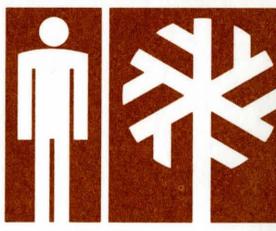


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development plan / cultural landscape report

ERBIE
BUFFALO



NATIONAL RIVER / ARKANSAS

DEVELOPMENT PLAN/CULTURAL LANDSCAPE REPORT

ERBIE AREA

Buffalo National River
Arkansas

Recommended: Alec Gould
Superintendent, Buffalo National River

April 4, 1986

Approved: Bill Alford
Acting Regional Director, Southwest Region

May 28, 1986

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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INTRODUCTION

The 1975 Master Plan for Buffalo River includes the following statement about Erbie:

Erbie gives access to Beauty (Fitton) Cave as well as to the Buffalo River. The open fields and mountains are suited to horseback riding and hiking. Beauty Cave, it is said, is as spectacular as any cave in the Ozark plateau. It is unusual because of its enormous rooms (one is approximately 700 feet in length by 70 feet in height) and its gypsum formations. Because there are many developed caves in the region, it is recommended that Beauty Cave remain primitive, with only limited access. Public access will be via guided tour. Some visitor safety facilities, such as handrails, may be required but they are to be handled in a way that preserves the primitive character of an "undiscovered" cave. A primitive camp is planned near the river.

No specifics are provided on the location of facilities or management of open fields. The Master Plan also shows a "historic farm" for the Erbie area on the Land Classification Plan map. However, no details are provided on the historic farmstead, the extent of the cultural landscape, or how these resources should be managed.

The purpose of this document is to describe a development and cultural landscape management strategy for Erbie. The Erbie area includes lands roughly within a two mile radius of the Erbie ford on the Buffalo River. It includes the former Erbie townsite, nearby farmlands, the Hickman Farmstead, a boat launch and primitive camping area, and Fitton (Beauty) Cave. The plan is intended to guide management decisions for the next 10-15 years.

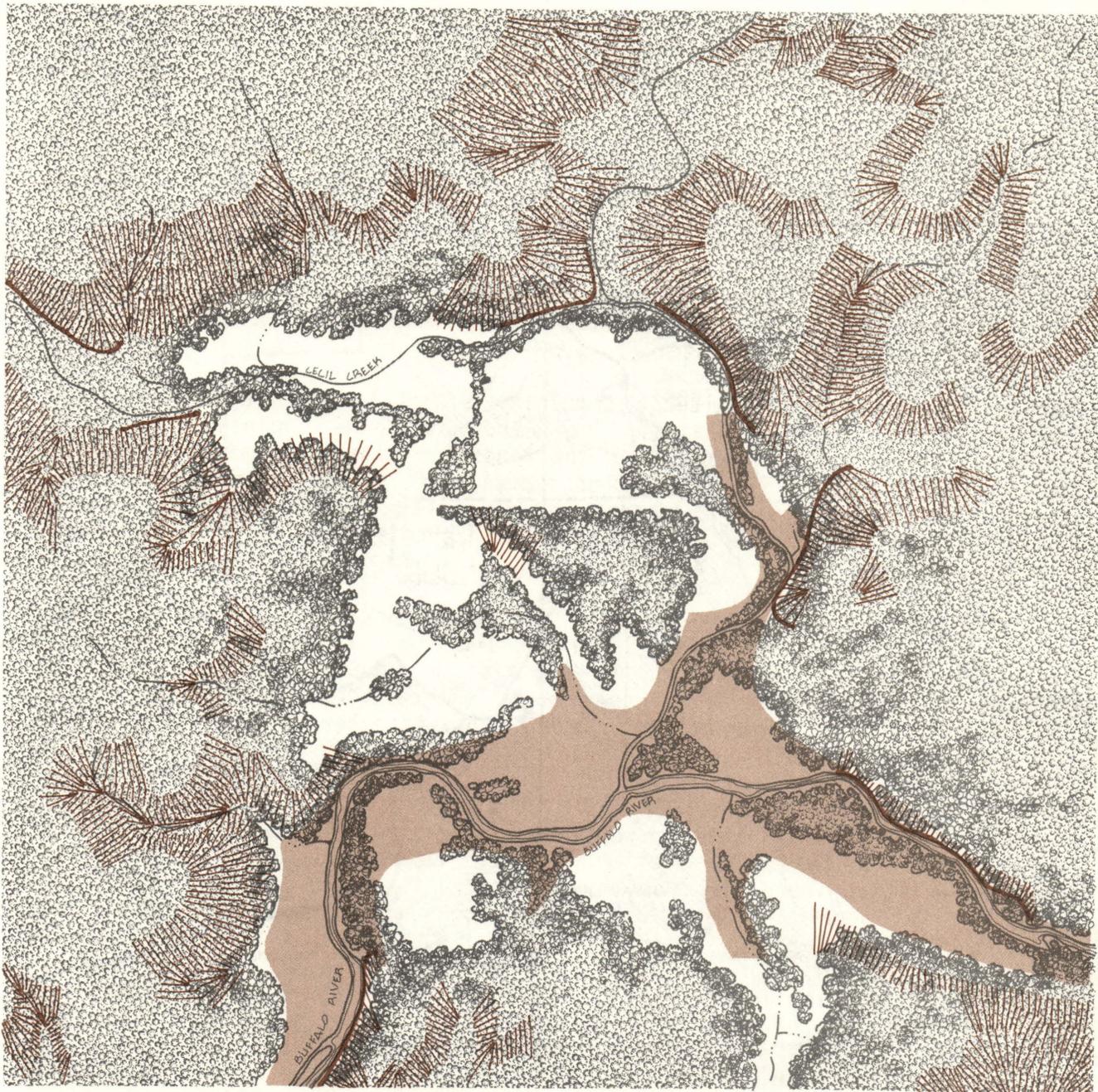
The primary development issue is the location, size, and character of facilities needed to assure essential visitor services are provided while accomplishing the natural and cultural resource management objectives for Erbie. Proposed facilities include a boat landing, campground, picnic areas, trails, roads, and parking areas. Cultural resource management issues include the area's historic significance, including its eligibility for nomination to the National Register of Historic Places, and the proposed management of the cultural landscape including roads, farmlands, and structures. Most of the area's buildings have been removed. The remaining farm complexes are vacant; one is falling into disrepair, one was recently stabilized by the Park Service, and another is in good condition structurally. There is a church remaining that is still used by local residents. Farm fields will revert to forest if not managed, and some are doing so now. Others are being maintained through short-term special use permits for hay cutting. Roads in the area are primitive and below typical Park Service road standards.

NATURAL RESOURCES

The primary resource of Buffalo National River, including the Erbie area, is the clean, free-flowing river. The superior water quality in the Buffalo River was recognized, as was its free-flowing character, when Congress established the national river. The State of Arkansas has classified the river as an outstanding natural resource water having extraordinary recreational and esthetic value. This is the State's highest stream use classification. This classification requires that higher standards be met for maximum fecal coliform content. The river is also classified as a coolwater fishery by the State.

Erbie is a former agricultural community situated in a relatively broad valley surrounded by mountains. Cecil and Cove Creeks join near Erbie to form a tributary to the Buffalo. The landscape is a combination of forest and open agricultural fields. Forest communities include upland oak-hickory, red cedar glades, mixed hardwoods, and floodplain species along the river. Some open fields have been maintained through special use hay permits; others are reverting to forest (see Natural Features map).

Fitton Cave is a major cave resource in Northern Arkansas. It is about two miles northwest of the former Erbie townsite, and access is via the Erbie road near Cecil Creek. Fitton Cave is an important habitat for the endangered Indiana bat, and a portion of the cave is closed during their period of occupation from August 15 to May 15. At other times use is limited to two groups per day to protect the fragile cave resources from overuse and degradation. There are no other endangered plant or animal species inhabiting the Erbie area. Bald eagles winter regularly along the Buffalo River. There have also been unconfirmed reports of both adult and immature bald eagles in the Erbie area during the summer, so the possibility of nesting exists. There are plant species currently under review for possible listing that occur in the Erbie area. Such species have been located at Jasper-in-June, on the Fuller Tract and near the Buffalo River northeast of the Hickman Cabin. In addition to river use and caving, the Erbie area offers opportunities for hiking, picnicking, nature study, fishing, camping, and interpretation of cultural resources. Erbie also has a mix of field and forest that provides attractive hunting for such game species as wild turkey and white-tailed deer. For a complete description of the natural resources of Buffalo National River, the reader should reference the 1976 Environmental Statement on the Master Plan. The 1982 Resources Management Plan for Buffalo River does not reference any other natural resource issues specific to Erbie.

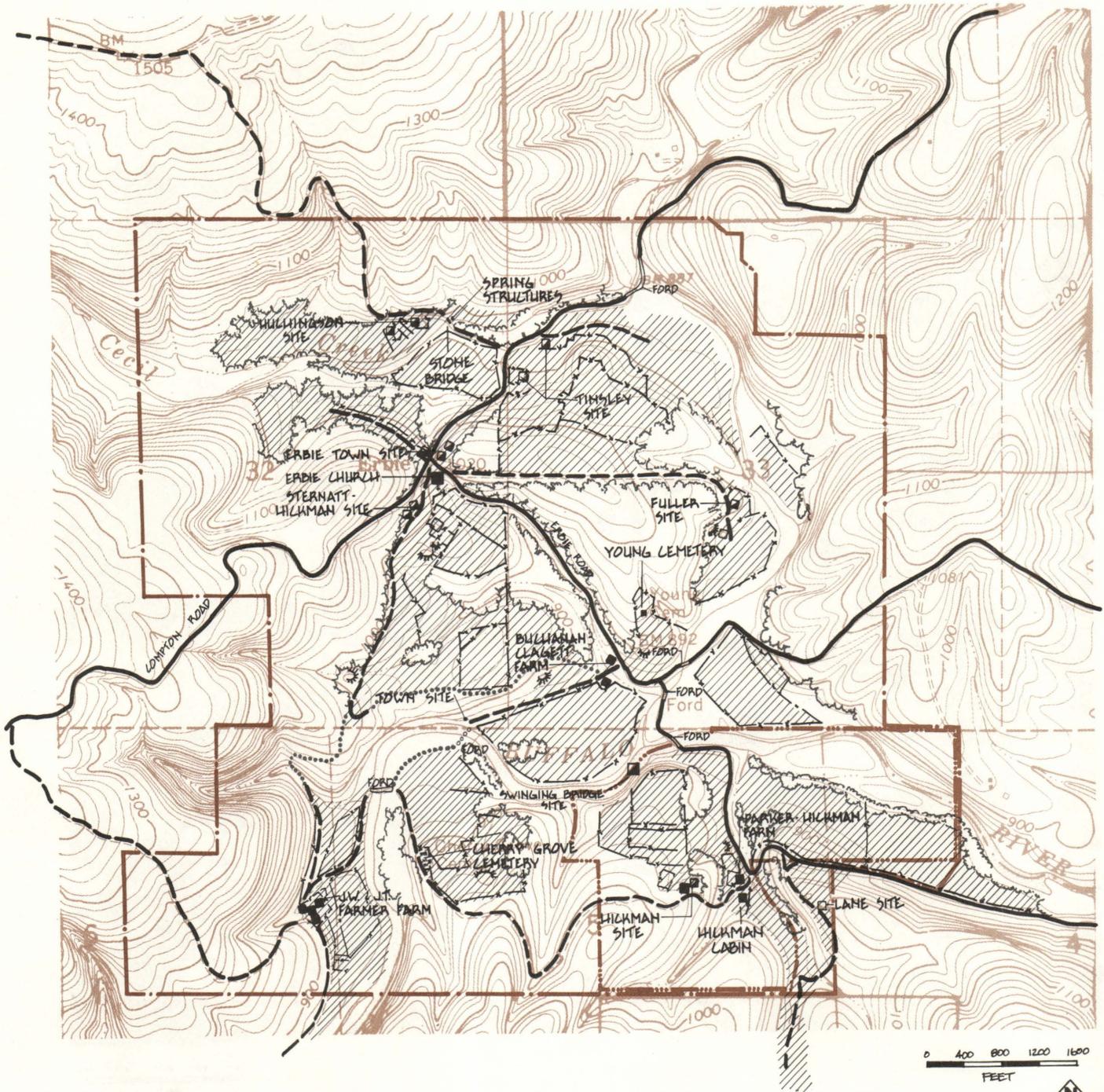


ERBIE NATURAL FEATURES BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER ARKANSAS

LEGEND

-  BLIFFS
-  STEEP SLOPES
-  APPROXIMATE FLOOD PRONE AREA
-  FORESTED AREAS
-  RIVERS & STREAMS

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ERBIE CULTURAL RESOURCES BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER ARKANSAS

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- LEGEND**
- STOCK POND
 - OPEN FIELDS
 - HISTORICAL ZONE BOUNDARY
 - EXISTING STRUCTURE
 - FOUNDATION OR RUINS
 - SITE
 - PRIMARY ROADS
 - SECONDARY ROADS
 - TRAILS
 - FENCE LINE
 - PROPOSED NATIONAL REGISTER DISTRICT BOUNDARY



Clagett Farmstead



Hickman Farmstead



Clagett House



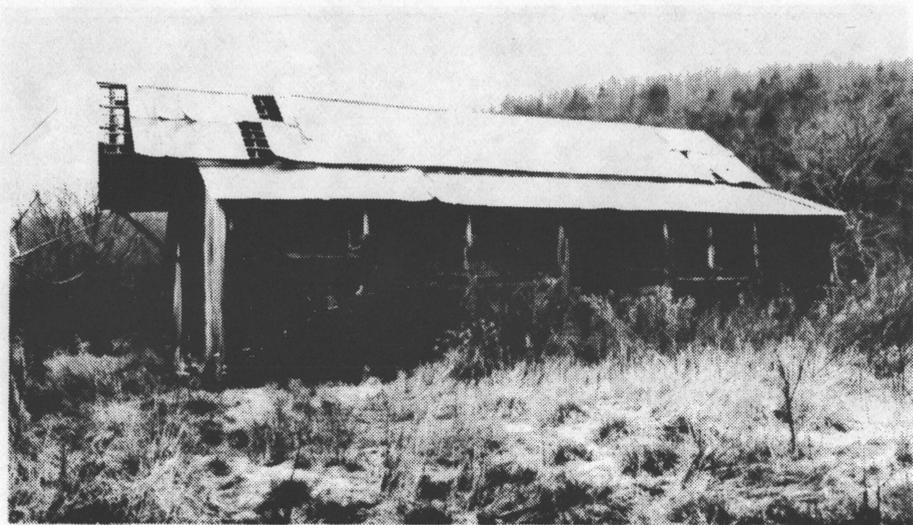
Ernie Church



Open Field Reverting to Forest



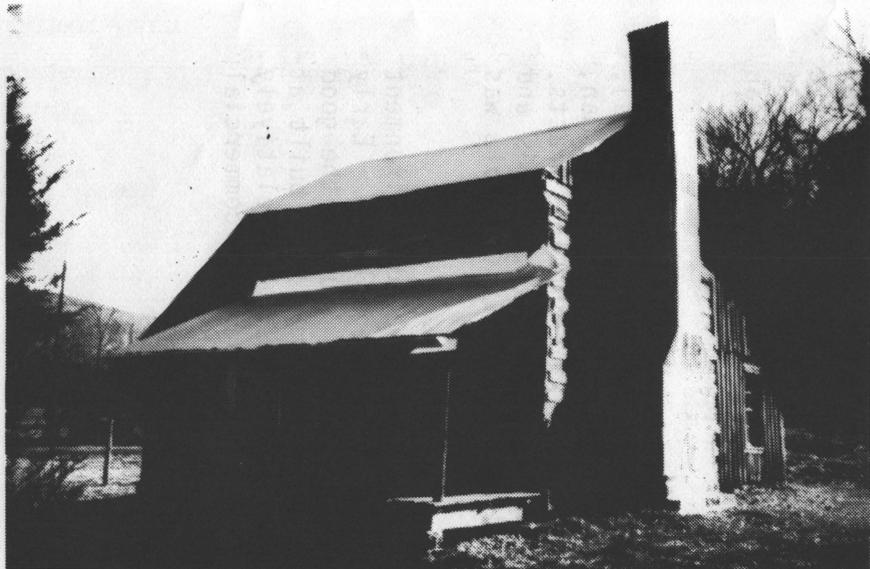
Farmer Farmstead



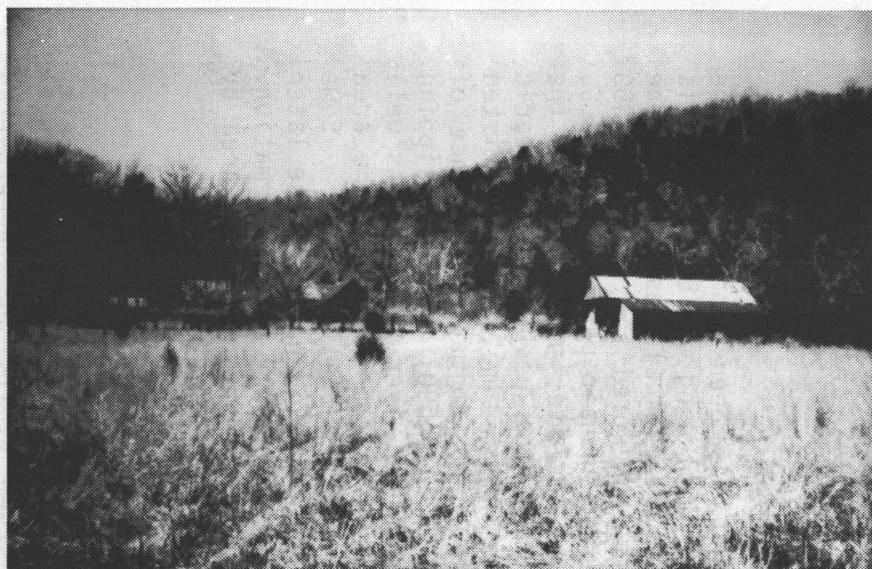
Farmer Barn



Farmer House



Hickman Cabin



Farmer Farmstead



Proposed Erbie Boat Access/Campground Area



Proposed Boat Landing Site

CULTURAL RESOURCES

Prehistory

Because of the limited amount of research that has been conducted in the area, the prehistory of Buffalo National River, including the Erbie area, is not well known. Information gathered from archeological research in the Ozarks suggests that prehistoric people may have occupied the area by 8,000 B.C. or earlier. Occupation during the succeeding Archaic period (8,000 B.C. to A.D. 1) is represented at several of the 30 sites identified in the general Erbie area. These sites may represent the peak of prehistoric occupation along the Buffalo River. During this time, people existed primarily by gathering plant foods and hunting game animals. Evidence of subsequent occupation during the Woodland (A.D. 1 to 1,000) and Mississippian (A.D. 1,000 to 1,541) periods occur along the Buffalo River but are less well represented. Corn agriculture was introduced during this time but the area lacks evidence of accompanying villages and burial mounds. Some archeological sites in the vicinity of Erbie suggest evidence of these later stages, but archeological studies would be needed to verify this information. No physical evidence has been found to indicate occupation of the area by historic native American groups.

Cultural Landscape Features

The Erbie cultural landscape consists of fertile bottomlands and gently sloping hills (elevation 830' to 1,040') in an area about one and one-half miles square. The area is surrounded by steep bluffs and tree-covered mountains rising to over 2,000 feet elevation. Newberry Point to the north and Mutton Point to the south are of particular note. The long occupation of the area has altered but not fundamentally changed the land. Utilized by Anglos beginning in the 1830s, the cultural landscape has evolved through adaptation to the original natural setting. The area possesses distinctive material culture as well as an association with events and processes significant to the appreciation of the Ozarks contribution to the American experience.

Early settlers moved west from Tennessee and adjacent states and took up the best lands (as determined by slope, soil, and other natural assets), beginning with the occupation of fertile bottomland near the Parker-Hickman, Villines-Huchingson, Farmer, Buchanan-Clagett, and Claxton-Tinsley tracts. Families interacted in several ways facilitated by a network of roads and trails, swinging bridges, and stream fords; and the community of Erbie was formed (see Cultural Resources map).

The original settlers made a living in a relatively isolated environment using the fertile soil of the floodplains and adjacent benchlands. Early agricultural activities were largely subsistence in nature. During the good times near the turn of the twentieth century new structures were built at several farmsteads, including larger more stylish houses and relatively spacious barns. Residents moved from a subsistence toward a commercial agriculture economy to enhance and modernize their life style.

Cultural landscape components at Erbie include the field pattern, fencerows, road network converging at the Erbie townsite, river and creek fords, swinging bridges, farmsteads and cemeteries. These components represent a continuum of settlement, economic pursuit and social interaction. They reflect the inhabitant's relationship with the landscape, neither dominating it nor being dominated by it; but rather, in harmony with it. Open field and fencerow patterns reflect this adaptation to natural conditions and placing a cultural order upon the land. Livestock production and cropping practices developed over time. These cultural expressions display the evolution from raw frontier to settled community during nearly 150 years of Ozarks history.

Historic Structures

The Erbie landscape includes about 50 structures and ruins (see Appendix for complete list). Together they form a collection of vernacular Ozarks architecture and a sample of building practices employed in the area between the 1850s and 1950s. Various periods of construction are represented, and the skills associated with using local wood and stone materials are evidenced. The Parker-Hickman log house is the most significant structure because of its age (c.1850) and the integrity of craftsmanship employed. The J.W. Farmer house, dating to about 1904, has a steep gable roof, brick chimney cap and molded porch support posts. The Clagett house (1921-22) was designed and built by Arch Hollaway, a carpenter from Harrison (some 20 miles away). Both the Farmer and Clagett houses are one and one-half story, T-shaped in plan and good examples of the form and feeling characteristic of the rural Victorian style.

There are four barns within the Erbie area. The Farmer (1895) and Hickman (1912) barns are double-crib log construction at their core. The Clagett barn (1911-13) is an oak box frame with vertical rough-sawn board-and-batten exterior under a great gable roof.

The three surviving farmsteads (Hickman, Farmer, and Clagett) include four to seven additional outbuildings each: smokehouses, chicken houses, corn cribs, tool sheds, feeding houses, etc. These clusters of buildings together with outhouses and spring/pump houses form a functional spatial arrangement. The spring/pump houses and associated domestic and animal watering structures are a significant architectural/engineering collection. Together with the homes, fields, natural springs, rivers and creeks, they form an intricate water delivery system. The Clagett pump house is built of field stone while the Farmer spring house is built of logs. At the former Huchingson farm, the spring development includes a three-foot diameter tunnel (natural or manmade), a concrete dam enclosing the spring pool under the protection of the overhanging bluff, stone pier supported piping, a concrete 3-bay tank, a stone slab, dry laid-up stone bridge, and associated vernacular engineering features. The water management structures at Erbie also include eight earth and rock dammed stock ponds found scattered about the open fields.

The Erbie townsite has few remaining architectural features except for the stone foundations of homes, a store, and associated structures. The Erbie Church is the single remaining structure of the "town", and it is in good condition. It was erected about the turn of the century and is of a simple

clean-line style. It is a frame building with horizontal lap siding built on a tall stone foundation. It has a steep gable over the main one-room (sanctuary) block and a small kitchen wing at the rear side. A laid-up-stone cellar lies below this wing.

Significance

Much of the integrity of the Erbie study area has disappeared with the dismantling of many structures and advanced deterioration of others (i.e. Farmer structures). The lack of funding to complete a detailed contextual historical study precludes a full comparative analysis to provide evidence that Erbie is significant relative to similar cultural landscapes in the region. However, the Parker-Hickman farm meets National Register criteria and is recommended for nomination. The proposed National Register district (approximately 195 acres) would encompass the Hickman farmstead, historic core of 80 acres along the Buffalo River, and lands included in the sale of the tract to the National Park Service in 1982.

In the 1830s the Parker family moved into the upper Buffalo drainage from Tennessee and settled on lands in T 16 N, R 21 W south of the Buffalo River. An evaluation of the Parker-Hickman tract provides sufficient historical evidence to support a National Register nomination. The Primary criterion met is "distinctive construction of structures," particularly the log portion of the house built about 1850 and two log barns constructed early this century. Supporting criteria met include "settlement patterns of the border south" (Ozarks) and "nineteenth and twentieth century economic development." The integrity of the farm is preserved in that a full complement of structures remains, dating from 1850 to 1955, including the house, barns, granary, smokehouse, privy, poultry house, and machine sheds. Extant roads, fields, fencerows, springs, a garden, and orchard sites complete the historic farm setting.

A distinguishing feature of the farmstead is the half dove-tail-notched cedar log portion of the house, crafted in a manner superior to most other log structures in the Ozarks. The structure, although added to in the late nineteenth century, possesses integrity of materials, basic design, and location, and is one of the older structures in the Arkansas Ozarks. Probably constructed by Greenberry or William H. Parker, the structure reflects techniques used on the Tennessee and North Carolina frontiers, which were the former homes of the Parkers.

Being remote and with difficult access, the Ozark region was among the last areas between the Mississippi River and Kansas Territory that was penetrated by settlers. The farmsteads were inhabited by pioneers from the east who sought a new beginning. Their early subsistence agriculture efforts took advantage of river bottomland, which was very limited along Ozark streams. Raising a variety of crops and livestock, the Parkers and subsequent owners experimented with several ways to achieve an economic return from the land. Valley and ridge roads ultimately connected the farm to midwestern markets via Missouri, particularly Springfield's market and railhead. In time, the farming activities provided more than subsistence; a commercial enterprise evolved with changed production, as evidenced in the more recent historic structures on the farm.

The Parker-Hickman farm was continuously occupied from the 1840s to 1978, and it is worthy of nomination to the National Register of Historic Places at the state level of significance.

Cultural Landscape Management

As stated in the recent Park Service publication, Cultural Landscapes (1984), a rural historic district that is not eligible for the National Register of Historic Places "may be protected for its own sake, and for the improvement and enhancement of the visitor experience." Accordingly, the Park Service will manage the Erbie area as a historic zone, but preservation actions will be the minimum necessary to preserve the cultural landscape. There will be no attempt to return the scene to an earlier period. The Parker-Hickman farm is of primary significance and it would continue to receive a high preservation emphasis by the Service. Because the legislative history and 1975 Master Plan do not specify a private use zone for Erbie, the historic zone will be preserved using the most cost-effective techniques as described below. The proposed rural historic zone is shown on the Cultural Resources map, as well as the proposed Parker-Hickman historic district which is within the historic zone boundaries. The significance of the entire historic zone will be reevaluated in the future as additional contextual information about the Erbie cultural landscape becomes available.

Historic Structures and Farmlands. Based on the National Register eligibility and management direction established in the Master Plan, the Parker-Hickman cabin and farm building complex will continue to be preserved by the Park Service as a primary historic interpretive display. The Buchanan-Clagett house and barn will continue to be preserved as secondary historic structures to provide an early 20th century contrast to the mid-19th century Hickman Cabin.

In order to perpetuate the cultural landscape scene, agricultural activities such as haying and livestock use will be encouraged. A secondary objective in keeping the fields open at Erbie is to provide more scenic diversity in general along the Buffalo River. Haying and cattle raising will be guided by farm conservation plans which will guard against water pollution and erosion.

The most cost effective approach to achieve the cultural preservation objectives at the Buchanan-Clagett farm is to lease it under the general Park Service leasing authority (36 CFR 17) to a family who will, by stipulation, take care of the buildings and lands in the proper manner. An important part of the lease agreement will be the upgrading and maintenance of the house to meet minimum health and safety standards. The very presence of a family living there could also help to provide protection for the cultural and natural resources in the Erbie area, as well as being a point of contact for visitors needing help. If leasing proves impractical, the exterior of the Buchanan-Clagett house will be preserved by the National Park Service maintenance staff, and the fields will be maintained through periodic bush hogging or prescribed burning.

The Farmer farm complex is accessible only by canoe or on foot. The historic access road from the west is severely eroded and impassible by vehicle, and the access road from the east requires crossing an unimproved ford on the Buffalo River. The buildings are in an advanced state of disrepair. For these reasons the buildings will be managed by the Park Service as a walk-in interpretive discovery site. They will receive no preservation treatment and will be allowed to deteriorate gradually through natural processes.

Vegetation clearing around selected historic remains will be done to slow the deterioration process and assist interpretation of the area, as appropriate. The Erbie Church will be maintained by those utilizing the structure for traditional community activities through a Park Service lease or permit. The exterior will be maintained in accordance with historic preservation standards; the interior, utilities, and rest rooms will be modified and be upgraded to meet all health and safety codes.

Roads. To preserve this important component of the cultural landscape, most roads within the historic zone will be maintained in their existing condition on current alignments. Minor improvements for drainage (e.g. culverts) or safety (e.g. turnouts) may be accomplished but will be the absolute minimum necessary to solve the problem. Some of the historic traces will be maintained through use as trails. Some very primitive roads that served former farmlands and houses will not be maintained, and the routes allowed to revert to natural conditions.

VISITOR USE AND DEVELOPMENT

Existing Use

Erbie is a secondary use area at Buffalo National River; existing visitor use of the land is relatively light. Most visitors pass through the area on the river having put in upstream at Kyles with intentions of taking out downstream at Pruitt. Use fluctuates from year to year. In 1985, about 13,900 visits were recorded for Erbie (excluding river users that simply floated through). According to the River Use Management Plan (1983), about 5,000 canoes floated from Kyles Landing to Pruitt in 1981. Based on two persons per canoe this would mean about 10,000 people floated through the Erbie area in that year, which was considered a typical year.

Use at Erbie is seasonal because the river is floatable primarily during the spring months. In 1984, over half of the people visiting Erbie did so in April and May. About 1,270 visitors camped at the existing Erbie camping area in 1985. In 1984, about 250 permits were issued to groups visiting Fitton Cave. Group size averages six people, so about 1,500 people visited the cave that year.

Visitor Experience

Canoeing, fishing, wading, swimming, and just watching the river run will continue to be the primary visitor experience at Erbie. The area will also be used for camping, picnicking, scenic driving, hiking, horseback riding, nature study, hunting, and historic feature interpretation. The Erbie area offers fine opportunities for short hikes or rides and related informal picnicking use. Fitton Cave will continue to be a high quality caving experience for a limited number of self-guided groups. It is anticipated that use at Erbie will increase as proposed developments are constructed and the historic Hickman Farmstead becomes better known. Erbie may be a good place to interpret the continuum of occupation from prehistoric through historic times. The interpretive prospectus for Buffalo National River is currently being updated and it will address these and other interpretive issues related to the Erbie area.

According to the Master Plan (1975) and River Use Management Plan (1983), a major management goal at Buffalo National River is to make available a range of high quality recreation experiences compatible with the river resources. Support facilities such as roads and camping areas will range from very primitive to highly developed, thereby offering a choice of recreation opportunities. In the upper part of the Buffalo River that range will go from (1) gravel bar camping with river access only and no facilities to (2) Kyles Landing (upstream) with a low standard access road and walk-in campsites with firegrates and vault toilets to (3) Erbie campground with a medium standard access road, drive-in and walk-in campsites with firegrates, picnic tables, vault toilets, and some tent pads to (4) Ozark campground (downstream) with drive-in campsites, firegrates, picnic tables, lantern hangers, tent pads, flush toilets, a pavilion, and organized interpretive programs.

Currently Kyles Landing is a heavily used river access and camping site during peak season weekends. It is expected that some of this use will be shifted down to Erbie, thereby lowering the camping density and improving the quality of the primitive area experience at Kyles. This will mean a slightly longer river run of about 12 miles between the Steel Creek put-in and Erbie, and a slightly shorter run of about eight miles between the Erbie launch and Pruitt take-out. Five of the seven upper Buffalo concessioners can be expected to use Erbie more than Kyles once the road, campground, and launch area improvements are made.

Day-use visitors will also have a variety of roads in the Erbie area ranging from the very low standard East Erbie Road, to the low standard North Erbie Road, and the medium standard South Erbie Road. Day-use visitors will also use the picnic areas and trails in the Erbie area.

River Access

The existing boat access (and camping area) is located near the Erbie ford. The site is in the most historic portion of the district determined eligible for the National Register of Historic Places, and it is of inadequate size for the intended future use. A new site serving both private and concessioner boat access will be developed about 3/4 mile downstream at the

eastern edge of the historic district. The site, at the end of an open field, provides adequate space for river access, parking, and related camping activities. It is adjacent to a calm stretch of river making it an ideal river access site. It also requires that about one mile less of the entrance road be upgraded because it is closer to Highway 7. A gravel-surfaced parking area (about 20 cars/2 buses) would serve the boat launch. This parking area will also serve as a trailhead for the Erbie area and the riverlong trail, when completed. The existing boat landing will be obliterated and the site restored. The new boat launch area will be made handicap accessible for river access and bank fishing if practicable.

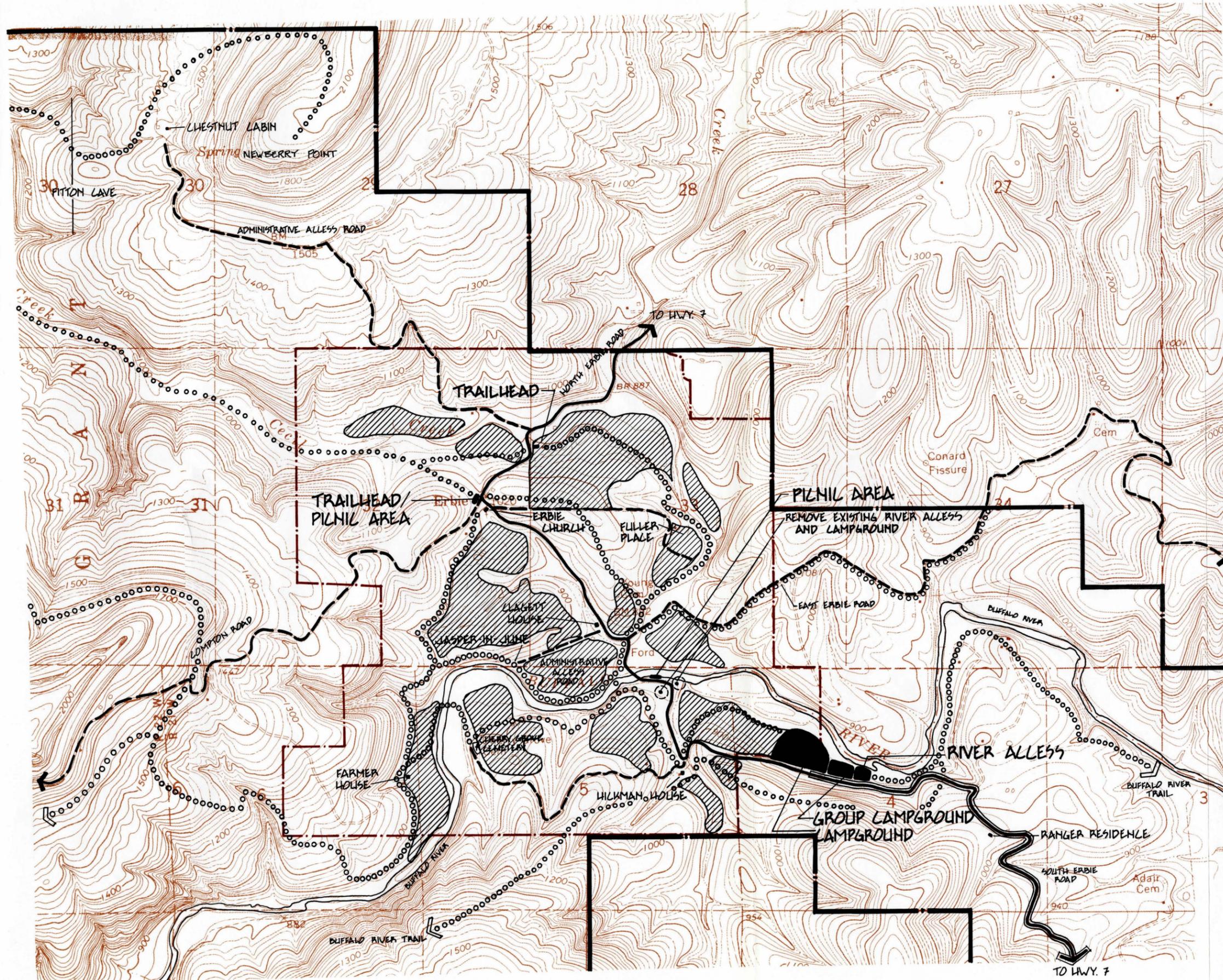
Campground

As mentioned above, a group camping area will be provided adjacent to the launch area. The group camping area will provide space for about 125 persons total or about 10 sites with space for 10-15 visitors each. The sites will have firegrates and picnic tables. They will be designed so as to allow for adjoining sites to be used by larger groups of up to 30 people, if needed. It is assumed that about half of these campers will be floating through Erbie. Therefore, parking will be provided for the other half who drive in (about 20 cars/2 buses).

A primitive campground will be developed adjacent to the group camping area providing up to 30 individual campsites. Each site will include space for about 6 people. About one-half of these will be developed drive-in sites located high in the floodplain, each with a parking space, firegrate, tent pad and picnic table. One site will be developed with water and electricity for a "campground host." At least one of the campsites will be made handicap accessible. About 15 sites will be walk-in campsites lower in the floodplain near the river. They will include only a firegrate and picnic table. This will provide a total peak capacity of about 300 people in the Erbie camping area. This capacity was established based on existing and proposed use plus anticipated shifts in use patterns from Kyles to Erbie. As shown on the Erbie Development Plan map, the area will be organized so that the group camping area acts as a buffer between the boat landing and the individual campsites. The existing camping area in the historic district will be restored to an open field and the parking area obliterated.

Vault toilets will be installed to serve the campground and boat launch area. A well will be developed to provide potable water for the campground and launch area. To provide shade, visual appeal, and screening, extensive landscape plantings using native species will be introduced to the new campground/river access area. These plantings will be placed in areas not subject to frequent annual flooding.

Up to 10 acres of land considered eligible for the National Register of Historic Places will be developed for the proposed campground. However, this facility will not be within view of the primary historic resource, the Hickman Farmstead, and it will be of a primitive design with gravel roads and vault toilets. Proposed landscape plantings will screen the development and soften the visual effect on the historic scene as the vegetation matures.

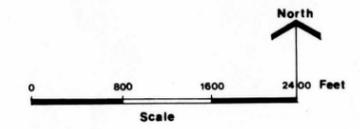


LEGEND

- PARK BOUNDARY
- HISTORICAL ZONE BOUNDARY
- ROADS
 - MEDIUM STANDARD
 - LOW STANDARD
 - VERY LOW STANDARD
- TRAIL
- DEVELOPED AREA
- OPEN FIELDS

**ERBIE
PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT
BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER
ARKANSAS**

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
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Additional archeological surveys were completed for the campground area in March 1986. Two sites in the former farmlands were determined to be significant and potentially eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. In consultation with the State Archeologist and the State Historic Preservation Officer, it was determined that one site will be excavated and the materials salvaged. The other site is in an area proposed for walk-in campsites only. It is felt that the proposal will have minimal additional impact on the site, and no action would be taken to salvage its prehistoric materials. Where vault toilets and landscape plantings will impact the site, excavations will be undertaken by an archeologist.

Trails

To encourage non-vehicular travel and provide opportunities not now available in the area, an extensive network of trails is proposed. The proposed Buffalo River Trail is shown on the south side of the river. Trailheads will be strategically located at the river access parking area, near the Erbie Church and near Cecil Creek. The latter trailhead will serve primarily Fitton Cave users. This trailhead will be limited to the existing fenced area to avoid disturbance of an adjacent archeological site. A portion of the trails near the proposed river access trailhead and possibly near the Erbie Church trailhead will be handicap accessible if practicable. As an important link in the Erbie trail network, a footbridge will be erected across the Buffalo near the Erbie ford at the historic location of the swinging bridge. The river is too high to ford in the spring when the greatest number of hikers are present. For additional details on parkwide trails see the Buffalo River Trail Plan (NPS 1986).

Picnic Area

Currently there are no developed picnic areas at Erbie. To provide an opportunity for picnicking on the north side of the river, a small (5-site) picnic area will be developed adjacent to the trailhead near the Erbie Church. The parking area will provide space for about ten cars to serve hikers, picnickers, and people visiting the church. A vault toilet will be provided to serve this area. Care will be exercised during the development of this site to minimize the impacts on historic foundations and archeological sites of the former Erbie townsite. Another small (4-site) picnic area will be developed in the woods south of the river just east of the Erbie ford to serve day users wishing to be near the Buffalo. A parking area will provide space for about five cars and a short trail will lead to the river for day users. The area will be signed to prohibit overnight use.

Fitton Cave

Recreational use of Fitton Cave is currently limited by park regulations to two parties per day. Cavers are permitted to park at the trailhead and camp overnight. A vault toilet will be provided at the trailhead. Access to the cave entrance is via a two-mile hike. The Chestnut cabin near the cave entrance will be maintained by cave research groups as an operations base.

Other aspects of cave management are covered in the "Fitton Cave Management Plan", which was prepared by the National Park Service with public review in 1984.

Roads

As mentioned above, a range of visitor experience levels is recommended for roads in the area. To provide an adequate level of service for the intended use, the South Erbie road will be upgraded to a consistent medium standard, 20-foot wide, gravel-surface road from the park boundary near Highway 7 to the proposed river access/campground area. The road will follow the approximate existing alignment. An archeological survey will be necessary for areas where the road will be widened or realigned as determined during the design phase. The remainder of the Erbie road through the historic district will be maintained as a low standard one-lane two-way gravel road with pullouts where needed. As mentioned above, only minor improvements will be done at specific locations for drainage or safety purposes. Signs will be posted at the entrances to the area stating that roads are of a historic primitive character.

The East Erbie Road will be maintained as a primitive (very low standard) route for passenger vehicles. Because the Park Service must maintain access to the cemetery, the Cherry Grove Road will be maintained as a primitive route but useable by passenger vehicles. The road to the Chestnut cabin will be maintained as a primitive road for administrative use only (high-clearance vehicles). Because it is so small, the Jasper-in-June (Old Erbie) site is most appropriately used by small numbers of people at any one time. The access road passes through the Clagett Farmstead. Jasper-in-June will be accessible by canoe or on foot only. The access road will be maintained for administrative use only. The Fuller Place Road will be maintained as a primitive route to provide visitor access to a popular low use area. Because this area is somewhat fragile, limits on use levels or seasons may be needed in the future to avoid adversely effecting the natural resources in the area. Other existing hayfield roads will also be maintained for administrative use only. The Compton to Erbie Road will be maintained by Newton County as a primitive road to retain this traditional route in from the west. For additional details on roads see the Buffalo River Road System Evaluation (NPS 1986).

Ranger Residence

The existing ranger residence on the South Erbie Road will be retained as required occupancy for the Erbie Ranger. The presence of a ranger living in this area helps to protect natural and cultural resources and park facilities. The ranger also provides essential visitor protection services for law enforcement, search and rescue, first aid, and other emergencies.

Floodplain Concerns

The 100-year floodplain elevation for the Buffalo River and its tributaries at Erbie has not been accurately determined (see Natural Features Map for an approximate flood-prone area). Based on observations of the 1982 flood at Erbie by NPS personnel, and interpolating between the U.S. Geological Survey estimates for 100-year flood levels at Kyles and Ozark campground; it appears as though the Clagett house is not within the 100-year floodplain of the Buffalo River. The house was five feet or more above the 1982 flood elevation, which was near the estimated 100-year flood level in nearby areas. For purposes of facility planning and design it may be assumed that all bottomland fields adjacent to the river are within the floodplain (a worst case scenario). As such, the proposed river access/campground site, the picnic area near the ford, and a portion of the Erbie road and trail system will be in the 100-year floodplain. There are no practicable alternative sites for these facilities outside the floodplain. While these facilities are all excepted from further compliance documentation by Park Service Floodplain Management Guidelines, care will be exercised in the design phase to minimize the potential for flood loss. Facilities will be sited as high as practicable in the floodplain and be designed to withstand periodic inundation. They will be the minimum necessary to promote safety, serve the public, and protect the resource. They will be designed to minimize flood repair costs. The Park Service has developed a flood warning program whereby park rangers (aided by a flood warning system) make attempts to alert visitors to impending floods and evacuate campgrounds, thereby minimizing the threat to people and their property.

CONSTRUCTION COST ESTIMATE

Boat landing	\$150,000
Group camping area (10 sites)	20,000
Campground (30 sites)	30,000
Campground and launch roads (0.8 mile)	200,000
Picnic area near Erbie church (5 sites)	5,000
Picnic area near river (4 sites)	4,000
Vault toilets (up to 6)	150,000
Well and water system for campground area	59,000
Landscape plantings	70,000
Trails (16 miles)	160,000
Footbridge over River (150-foot span)	36,000
Signs	10,000
Boat launch and group campground parking areas (40 cars/4 buses)	54,000
Erbie trailhead/picnic area parking (10 car)	8,000
River picnic/day use area parking (5 car)	4,000
Fitton Cave Trailhead (5 car)	4,000
Entrance road (4 miles gravel)	<u>500,000</u>
Total (Net)	\$1,364,000
Total (Gross)	\$1,991,000

Cost estimates are based on average contracted construction costs of similar facilities at other National Park areas as of 1985 (Class C). Gross costs include 46 percent of net costs to cover design, construction supervision, and contingencies. Use of volunteers or local labor can reduce trail development costs significantly. The above trail cost estimates assume one-half by volunteer labor. These preliminary estimates will be refined as detailed design and construction documents are prepared. Costs for the boat landing and campground are based on design work currently in progress.

CONSULTATION

Because the Erbie area includes the Parker-Hickman farm which is considered eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places, the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation and the State Historic Preservation Officer were consulted during the preparation of this plan. Because the area includes prehistoric sites, the State Archeologist was also consulted. The draft Development Plan/Cultural Landscape Report/Environmental Assessment (August 1985) was placed on public review in October 1985. A Finding of No Significant Impact was approved in February 1985.

PLANNING TEAM

Core Team

Ric Alesch, Planner/Environmental Specialist (Team Captain), Denver Service Center (DSC)
Terri Urbanowski, Landscape Architect, DSC
Craig Frazier, Historical Architect, DSC
Jere Krakow, Historian, DSC
Alec Gould, Superintendent, Buffalo National River, (BUFF)
Bob Davidson, Planner/Regional Liaison, Southwest Regional Office (SWRO)
Suzie Rogers, Historian, BUFF

Consultants

Jim Liles, Assistant Superintendent, BUFF
Larry Walling, Landscape Architect, DSC--Duty stationed at BUFF
Russ Virgin, Landscape Architect, DSC
Paul Zenisek, Project Manager, DSC
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Carl Hinrichs, Chief Ranger, BUFF
Mark Mosely, Upper Buffalo District Ranger, BUFF
Wayne Valentine, Erbie Area Ranger, BUFF
Rich McCamant, Chief Interpreter, BUFF
Doug Faris, Chief, Division of Planning and Design, SWRO

APPENDIX: ERBIE STRUCTURE INVENTORY

Structure # & Tract	Feature Name	LCS	Description
4-62HB-22 46-100	J.W. (J.T.) Farmer House	Yes	1904, 1½-story frame "T" over stone cellar; 1570 SF
4-63HB-23 46-100	Farmer cabin	yes	c1913, 1-story frame, 16' X 23'
4-64HB-24 46-100	Farmer barn	yes	c1895, 2-bay log core, 33' X 56.5'
4-65HB-25 46-100	Farmer smokehouse	yes	c1913, 12' x 16' plus wing, frame
4-66HB-26 46-100	Farmer feedhouse/tool shed	yes	c1913, 14' X 17.5' frame
4-67HB-27 46-100	Farmer springhouse	yes	c1904, 8' X 10' log, roof has fallen in
4-67HB-28 46-100	Farmer outhouse	yes	two seater frame, c 4' X 6'
4-00-01 46-100	Farmer chickenhouse	no	frame ruin
4-69HB-29 46-101	Cherry Grove Cemetary	no	many stone monuments from 1800s
4-70HB-30 47-103	Jesse Hickman cabin	yes	1935, rock pier foundation, 26' X 16'
4-00-02 47-103	Sherratt house	no	c1950, conc. block ruin
4-00-03 47-103	Sherratt ruin	no	c1950, conc. block ruin
4-00-04 47-103	Stock pond, small	no	earth and rock dam, age unknown
4-00-05 47-103	Stock pond, large	no	earth and rock dam, age unknown
4-00-06 47-103	Stock pond, at south	no	earth and rock dam, age unknown
4-00-07 47-104	town site/Jasper in June	no	clearing/historic archeology site
4-00-08 47-104	ford and swing bridge site	no	clearing, steel cable, historic archeology site
4-71HB-31 48-100	Huchingson house	yes	c1932, stone foundations (21' x 50') and chimney
4-00-09 48-100	Huchingson farm site	no	clearing w/stone and concrete foundations
4-72HB-32 48-100	Spring Creek bridge	yes	12' X 20' stone, single span, 4" X 12" wood treads
4-73HB-33 48-100	Huchingson Spring structures	yes	(vernacular engineering), stn./conc. pool, tank, dam, etc.
4-00-10 48-100	Huchingson fish ponds	no	earth tank fish farm
4-00-11 48-103	Erbie town site	no	road intersection & clearing, historic site
4-00-12 48-103	Weber farm site	no	c1950 misc. stone foundations at Erbie
4-00-13 48-103	Erbie store	no	1932 stone foundation 16' X 32'
4-74HB-34 48-104	Erbie church (Villines Chapel)	yes	early 20th cen., 20' X 36' frame w/12' X 16' wing over stone cella
4-00-14 48-104	Church outhouse	no	3.5' x 4' frame
4-00-15 50-100	Tinsley house site	no	1940s clearing, fences, garden site, no structure
4-00-16 50-100	Tinsley farm site	no	1950s concrete barn/milkhouse foundations
4-00-17 50-100	Stone walls	no	water control features, date unknown
4-00-18 50-100	Cecil Creek ford	no	natural rock shelf, also former bridge site

APPENDIX: ERBIE STRUCTURE INVENTORY

Structure # & Tract	Feature Name	LCS	Description
4-75HB-35 50-105	Fuller house foundation	yes	c1931, continuous mortared stone 18' X 26'
4-76HB-36 50-105	Stock pond	yes	earth and stone dam
4-00-19 50-105	Fuller barn site	no	a clearing and some debris
4-77HB-37 50-106	Buchanan-Claggett house	yes	1922, 1800 SF frame, had 2 front doors, 1½-story
4-78HB-38 50-106	B-C barn	yes	1911-13, oak box frame, 50' X 50'
4-79HB-39 50-106	B-C smokehouse	yes	c1913, 12'2" X 16'2" frame, B-and-B white
4-80HB-40 50-106	B-C pumphouse/springhouse	yes	c1913, stone, 7'2" X 7'10", metal gable roof
4-81HB-41 50-106	B-C outbuilding/shed	yes	12' X 12' wood frame on stone piers
4-82HB-42 50-106	B-C outbuilding/shed	yes	pole frame, metal clad 24' X 40'2"
4-83HB-43 50-106	B-C garage	yes	c1920s, 11'6" X 20'2" pole-wood frame, wood clad
4-00-20 50-106	Chickenhouse #1	no	4' X 4' pole and wood
4-00-21 50-106	Chickenhouse #2	no	4' X 8' pole, wood, rock foundation
4-00-22 50-106	Chickenhouse #3	no	6' X 8'8" wood and plywood
4-84HB-44 50-106	Stock pond east of house	yes	earth and stone dam, below Young Cemetary
4-00-23 50-106	Stock pond west of barn	no	earth and stone dam
4-85HB-45 50-106	Young Cemetary	no	2 primary and 4 smaller stone monuments
4-00-24 50-109	Lane fields and fences	no	
4-00-25 50-110	Lane house/barn site	no	clearing (1922 house gone)
4-00-26 50-111	Hickman field/stock pond	no	earth dam
4-51HB-11 50-112	P-H chickenhouse	yes	10'6" X 16'3" wood frame on stone rubble foundation
4-52HB-12 50-112	P-H storage building	yes	11'3" X 21'6", wood frame, metal shed roof
4-53HB-13 50-112	P-H corn crib	yes	c1890s, 5'6" X 10'5" board and frame, log sills
4-54HB-14 50-112	P-H barn	yes	1926, wood frame, 30' X 20', 1½-story
4-55HB-15 50-112	P-H barn	yes	1912, double-crib log, 34'9" X 37', 1½-story
4-56HB-16 50-112	Parker-Hickman house	yes	c1840, log 2-story, with additions over 720 SF
4-57HB-17 50-112	P-H smokehouse	yes	10'3" X 12'2" wood frame, gable
4-58HB-18 50-112	P-H outhouse	yes	c. 4' X 3.5' wood frame, metal shed roof
4-61HB-21 50-112	P-H feeding structure	yes	c. 4' x 8' wood pole with metal shed roof
4-00-27 50-112	P-H swing bridge ruin	no	steel cables and debris
4-86HB-46 50-112	Hickman house foundation	yes	c1930s, 2' or 3' high stone piers, 24' X 32' foundation only
4-HB-47 50-112	Hickman smokehouse	yes	c1930s, 14'2" X 10'2" log, roof caved in

As the nation's principal conservation agency, the Department of the Interior has basic responsibilities to protect and conserve our land and water, energy and minerals, fish and wildlife, parks and recreation areas, and to ensure the wise use of all these resources. The department also has major responsibility for American Indian reservation communities and for people who live in island territories under U. S. administration.

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