

## a-Maze-ing Karst

This area of the Ozarks features the relationship between water and rock. Weak **Carbonic Acid** is formed when rainwater leaches through organic matter (decomposing plant and animal material) in the ground. Over many thousands of years, Carbonic acid has worked away at the region's limestone and dolomite (carbonate rock). This relationship has created a **complex 'maze' water system** that exists more below ground, than above.

**Sinkholes, springs, caves, and disappearing streams** are all karst features found along the Indian Rockhouse trail, and within the 95,000 acres of the Park.

### Karst Formation



Arkansas averages over 50 inches of **rain** each year!

+

**Air** is composed of:

Nitrogen (78%)

Oxygen (21%)

Argon (1%)

Carbon Dioxide, CO<sub>2</sub> (0.3%)

+

**Organic Matter:**

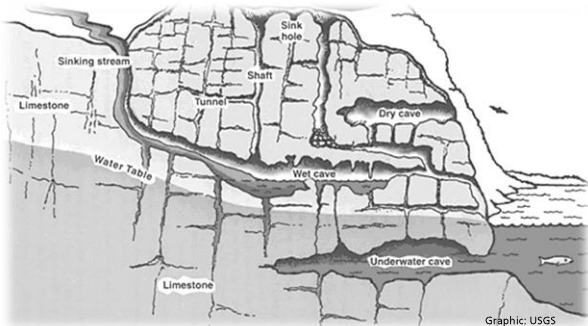
decomposed

plant and animal  
material (lots of CO<sub>2</sub>)

=

**Carbonic Acid:**

formed when rainwater  
filters through air and  
organic matter



**Carbonic Acid + Carbonate Rock= KARST**

Features of karst: sinkholes, sinking streams,  
caves, springs

## Old Zinc Mine

Around 1880, **zinc ore** was found and mining towns began springing up throughout the area. The largest mines were located just eight miles downriver at Rush.

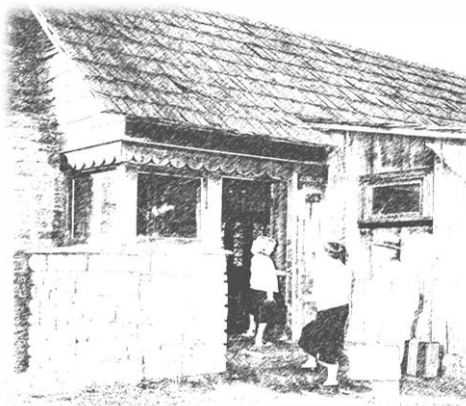
During World War I, the value of zinc skyrocketed. Many local people, dreaming of getting rich quick, began prospecting their own lands.

Unfortunately, most mines, like this small opening, proved to be void of any economic minerals, and were soon abandoned. Today, animals such as deer mice, woodrats, and cave salamanders find shelter in someone's abandoned dream.



### Rock Quarry

**Rock for park buildings** and walls was quarried here by men of the **Civilian Conservation Corps** during the 1930s. The long tube-like drill marks are where dynamite charges were set to blast off hunks of the red limestone. Take a look at their craftsmanship by walking around the Buffalo Point cabins and pavilions.



# Indian Rockhouse



## BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER





## Panther Creek

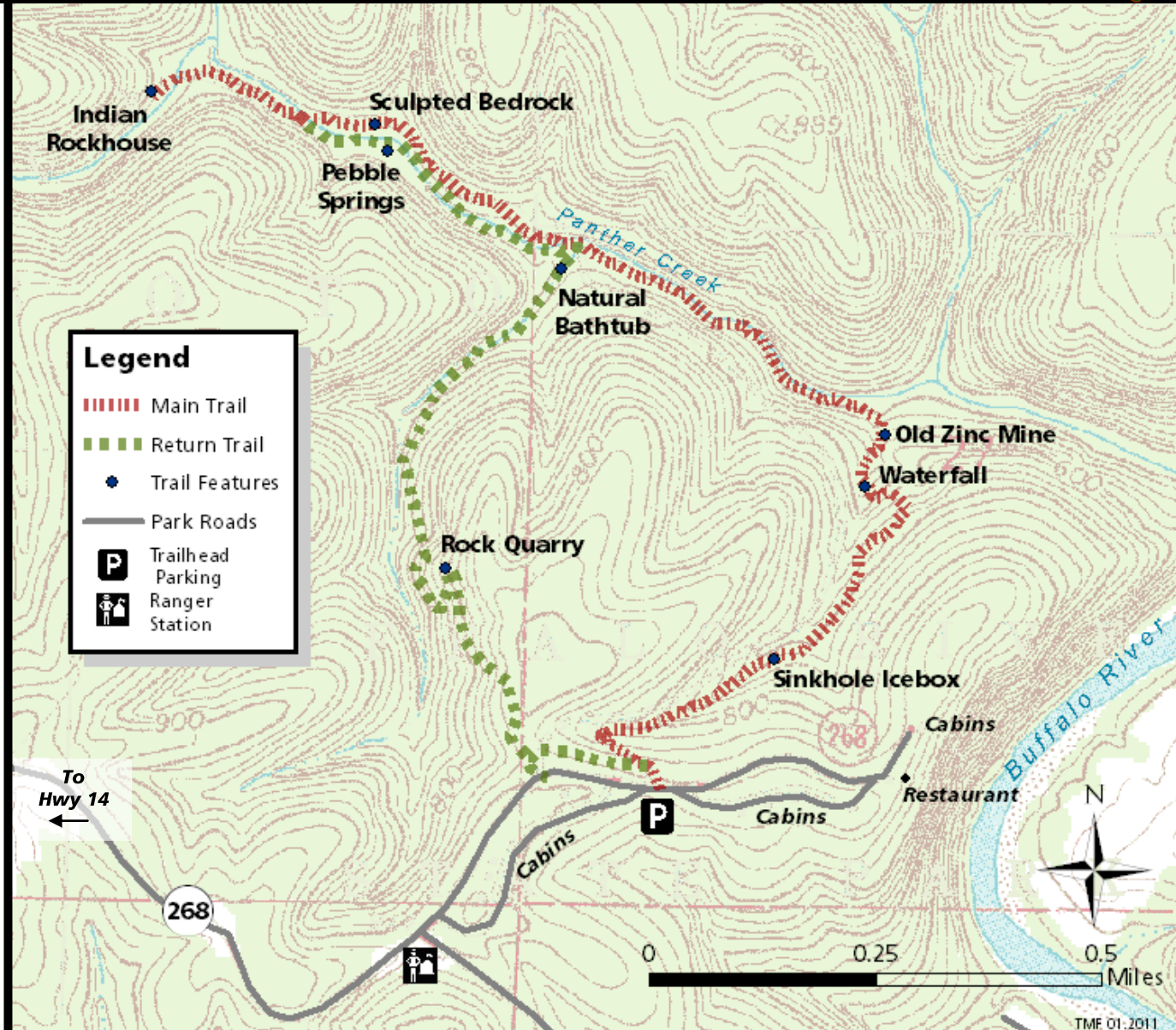
Panther Creek is an **intermittent stream**, meaning it only has water during parts of the year (as opposed to a perennial stream). The streambed collects extra organic matter during dry periods, yielding a nutrient rich environment. An intermittent stream is a safer spawning location for smaller fish (such as the Orangethroat Darter), because there are fewer larger predators.



## Indian Rockhouse

The Indian Rockhouse is an example of a **bluff shelter** used by prehistoric Native Americans since at least as early as 7,000 BC. Coming to the attention of the Carnegie Institute, excavations were carried out in the 1930s, revealing an array of stone tools, basketry, and food remains. The site has been protected from all excavation and collection since becoming part of Buffalo National River in 1972 so that what remains of this unique site can be preserved for future generations.

**\*Camping is not permitted. Digging for artifacts is prohibited,** as it destroys the scientific value of the site and is disrespectful to Native American Peoples. Please help keep the cave in its natural state for others to enjoy.



*Pack it in-Pack it out*

*Respect the Resource*

### Hiking Information:

**Moderate-Strenuous:** The trailhead and the Rockhouse have about a 400ft elevation change between them; therefore, be prepared for a steady incline/decline on the trail, with several steep sections. Allot **3 hours** for this 3.5 mile hike, and make sure to bring plenty of **drinking water**.