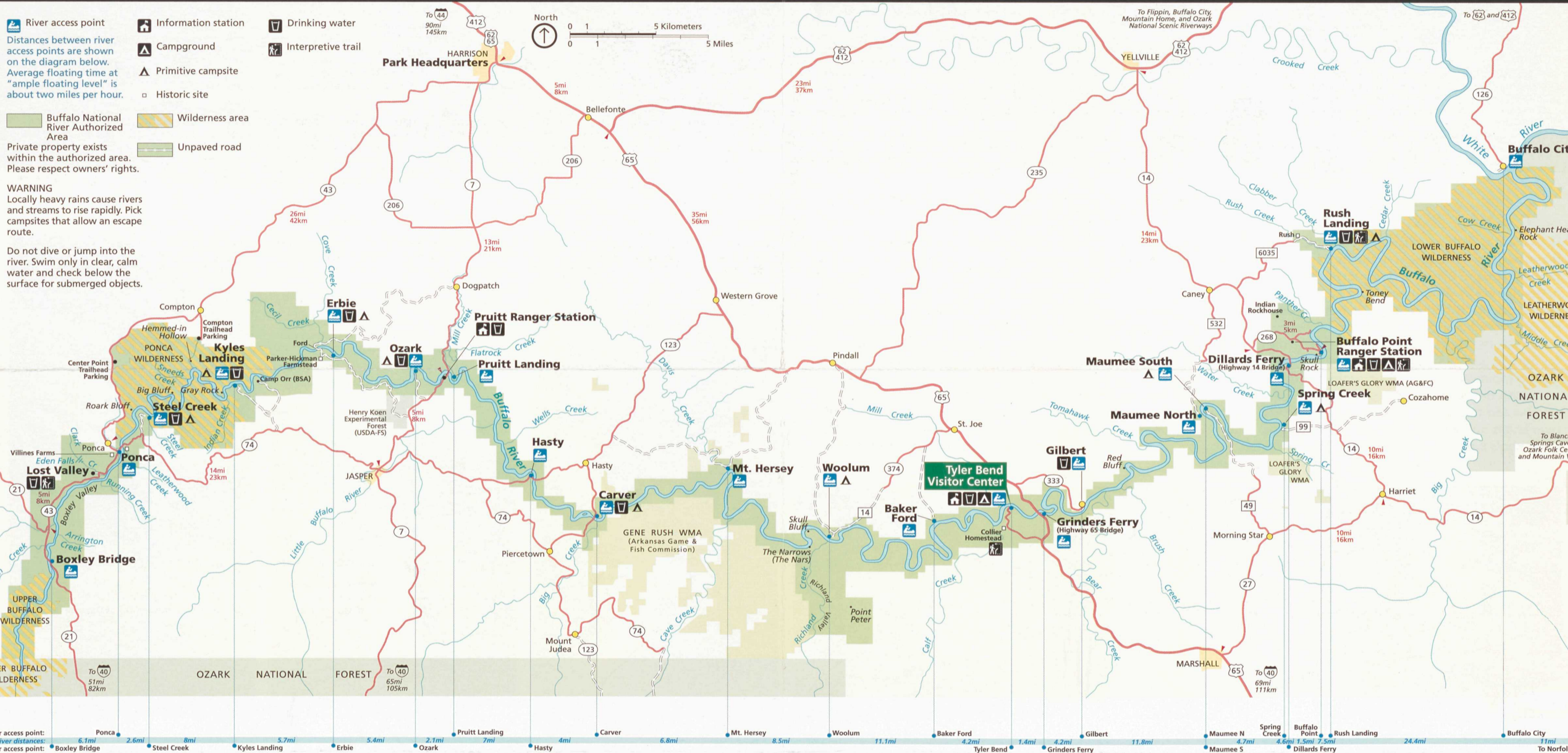
Service animals are welcome.

**More Information** Buffalo National River Park Headquarters 402 N. Walnut, Suite 136 Harrison, AR 72601 870-365-2700 TTY 870-741-2884 [www.nps.gov/buff](http://www.nps.gov/buff)

Tyler Bend Visitor Center 870-439-2502 Buffalo Point Ranger Station 870-449-4311 Pruitt Ranger Station 870-446-5373

Buffalo National River is one of over 390 parks in the National Park System. To learn more about national parks and National Park Service programs in America's communities please visit [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov).

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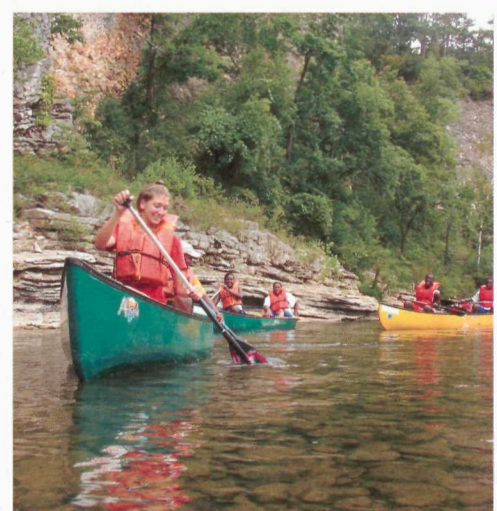
## Floating the Buffalo River

Few experiences can compare to a float trip down the Buffalo. Clean waters, high rocky bluffs, wooded hillsides, and myriad wildflowers in season conspire to restore you as a nature enthusiast. Inexperienced beginners can float slow-moving river sections, and canoes may be rented nearby. Always check with a ranger about river conditions before you set out.

The Buffalo River offers a near-wilderness experience between Carver and Woolum and downstream of Rush Landing. Choices for length of float trips are many. Choose a half-day float or a 10-day float, 120-mile expedition; or anything in between. Boat motors under 10 hp are allowed only up to the Erbie boat launch.

**Before Setting Out** Upstream from Pruitt the river offers exciting whitewater usually floatable in winter and spring only. Canoe or kayak experience is highly recommended. Between Ponca and Kyles Landing, use is usually high, especially on weekends. Except when the river level is high, the Buffalo below Pruitt has calm pools, riffles, and the occasional fast water.

On the lower Buffalo, be aware that Rush Landing is the last



A serene stretch of the Buffalo River.



Whitewater action challenges paddlers on the upper river.

takeout before entering the Lower Buffalo Wilderness. A Buffalo National River Services and River Level Guide (at [ar.water.usgs.gov/buffaloriver/](http://ar.water.usgs.gov/buffaloriver/)) has general river conditions.

**Concessioners** Park-approved concessioners (listed at [www.nps.gov/buff](http://www.nps.gov/buff)) rent canoes, kayaks, rafts, and johnboats, providing all trip needs except personal gear and food. Their brief talks are meant to get you and their equipment safely over rapids and down the

river, so listen carefully. They also offer shuttle services for both floaters and hikers. Guided johnboat fishing trips serve the middle and lower river. Gear and food can be provided.

**River Safety** Observe all river warning signs and water safety regulations. • A US 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 them low and balanced in your canoe. • If you capsiz



Great blue heron.