



Currents

The official newspaper
of Buffalo National River

2012/2013 Issue

7 Lost Valley

In 2011, a flash flood damaged Lost Valley. Read about efforts to repair the damage, and changes that have occurred as a result. This popular destination brings approximately 64,000 visitors each year.

7 Elk viewing

There are approximately 500 elk in the Buffalo River area, since their reintroduction in the early 1980s. Read about their habitat, their habits, and find out the best times for optimum elk viewing.

10 Planning a float

A good plan can be the difference between a good day on the river and a miserable one. See page 10 for checklists of equipment, and ideas for making a good plan. See page 11 for more information and tips.

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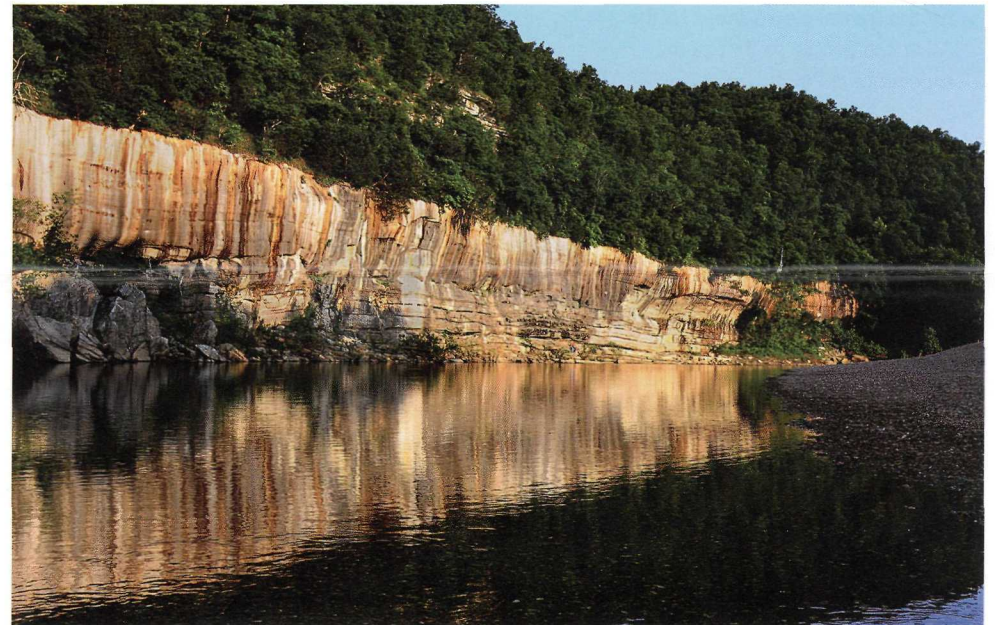
Welcome to the Buffalo National River

MARCH 1, 2012 MARKED THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF Buffalo National River, the culmination of years of debate, struggle and uncertainty about the future of this part of the Ozarks. The “Battle for the Buffalo River” as it was called, harkens to a time when it seemed that two federal entities were in mortal conflict as to whether the place would house deep lakes with resort and boating opportunities, or would retain something of its existing nature as a free-flowing river with agriculture in the bottoms along its 135-mile length. In the end, the latter won out. Dams were not built and the Buffalo continues to flow unabated from its source to the White River.

The recognition of the Buffalo as a unique regional and national resource did not, however, mean that the place was frozen in time: families in a three-county area lost their lands and have watched as ancestral farms gave way to cedars, buildings collapsed, and roads closed. We recognize the difficult sacrifice made by these families as a consequence of bringing the Buffalo into the national park system, knowing that their feelings are shared by thousands of other families in numerous other parks throughout the nation. We also acknowledge the immense responsibility we have towards the best possible stewardship of the lands these families lost to the national interest. It is in this spirit that we take this opportunity, the 40th anniversary of the enactment by Congress of the legislation which created the first National River, to reach out to all groups with an interest in the Buffalo to look back and, more importantly, to look ahead.

The park, like the river, does not hold still. Things are always happening, and many of these are invisible to our visitors. There are the elk, channel catfish, smallmouth bass, hunting and fishing regulations, the protection and preservation of historic and archeological resources (such as the Civilian Conservation Corps cabins at Buffalo Point and the Parker-Hickman farm), keeping campgrounds clean, cave protection, stream bank erosion, prescribed and wildfire, feral hogs, water quality, visitor safety, public information and education, working with park neighbors, and forming partnerships to assist the park in meeting their shared goals...to name a few, and not including response to catastrophic events such as ice storms and floods. It is likely that most visitors see a “snapshot” of the park and its operations during their visit, and naturally form an opinion based on that, without any real impression of how hard we work behind the scenes. Local visitors will have a different perception of the park based on years, decades, and perhaps generations of experience. Neither group, however, is likely to have a deep understanding or appreciation of the management challenges that are behind the scenes of park operations, or the sensitivity that is behind our management decisions.

From today’s perspective, that is, one of diminishing budgets, the future could be characterized as “mighty grim.” Statistics you may have heard before have staffing cuts between 50% and 60% in all operational areas. And our ability to do “simple things” like clean restrooms and haul trash become more complicated, especially in the face of visitation numbers reach-



ing upwards of 1.6 million per year. But on the positive side, we have a growing number of partnerships. Partnerships are the means by which private, state, and national entities join with the park to address specific needs of shared interest. At present, Buffalo National River has over forty partnerships that address diverse subjects from wildlife and fisheries management, fire suppression, search and rescue, to education. Even with this assistance, difficult decisions must be made as to where the dollars are spent, which means identifying those things which are core values to the future of this park:

For the purposes of conserving and interpreting an area containing unique scenic and scientific features, and preserving as a free-flowing stream an important segment of the Buffalo River in Arkansas for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations...(PUBLIC LAW 92-237)

We have learned that, like every government entity, not everyone agrees with everything we do. But we have also learned that many people, both locally and “from off,” do understand and appreciate the challenges of protecting the nation’s first National River and providing quality recreational and educational opportunities for the visiting public. Speaking for all of our staff, we would like to thank our host communities and all of our visitors for their support of the park, forbearance through difficult fiscal times, and their assistance in partnering with us now and in the future to keep the Buffalo flowing as it has for centuries.

Kevin Cheri, Superintendent



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Buffalo National River

402 N Walnut, Suite 136
Harrison, AR 72601

Park Headquarters

870 365-2700

Pruitt Ranger Station

870 446-5373

Tyler Bend Visitor Center

870 439-2502

Buffalo Point Ranger Station

870 449-4311

24-hour Dispatch Office

888 692-1162

www.nps.gov/buff

The National Park Service cares for the special places saved by the American people so that all may experience our heritage.



Protecting the park

- Buffalo National River is part of the national park system. Plants, animals, rocks, historic sites, and prehistoric sites are protected by law for all to enjoy.
- Collecting of anything is prohibited (except designated edibles for personal consumption).
- Littering is prohibited. Picking up after those less considerate is encouraged.
- Glass is prohibited within 100 feet of the river, its tributaries, and in caves. Bring drinks in non-glass containers.
- Stay on hiking trails. Avoid short cuts that create erosion and harm plants. If stepping off trail is unavoidable, don't trample lichens or delicate plants.
- Excessive noise lessens the likelihood of spotting wildlife. Have fun, but respect others.
- Trees have rights, too. Carving your name in tree bark damages the tree and creates a pathway for disease.
- Help protect your park by reporting violations to a park ranger.

Buffalo National River has something for everyone



FLOAT

Most of the 1.6 million people that come to experience Buffalo National River from the seat of canoe or kayak, come between Memorial Day and Labor Day. However, this is a wonderful float stream all year long. On any given Saturday in the summer, there could be as many as a thousand boats, and three times that many people on the river at one time; which is a specific experience that is commonly sought after by the warm weather visitor. Each person that visits our first National River is expected to conduct themselves in a safe manner. Everyone has a responsibility to uphold the rules and regulations set by state and federal law; whether camping in the campground, hunting deer, fishing for smallmouth, hiking a trail, piloting a canoe down the river or operating a motor vehicle.

The goal of the National Park Service (NPS) is to provide a natural, family oriented, safe



and enjoyable experience for all visitors, while protecting and preserving the resource. Venturing out onto this free flowing river should not be taken for granted.

Planning a trip between Labor Day and Memorial Day will offer a less populated visit to the river. Visiting during the cooler months, after leaves have fallen, will offer more solitude, as well as harmony with the river.

HIKE

The approximately 150 miles of carefully crafted Buffalo River Trail is two years from completion. Once finished, you will have the opportunity to hike from Boxley Bridge in the Upper District to Dillard's Ferry on Highway 14 in the Lower District. This trail system is also connected to multiple side hike routes and loop trail networks that showcase some of the most breathtaking sights in the region, as well as the rich cultural history that dates back several millennia.

HUNT

The Natural State offers many options for hunters. It is suggested that all hunters attend a Hunter Safety Course, as well as

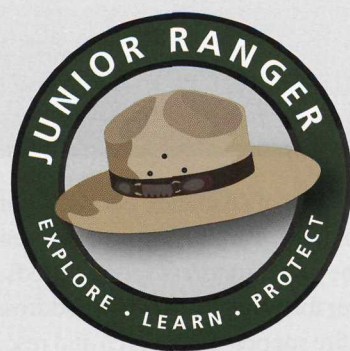
familiarize themselves with the current rules and regulations, prior to striking out into the wood line. Hunting is prohibited in built-up areas, such as campgrounds, day use trail systems, and river access points. Come by or call any of the Visitor Contact Stations, or contact your local Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Wildlife Officer for information. Buffalo National River is working to control the growing number of feral hogs along the river. See page 10 for information on hunting feral hogs.

CAMP

Deciding to spend a night at Buffalo National River offers the visitor a marvelous multitude of camping opportunities, ranging from a bare bones spot on a gravel bar under a start-lit sky, to the capability of parking and plugging in your plush custom coach, full of creature comforts and conveniences. If you are proactive enough in your planning, and flexible enough to enjoy the merits of a little adversity or inconvenience, a camping trip to Buffalo National River can be both enjoyable and memorable.



Above: Many visitors come to the Buffalo to view nature - the possibilities are endless for wildlife, bird and wildflower watching. Fishing is another popular activity at the Buffalo. Don't forget your license - all state regulations apply.



So, you want to be a Junior Ranger?

Junior Rangers explore the plants, animals, history and artifacts in the park. They learn the stories these things tell us about how they live in this ecosystem. Junior Rangers help protect the park by sharing their knowledge with others.

To earn your Buffalo National River Junior Ranger badge during your visit, request an activity booklet at the visitor center or contact station. When you complete the required activities, return to the contact station for your badge.

What will the weather be like?

Month	Average Daily Highs (°F)	Average Daily Lows (°F)	Average Monthly Precipitation	Average Water Temperature (°F)
January	49°	27°	3.2"	42°
February	54°	30°	3.0"	42°
March	62°	36°	3.4"	46°
April	72°	46°	4.7"	60°
May	80°	53°	5.5"	68°
June	88°	63°	4.8"	76°
July	93°	66°	3.0"	77°
August	93°	65°	3.3"	80°
September	86°	57°	3.8"	71°
October	75°	46°	3.7"	60°
November	60°	35°	3.2"	53°
December	51°	24°	2.7"	45°

Camping

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER HAS ELEVEN designated campgrounds. Most campgrounds are available on a first-come, first-served basis. However, Buffalo Point campground offers reservations for some individual sites, all pavilions, and group sites. Reservations are necessary for day-use picnic pavilions at Tyler Bend and Ozark and group campsites at Tyler Bend and Erbie. Since day-use pavilions are popular, it is advisable to reserve them as early as possible. Reservations can be made one-year in advance for group site campgrounds and picnic pavilions; and six months in advance for campsites at Buffalo Point. You can visit www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777 to make reservations. Please note that a fee is charged for making, changing or cancelling reservations.

As visitor use increases in a given section of the river, so does campground use. On spring weekends, during peak floating season on the upper river, Kyles Landing and Steel Creek Campgrounds can be extremely crowded. Ozark Campground is also popular throughout the spring and summer months. With the exception of Erbie, campgrounds on the upper river are filled to capacity over Memorial Day weekend.

Tyler Bend Campground fills to capacity during Memorial Day weekend, July 4th weekend, and many weekends throughout the spring and summer months.

Buffalo Point Campground can become full any day between Memorial Day and mid-August. It is the most crowded campground in the summertime. Buffalo Point is the only campground inside the park that has electric (30/50 Amp) and water service at individual sites, as well as a central dump station. It should be noted that in the off season (generally from mid-November to mid-March) electricity and water are not available at Buffalo Point.

Camping fees are charged from mid-March

through mid-November, except at Tyler Bend, where fees are charged year-round. A self-registering system is used at each fee campground. Campers should select a site and then immediately return to the campground fee station located near the entrance to the campground to complete the registration process. Campsite information is completed on both the fee envelope and on the registration sheet and the fee (cash or check only) placed inside the envelope and then deposited in the fee safe at the fee station. Keep the perforated section of the fee envelope for posting at your site. Campers must pay for their site within 30 minutes of arriving at the campground.

Following all campground regulations will help make your camping experience more enjoyable.

- Campground stay limit is 14 consecutive days with no more than 30 days per calendar year.
- Quiet hours in campgrounds are between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. Generators may only be operated from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m.
- Only six people are allowed per site.
- Use only designated parking areas. Do not drive or park on the grass.
- Pets must be on a leash at all times. The leash cannot be longer than 6 feet. Pets are not allowed on most park trails. Please pick up after your pets and deposit waste in trash receptacles.
- To avoid insect and animal problems, do not release waste water or scatter food onto the ground. Put away and secure all food stuffs in animal proof containers.
- Although dead and down wood in the park may be gathered for firewood, we recommend buying pre-split wood from local vendors outside the park. Wooded areas around campgrounds have been picked over for firewood.
- Recreational vehicles and pull behind style campers are prohibited from Kyle's Landing, Steel Creek, Rush, Spring Creek and Carver. These campgrounds are available for walk-in tent camping only.

Backcountry Camping

Campers who desire a more primitive experience may camp many places within the park if they stay at least one-half mile (0.8 km) from any developed area. A backcountry permit is not required. Camping is not permitted in or near historic sites and buildings, in hayfields or pastures, on private land or in abandoned buildings. For a more enjoyable camping experience, we recommend camping out of sight of all trails.

When camping along the river, be prepared for the unexpected. Check weather and water conditions before and during your trip. Heavy or prolonged rains, which may occur upstream and out of sight, can raise river levels rapidly. Rises of over a foot an hour can occur at any time of the year, and the river can rise more than 25 feet (7.6 m) in a single day.

Camp well above the water level and check the river periodically to be sure it is not rising. Pull your canoe and other gear well above river level. Always camp where you

have an escape route to higher ground—don't camp on islands or on gravel bars which are likely to become islands if the river begins to rise.

Although backcountry permits are not required, it is recommended that you let others know your itinerary and what time you expect to return from your backcountry trip. Campfires are allowed in the park but be sure to check with park personnel for any fire bans in place. Fires must not be left unattended, and must be completely extinguished and dismantled before leaving your backcountry campsite. Some hiking trails are closed to backcountry camping, such as the Lost Valley and Indian Rockhouse Trails.

Always practice *Leave No Trace* techniques when enjoying the backcountry. This includes carrying out all trash and properly disposing of human waste. Please remember that collecting or disturbing natural features, plants, rocks and cultural and archaeological resources is prohibited.

Frequently Asked Questions

WHERE'S THE BATHROOM?

The National Park Service has provided the visitor with either a hardstand restroom facility (flushing toilets) at most of the developed campgrounds and widely used river access points. In the more remote locations, an innovative commercial designed pit toilet, aptly named SST Romtec (The initials stand for "Sweet Smelling Toilet"), have been installed for your convenience and assistance in protecting the resource that is Buffalo National River.

If you find yourself in a situation where you've just gotta go, we ask that you understand that Buffalo National River receives about 1.6 MILLION people every year, which constitutes a tremendous number of "nature calls". Without the wise management practice of installing hardstand and pit toilets at the areas of highest visitor concentration, and the conscientious use of the trails, gravel bars, parking lots, canoe accesses and the river itself, this free flowing stream would very quickly become a giant cesspool. We are already experiencing some recurring issues with plants, such as Spirogyra, that propagate due to excessive nutrients in the water; many of which we release when we...release our bodily waste products.

The spirogyra emerge as tangled pond scum, and float on the pond's surface during warm weather. When the sun sets down and the weather is cold, the tangled pond scum shrinks as its oxygen production or photosynthesis slows down. When spirogyra

consumes oxygen in pond, it oozes carbon dioxide that are intolerable for fish. Then the carbon dioxide (CO₂) increases the ammonia levels. Thus, a heavily populated pond with spirogyra can lead to fish fatalities.

With that said, when making use of the natural environment to relieve oneself, please consider doing so, as far away as possible from areas of visitor concentration (travel 100 feet perpendicular to all trails), construct and completely cover cat-holes at least 100 feet from the rivers edge, and out of plain sight of others. When you begrudgingly walk into the wood line with paper and shovel in hand, consider how you would feel if someone had done their business and left it on the gravel bar you were hoping to have lunch and a swim break with your family. Thank you.

DID YOU ADD SOMETHING TO THE WATER TO MAKE IT THAT BEAUTIFUL SHADE OF BLUISH-GREEN?

The source of the flow of the Buffalo River originates in the Boston Mountains. The mountains are composed of limestone and dolomite, a sedimentary rock made of layers and layers of dead stuff that settled on the floor of a warm shallow sea. The relationship between rain water and this sedimentary rock formation is rather in-depth, but the actual reason for the color of the water is tiny flakes of dissolved limestone in the water are reflecting light from the sun that we see as a rich shade of blue.



Campgrounds

Areas	Campsites	Campsites	Nearby Trails	Nearby Trails	Campground Amenities										Campground Coordinates		
					Picnic Tables	Drinking Water	Fire Grates	Showers	Flush/Vault Toilets	Water & Electricity	Dumping Station	Nearby Pay Phone	Picnic Pavilion	Campground Fee **	Latitude	Longitude	
Steel Creek			X													36.04077580	-93.34404834
Walk-In Sites	12				X	X	X			F/V					\$10		
Horse Sites	14				X	X	X			F/V					\$10		
Kyles Landing	33		X		X	X	X			F/V			X		\$10	36.05575627	-93.28129973
Erbie			X	X									X			36.07343937	-93.21773258
Drive-In Sites	14	1			X	X	X			F					\$10		
Walk-In Sites	16	1			X	X	X			V					\$10		
Group Sites	5				X	X	X			F					\$30*		
Horse Sites	open																
Ozark	30		X		X	X	X			F/V			X	\$25	\$10	36.06213167	-93.15972441
Carver	8				X	X	X			V					\$10	35.98518232	-93.03818673
Woolum	open		X							V					No fee	35.97211268	-92.88193273
Tyler Bend			X	X									X	\$50		35.98671523	-92.76390290
Drive-In Sites	28	1			X	X	X	X		F					\$12		
Walk-In Sites	10	1			X	X	X	X		F					\$12		
Group Sites	5	1			X	X	X	X		F					\$30*		
Maumee So.	open									V					No fee	36.03941072	-92.62990214
Buffalo Point			X										X	\$50		36.08536501	-92.56565487
Drive-In Sites	79	2			X	X	X	X		F	X				\$17		
Walk-In Sites	21				X	X	X	X		F					\$12		
Group Sites	5				X	X	X	X		F					\$30*		
Rush	12		X		X	X	X			V					\$10	36.12287571	-92.55074853
Spring Creek	13		X		X		X			V					No fee	36.02852890	-92.58008345

Note: All fees are charged on a daily basis. All group site rates are per person. *Group sites are \$30/night minimum. An additional \$3 per person is charged for more than 10 campers, up to 25 people. **Published fee rates are subject to change.

Why is fire important at Buffalo National River?

Outdoor enthusiasts today are often quite sophisticated in their understanding of the natural world. Yet many people are unaware of how dramatically the landscape and its components have changed in the past 100 years. Throughout history, fire has played a significant role in shaping the plant and animal communities of Buffalo National River.



For some 8,000 years, the landscape coexisted with periodic fires, both human caused and naturally caused by lightning, that removed most of the brush and young woody growth while leaving the larger trees. As a result, many plants and animals now present are dependent on periodic fires for their reproduction, growth, and survival.



burned through the Ozarks. Fires were a natural process shaping the landscape and greatly influencing the forest communities. Fire helps sustain a more diverse natural community of plants and animals. Much of the unique character of Buffalo National River is a result of fire dependent plant communities and related ecosystems.

For the past 100 years or so fire suppression and modern development have altered the occurrence of fire and thus its effect on the landscape. Without the influence of fire the landscape changed from the once open woodlands to the dense forests of today.

Early explorers including Schoolcraft in 1821 described forests in the Ozarks area as having an open understory. As these openings and grassy spaces on the forest floor began to disappear so did once abundant plant species and creatures such as the collard lizard.

Scientists and land managers have come to realize that throughout time, periodic fires have

Using existing scientific information and careful fire monitoring, prescribed fire also known as controlled fire is applied at Buffalo National River to restore and promote natural growth. Reintroducing fire into the ecosystem and restoring fire to naturally occurring levels also reduces the unnatural build up of leaf litter and other burnable material reducing the risk of an unplanned and possibly catastrophic wildfire from occurring.



Remember Smokey Bear's ABCs: Always Be Careful with fire.

Fire has many uses. Smokey wants you to be responsible when using fire. Smokey never wants you to play with matches, leave fires unattended, or throw lighted cigarettes away. With your help, we can use fire safely at Buffalo National River. Keep the following the safety tips in mind when building a campfire.

- Pick a site that is at least 15 feet away from tents, trees, and other flammable objects
- Keep your fire to a manageable size
- Make sure children and pets are supervised when near the fire
- Never leave your campfire unattended
- Never cut live trees or branches
- Before leaving extinguish your fire and make sure that it is out and cold to the touch

Important firewood information

U.S. forests are threatened by non-native insects that can kill large numbers of trees. Three recently introduced insects – emerald ash borer (*Agrilus planipennis*), Asian longhorned beetle (*Anoplophora glabripennis*), and Sirex woodwasp (*Sirex noctilio*)—are wood-infesting species that can be transported long distances. All three of these species are thought to have arrived in wood pallets and other wood packing material accompanying cargo shipments from Asia, Europe, and/or northern Africa. Once transported into new areas, these insects can become established and kill local trees. These insects can be transported in firewood and infest new locations.

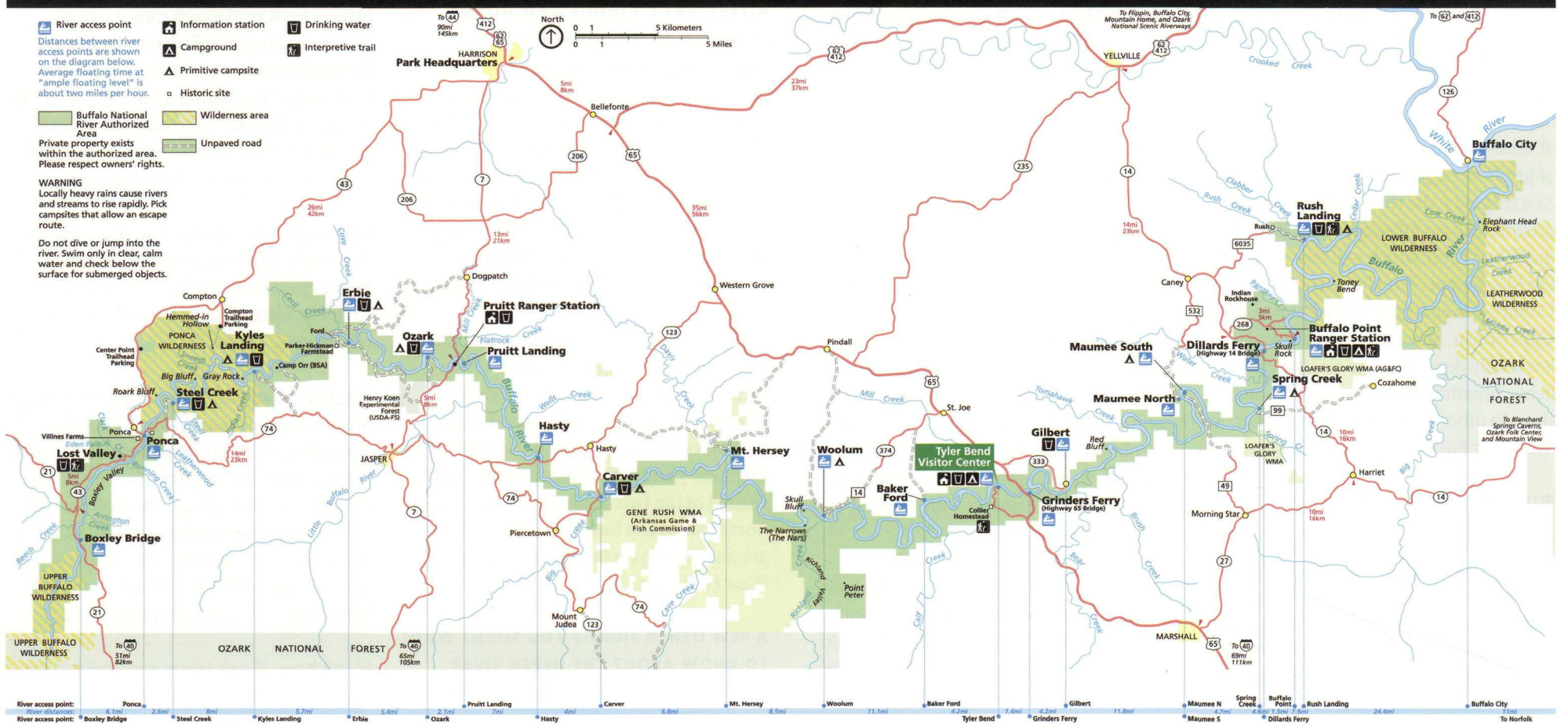
HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Leave firewood at home—do not transport it to campgrounds or parks.
- Use firewood from local sources.
- If you have brought firewood with you, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.
- Researchers may have traps in trees. Leave them in place. If you find one that has been taken or blown down, bring it to the nearest ranger station or visitor center.

For more information about these and other non-native pests, check these websites.

- www.emeraldashborer.info
- www.na.fs.fed.us/fh
- www.aphis.usda.gov/ppq/ep
- www.fs.fed.us

Buffalo National River Map



Note: Changes May Occur Without Notice

[————— Upper District (Boxley to Mt. Hersey) —————] [————— Middle District (Mt. Hersey to Maumee North) —————] [————— Lower District (Maumee South to White River) —————]

see information on page 6 see information on page 8 see information on page 9

River Levels	Very Low		Low		Moderate		High		Flood Stage	
	Discharge / cfs	Stage / Feet	Discharge / cfs	Stage / Feet	Discharge / cfs	Stage / Feet	Discharge / cfs	Stage / Feet	Discharge / cfs	Stage / Feet
Boxley, AR	Below 200 cfs	Below 3.2'	200-350 cfs	3.20'-3.85'	350-1,500 cfs	3.85'-5.99'	1,500-6,500 cfs	5.99'-9.05'	Over 6,500 cfs	Over 9.05'
Ponca, AR	Below 100 cfs	Below 2.0'	100-200 cfs	2.0'-2.4'	200-1,000 cfs	2.5'-4.9'	1,000-1,900 cfs	5.0'-6.0'	Over 1,900 cfs	Over 6.0'
Pruitt, AR / Hwy. 7 Bridge	Below 100 cfs	Below 4.4'	100-220 cfs	4.4'-4.7'	220-1,100 cfs	4.8'-6.6'	1,100-2,000 cfs	6.7'-8.0'	Over 2,000 cfs	Over 8.0'
St. Joe, AR / Hwy. 65 Bridge	Below 100 cfs	Below 3.6'	100-250 cfs	3.6'-4.5'	250-3,500 cfs	4.6'-8.5'	3,500-10,000 cfs	8.6'-12.5'	Over 10,000 cfs	Over 12.5'
Harriet, AR / Hwy. 14 Bridge	Below 100 cfs	Below 2.0'	100-350 cfs	2.0'-3.4'	350-2,700 cfs	3.5'-5.9'	2,700-8,000 cfs	6.0'-10.0'	Over 8,000 cfs	Over 10.0'

Buffalo National River Float Guide:

DEFINITIONS:

- CFS:** Cubic feet per second measurements show how fast/swiftly the river is flowing
- Very Low:** The Buffalo River is very shallow in places. Portaging will be necessary in many sections of the river.
- Low:** The Buffalo River moves slowly, and many rocks are exposed.
- Moderate:** The Buffalo River flow is adequate for floating; some exposed obstacles may be encountered.
- High:** The Buffalo River flows swiftly. Canoeing experience on swift moving rivers is necessary. All canoeists must possess good river-canoeing skills and must be familiar with rescue procedures.
- Flood Stage:** The Buffalo River flows out of its normal banks. Floodwaters move quickly and carry debris. River conditions are hazardous even for highly skilled canoeists.

River level readings indicate the condition of the river for recreation. These readings are taken at five locations along the river. Each reading is unique and pertains only to that area.

- For current "real time" river level conditions please visit: <http://ar.water.usgs.gov/buffaloriver>, or
- Call Park Headquarters at 870-365-2700, M – F from 8:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., and the Tyler Bend Visitor Center at 870-439-2502, seven days a week from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.
- For 24 hour emergency dispatch services (Law Enforcement, Fire, Emergency Medical Services, Search and Rescue) call 1-888-692-1162

Pets

Pets are allowed in the park, but must be under physical control at all times. Documented Service animals are an exception to most pet restrictions and are allowed on trails and in public buildings. Service animals must also be kept under physical restraint at all times.



- Pets are not allowed in any government buildings, caves or on most park trails.
- Pets are not allowed within designated wilderness areas with the exception of the Ponca Wilderness gravel bars.
- Leashed pets are permitted on gravel bars up to 25' from the water's edge.
- Pets may not be left unattended. Unfamiliar sights, sounds, and smells can disturb even the calmest, friendliest, and best-trained animal, causing them to behave unpredictably or bark excessively.
- Pet excrement must be collected by pet owners, and disposed of in trash receptacles.

Two trails within the park have been opened to pets on a trial basis: Mill Creek Trail in the Upper District near Pruitt, and the Forest Pit Trail in the Lower District at Buffalo Point. Maps of each trail are available at the respective Visitor Contact Stations.

Upper Buffalo River district opportunities

Pruitt Ranger Station • HCR 73, Box 222 • Marble Falls, AR 72648 • 870 446-5373 • Latitude 36.06100491 • Longitude 93.13948345

THE HEADWATERS OF BUFFALO NATIONAL River begin in Newton County and as folklorist Vance Randolph wrote, “if you take all of Newton County and spread it out flat it would be bigger than the entire state of Texas!” That should give you some idea of just how rugged this area is in places. As a tributary, the river makes its way approximately 150 miles before emptying into the White River which will take it on to the Mississippi. Flowing through Newton County is over 60 miles of what we call the Upper River. Since it is a free-flowing river, it is totally dependent on rainfall, and like a living, breathing thing is an ever changing river. In other words it is always either on the rise or fall in this canyon like terrain.

WILDLIFE IN THE UPPER RIVER

REINTRODUCTION OF ELK TO ARKANSAS AND THE UPPER RIVER

During the early 1980s Arkansas Game and Fish began a program to reintroduce elk to Newton County. Rocky Mountain elk were brought in to replace the extinct sub-species, the Eastern Elk. Although the Rocky Mountain elk have thrived and spread out to where they are seen in several counties, the greatest concentrations are still seen in Newton County and the Upper River. Highway 43 through Boxley Valley, south of the town of Ponca, is the prime viewing area. Please drive carefully and watch for elk, other wildlife, pedestrians, and vehicles. See page 7 to learn more about this majestic animal.

REINTRODUCTION OF TRUMPETER SWANS TO THE UPPER RIVER

During the winter of 2005-06 a pair of trumpeter swans landed on a mill pond near the Buffalo River. They liked it there and decided to hang around for the winter then come spring they headed to a northern state to build their nest and start a family. When the next winter rolled around they returned to that same mill pond bringing with them an off-spring. It was then that the state of Iowa decided to release additional swans to the mill pond in order to increase the native bird count to the river area. You will see these swans have a green band around their neck. This is how biologists in Arkansas and Iowa can note their location when folks call in with sightings. The letter and number on those green bands tell where the swans are from and where they had been released. Trumpeter swans are North America's largest swans and became nearly extinct. Today we can be proud that these majestic birds are making a comeback and are multiplying in great enough numbers that our children and our grandchildren will have an opportunity to see and hear them. Please do not

feed wild animals. If they become dependent on a handout they will either become sick or die. Enjoy the sight of these birds from a distance.

WATER SPORTS

Canoeing/Kayaking/Rafting/Motor Boating: The pristine waters of Buffalo National River beckon folks from all walks of life bringing with them all levels of experience. You can rent from any of the National Park Service authorized outfitters. Please see website or contact any rangers for a current list of outfitters. You can bring your own equipment and are expected to know and abide by state waterway regulations so please read page 10 & 11 for boating safety tips, requirements and other useful information. Be honest with yourself when judging your abilities.

Although a maximum of 10 horsepower motor is allowed from the Erbie launch downstream to the mouth of the Buffalo River, you will find that very rarely is there enough water to boat the Upper River with a motor. Buffalo National River works in conjunction with the State of Arkansas to determine safe boating regulations, so be sure and refer to their website www.agfc.com for more information.

You are welcome to take your dog in your watercraft (whether it be canoe, kayak, raft or boat). Please make sure you maintain constant physical control of your pet when on gravel bars and access points.

HIKING THE UPPER RIVER

Awaiting your footsteps, the Upper River has many choices of day hikes and also offers the more adventuresome opportunities for backcountry experiences. Although it is recommended that you inquire about degree of difficulty, trail condition and also road conditions before arriving at the chosen trailhead, permits and checking in/out are not required in order for you to go on a hike: miles and miles of hiking trails are waiting for you. Trails range from easy to strenuous. Make sure you ask yourself about your abilities and only you will know the answer to that question so be honest with yourself. Also give some thought as to your strengths and weaknesses. A good multi-use map, such as Trails Illustrated® West Half, is recommended because it serves the hiker, horseback rider, and floater. It is recommended that you stay on the established trail. Stepping off trail creates beaten paths, kills wildflowers, and creates erosion. Staying on the trail makes things safer for you and the vegetation. Be sure and be safe when enjoying the area.

HORSE BACK RIDING AND HORSE CAMPING IN THE UPPER RIVER

Even though, at this time, there is no concessioner authorized to rent horses or mules or conduct trail rides at Buffalo National River there are many miles of trails that can be ridden if you bring your own. The Trails Illustrated® West Half is recommended as a good multi-use map since it not only serves the horseback rider but also serves the hiker and the floater.

The Upper River has two horse designated horse camps. Steel Creek Horse Camp is located on the south side of the river off of Highway 74 while Erbie Horse Camp is located on the north side of the river off of Highway 7 and is the more primitive and rugged of the two. More information about horse camps can be found on page 8. They are also shown on the Trails Illustrated® West Half Map.

A FEW OTHER THINGS YOU MIGHT WANT TO KNOW ABOUT THE UPPER RIVER

Biking: Although there are no trails built specifically for bicycles there are opportunities in the area. A bicycle can go any place a motorized vehicle can go. Two popular routes taken by folks on bicycles would be Boxley Valley along the paved road of Hwy 43 and also what is known as the North River Road which is an unpaved county road northwest of Highway 7 just north of the Pruitt area.

Pet walks: The Upper River has one trail that you can enjoy with your pet: the Mill Creek trail just off Highway 7 at Pruitt. Keep your pet on a leash and remember that some people are afraid of pets so please keep yours close to you and under complete control. Be sure to clean up after your pet. Following rules will help the park managers in the consideration as to whether or not to continue to have this “pet friendly trail.”

Fishing: Fishing In the Upper River seems to pick up during the spawning season of spring. Before you decide to “wet a line”

please check with a park ranger or with Arkansas Game and Fish for regulations. Remember that in the state of Arkansas, there is one free fishing weekend during the month of June, so make sure you encourage friends and family to try their luck that weekend when no license is required.

Hunting: Hunting does take place within the park boundary throughout the year. Please check with a park ranger or with Arkansas Game and Fish for seasons and regulations.

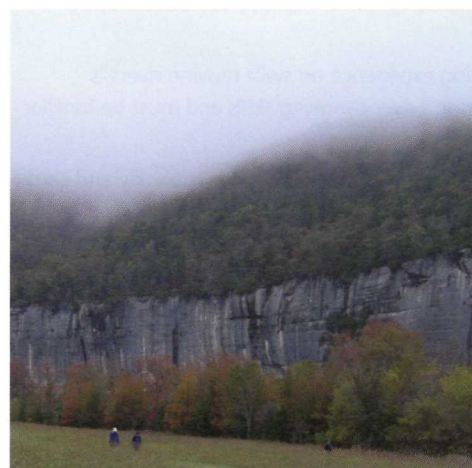
Jogging: More and more people want to get out and jog the countryside. Although no areas are specifically designated for jogging, folks do seem to enjoy the six miles of Boxley Valley along Hwy 43. Stay alert for wildlife that might be moving across the highway and be aware of vehicle traffic. You can park at the Ponca Low Water Bridge or the Lost Valley Day Use Area to begin your jog.

Picnicking: Picnic tables are provided for day use at Lost Valley, Pruitt and Cedar Glade.

Picnic Pavilion: There are two pavilions in the Upper River. A reservation and fee is required in order to use the pavilion at Ozark Campground. There is a pavilion at the Lost Valley Day Use Area with no charge. Please respect others wanting to use the pavilion at Lost Valley and be willing to share.

Pondering: When you just want to get away from it all, try Buffalo National River and the Upper River. Leave your worries at home and come out for a breath of fresh air and relaxation. It is a great place to ponder about something and about nothing.

Swim: Remember there are no life guards so you will be swimming at your own risk. Check for hazards (boulders, boats, horses, etc) and do not dive into the river from the banks or bluffs. Never swim when the river is muddy or in flood stage.



Lost Valley is not lost

IN APRIL OF 2011, A FLASH FLOOD TOOK out the bridge, scoured the trail and many of the lower campsites, and created a number of unsafe areas. The Buffalo National River trail crew was diverted from other areas to conduct extensive repairs to the trail, including restoration of trail surfaces and steps that were heavily damaged in the flash flood that swept down Clark Creek. The Youth Conservation Corps workers were also detailed to this job. Trail improvements to Lost Valley had been under way since last summer and much of that effort was destroyed or damaged in the flood. New interpretive waysides scheduled to be placed along the trail to identify and explain natural and cultural features on the trail had fortunately not been placed or many of these would have also been destroyed by the flood.

Some things will take longer to fix, such as the handicap accessibility portion of the lower hiking trail. Certain segments of the trail are being redesigned and rerouted to accommodate erosion and avoid future flood events. The bridge over Clark Creek was a total loss and visitors will have to negotiate their way across the creek bed to access the trail from the parking area until funding is available for redesign and reconstruction, likely to a more sustainable location further downstream from its previous location.

Approximately 3,600 visitors hiked the Lost Valley trail between December and May of 1983, the first year that these records were kept. By 1985 9,500 visitors were on the trail. Road counter statistics begin in 1995 with an annual total of 8,233 vehicles. The last count ending in December of 2010 showed over 23,000 vehicles traveling to Lost Valley. If you put an average of two people in each vehicle, which is probably low, the resulting total is 64,000 visitors last year!

Although mining and logging operations were undertaken here during the Civil War and into the first half of the twentieth century, these industries did not leave much of an imprint on this part of the valley. The first tangible record comes in the form of a farm, located in the area now used by the National Park Service as part of its Lost Valley Campground.

Harry S. Primrose owned a 160 acre parcel that included most of Lost Valley. Mr. Primrose homesteaded here in 1928 and was formally deeded the land by the Arkansas State Land Commissioner in 1935. Construction of the house began in approximately 1942-44 and was eventually completed in 1952. Lost Valley State Park was established



in 1967, the Primrose house became the Superintendent's House, and the former pasture the camping area. The National Park Service formally acquired Lost Valley State Park for Buffalo National River in 1975 when it was transferred from the Arkansas Department of Parks and Tourism. State of Arkansas, Seventieth General Assembly, passed House Bill 719 which conveyed those portions of both Lost Valley and Buffalo Point state parks lying within the boundaries of Buffalo National River to the National Park Service. It was at this time that camping was moved across Clark Creek to its current location.

Engineers have assessed damages and are developing plans for bridge replacement and short and long-term repairs to the trail system. Full repair incorporating redesign, materials, and construction is a long way off with an estimated price tag of \$250,000. The decision to restore, relocate, or otherwise make camping available will become part of a planning process involving public scoping and technical input. Buffalo National River recognizes the importance of Lost Valley, both as a popular day use area and as an overnight destination, but feels that this is the most appropriate time to reconsider its future.

Many people are concerned about the camping at Lost Valley. When Lost Valley does reopened, visitors found that tables and fire grates had been removed and that camping was no longer allowed. This interim measure was taken for several reasons, including the recognition of flash flood danger to campers, the loss of vegetative cover, and the overall poor design of many of the sites and the campground as a whole. Long-term evaluation of alternative road access, campground location, and other facilities will be on the planning table, but in the meanwhile the park will make every effort to maintain Lost Valley as a quality day-use area.

Elk: History and Habits

Do you remember the first time you saw an elk? Was it in a zoo or was it in the wild? You say you have never seen an elk in the wild? If you haven't had that first sighting why not make it now and make it in Arkansas at Buffalo National River? Increase your chances of that memorable sighting by first learning something about the history and habits of elk in Arkansas.

Did you know that elk in North America once ranged wild and free from the west coast to the east coast? The sub-species of elk that called Buffalo River home was the eastern elk and was the largest of the six known sub-species but became extinct just as many folks were moving into the valley area after Arkansas gained its statehood in 1836. For generations to come, the descendants of those first settlers did not get to see wild elk in Arkansas. In 1933 the U.S. Forest Service (USFS) released 11 Rocky Mt. elk in Franklin County. These elk multiplied until about 1950, but no one knows for sure why they did so well then disappeared. So, once again Arkansas was without the beauty of elk until Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) released 112 Rocky Mountain elk in Newton County between the years of 1981 and 1985. For a while it began to appear as these elk, for one reason or another, would also disappear from Arkansas. Through the cooperation of the AGFC, USFS, NPS, Rocky Mt. Elk Foundation, and the respect of local citizens these original 112 elk have continued to thrive and multiply to where it is estimated there are around 500. Since elk live to be about 15 years old, we can now assume that probably all elk we are seeing in Arkansas were born in Arkansas.

Although elk have free range and can occasionally be seen at several different locations in and near the river, the majority of elk seen at Buffalo National River are seen in Newton County along the six miles of Hwy 43 and Hwy 21 that is known as Boxley Valley.

If you would like to increase your chances of seeing elk take into consideration the season. Is it summer and so hot that elk can't take the heat and consequently can't stand to be out in wide open fields? Remember, this is the Ozark Mountains so keep in mind that there is not an elevation change for elk to go to higher areas and cool off like they could if they were living in the Rocky Mountains. If it is summer then you can assume that elk will probably be hanging out under the shade of a tree, along the river's edge, just the way people will do in order to survive the heat of the day. Elk sightings are frequently made when the sun is off the fields and elk come out to graze, either before sunrise or after sunset.

You will have a better than average chance of seeing elk in the fields during the autumn



months of October and November. This is called the rutting season and the bull elk have large antlers to show off to their harems of cow elk, other bulls, and the audience of spectators along the fence line. Even so, once that sun hits the fields the elk will probably disappear, like phantoms, back into the shade of the cane/trees in order to seek the river's edge until the sun leaves the fields in the evening.

Are you looking for elk in the winter? If it is an all-day cold spell you just might be able to see elk anytime of the day either as they are eating or sleeping.

Try visiting the river during the spring months especially if it is cloudy and rainy. Elk are less apt to seek shade on chilly days. Remember even days we think it is cool; elk won't necessarily feel cool because they will still be wearing a heavy coat!

Other than during the rutting season, elk are going to act lazy. They won't be putting on much of a show but instead will be lying around chewing their cud just like a dairy cow! Sparks do fly during the rutting season. That is when visitors will be listening for elk to bugle and will be watching for the "show" of sparing and fighting among the bulls that are trying to keep harems gathered together. Remember, even if elk aren't looking directly at you, they know you are there. Since elk are wild animals do not try to get close to them (we don't want you to make headlines and the fields are private property within Buffalo National River). Elk do feel threatened by your presence and will feel the push of your eyes. They may leave the viewing area then return later when spectators are gone so patiently wait for them to relax and they might return.

Whether it is your first sighting or the countless times you have seen wild elk, the experience will give you something to remember, talk about and an excitement that will be handed down to your descendants for generations to come.

Middle Buffalo River district opportunities

Tyler Bend Visitor Center • 170 Ranger Road, St. Joe, AR 72675 • 870-439-2502 • Latitude 35.97531366 • Longitude 92.76534073

THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF THE BUFFALO River spans 41.3 river miles from Mt. Hersey to South Maumee. Sections of the middle river offer quiet, gentle floats through a pastoral setting and opportunities to enjoy the river's tranquility.

RIVER HIGHLIGHTS

Between Mt. Hersey and Woolum, the river drops only 3 feet per mile. As you approach the last bend before Woolum, look for the formations known as The Nars and Skull Bluff. The Nars is a narrow spine of limestone and Skull Bluff has eroded to look like a human skull. At the right river level, you can paddle into the eye.

From Woolum to Tyler Bend the river drops a little more steeply at 5 feet per mile. Be Aware! If the rainfall has been low, the riverbed will be dry for up to 3 miles starting just past Woolum, whatever water there is flows underground. The second largest tributary, Richland Creek, enters the river near Woolum. The Richland Valley area was a thriving farm community. Just downstream is Peter Cave Bluff. The cave provided saltpeter to the Confederates during the Civil War and a tie slide used during logging operations starting in the late 1800s. The largest island in the river, Arnold Island, is a

few miles upstream of Tyler Bend.

From Tyler Bend to Gilbert and on to South Maumee the river flattens out again to a gradient of only 3 feet drop per mile. A mile downriver from Tyler Bend is the Highway 65 bridge that replaced Grinders Ferry. The ferry operated until the first bridge was built in 1929. The only town remaining on the river is Gilbert. In season, a store, restaurant and accommodations are available. Past Gilbert are the remains of a railroad crossing and Red Bluff.

FACILITIES

The Tyler Bend Visitor Center is 2 miles into the park on the access road off of Highway 65 between Marshall and St. Joe, AR. The visitor center is open year-round and provides information about the park, an exhibit area, bookstore, park video, restrooms and water fountain. Ranger guided programs are provided in season as staffing permits. River access, picnic area and pavilion, and campground are found at Tyler Bend.

HISTORIC SITE

The Collier Homestead represents an Ozark dwelling from the 1930s. Sod and Ida Mae Collier used the provisions of the Homestead Act of 1862 to acquire this Ozark



farm. A log house, smokehouse, cistern, and a barn remain. An accessible trail to the homestead is found 1.5 miles from Highway 65 on the Tyler Bend road.

TRAILS

Over six miles of trails loop through the Tyler Bend area. Scenic river views, the historic homestead and woodland wildflowers may be found along these trails. Free trail maps are available at the visitor center.

"Hikers only" trails have white blazes. Hiking and horse riding trails have yellow blazes.

The Buffalo River Trail (BRT) in the Middle District has been completed from Woolum to Gilbert. A trail continues along the old railroad bed from Gilbert to the railroad



bridge piers. Some sections of the BRT are shared, but the horse trail moves to the north side of the river upstream of Tyler Bend. Hikers may stay on the south side and cross the river on the highway bridge instead of fording the river.

The last miles of the Ozark Highlands Trail (OHT) run through Richland Valley to Woolum. If you plan to hike a section of the OHT that joins the park at Woolum, realize that both the Richland Creek crossing and the Woolum river crossing can be swift and deep in winter and spring.

HORSES

Middle river horse users may camp overnight at Woolum. They are not permitted in other developed campgrounds or in the town of Gilbert.

Horseback riding at the Buffalo

THERE IS A LONG, RICH CULTURE OF equestrian use along the Buffalo River. From the time of the early settlers until today, horses and mules have been used to support the commerce of the region. Farming and logging with stock was once a common practice in the rural counties along the river. Mail delivery and traveling "circuit rider" judges and preachers depended on their horses and mules. Today, equestrian use is one of the popular recreational activities along the Buffalo River, giving visitors access to many of the area's scenic features and the rich history of the Ozarks.

Whether a developed campground or a wilderness adventure, Buffalo National River offers visitors several options for equestrian camping and trail riding. The park encompasses over 95,000 acres that surround the free-flowing Buffalo River with over 75 miles of designated equestrian trails. Many miles of primitive trails and old road traces are also available to equestrian use. The most extensive horse trail network is in the upper section of the river. Horseback riders are advised to purchase a Trails Illustrated® map from any of the park visitor centers, park concessionaires, area Arkansas

Game & Fish Commission offices, or local area businesses to properly identify park approved equestrian trails.

Camping: Two camping areas in the upper river are designated for visitors with horses. Steel Creek and Erbie are accessible by vehicle and provide basic facilities such as fire grates, toilets, and space for horse trailers. Both camps are located adjacent to horse trails. Steel Creek Horse Camp offers 14 sites and Erbie Horse Camp another 5 sites. Use is limited to six people and four head of stock per site with a seven day limit per stay at the first-come, first-serve sites.

Middle river horse users may camp overnight at Woolum. Horses are not permitted in other developed campgrounds or in the town of Gilbert. Visitors to the Lower Buffalo Wilderness Area may camp at Log Wagon Gap or Hathaway Gap. Water for stock is unavailable and there are no facilities in these areas.

Horse Health: Proof of a negative Equine Infectious Anemia test, commonly known as a Coggins test is required in the state of Arkansas by act 1306 of 1997.

Wilderness: The Park's wilderness areas are managed as natural areas where man is but only a visitor. The forces of nature determine the trail conditions to a greater degree than in other areas of the national river. Be prepared for swollen streams, washouts, downed trees and trail obstacles that may require dismounting. Many trails along the Buffalo are designated for both hiking and equestrian use. Shared use equestrian trails are marked with a yellow blaze. Please keep horses off trails marked with a white blaze, which are designated for hiking only.

HORSE TIPS

- Do not tie horses and pack animals to trees. Use hitching rails, high lines, or pickets to secure animals.
- Riders are responsible for removing or scattering horse manure from camp areas, trailheads, and loading areas. "Pack it in, pack it out."
- Where available, camp in previously used sites on durable surfaces away from streams and trails.
- **Dogs are prohibited on all horse trails.**
- There are no authorized commercial horse outfitters operating in the park.
- All drive-in horse campsites are on a

first-come, first-serve basis.

CHECKLIST FOR HORSEBACK RIDERS:

- Halter/lead rope for trail use
- Insect repellent for horse and rider
- First aid kit for horse and rider
- Adequate food and water for rider and horse
- Tack
- Camera
- Hat
- Raingear
- Extra clothing layers
- Current Coggins test papers
- Highline and tree-savers
- Maps (Trails Illustrated®) and compass
- Signaling device, GPS, cell phone

GENERAL INFORMATION:

Always check weather and water levels before and during your trip. Heavy or prolonged rains, which may occur upstream and out of sight, can raise river levels rapidly. If an emergency situation occurs, visitors should not depend on cell phones as cell service is very limited along the river.

In case of Emergency, call 1-888-692-1162.

Lower Buffalo River district opportunities

Buffalo Point Ranger Station • 2229 Hwy 268 East, Yellville, AR 72687 • 870-449-4311 • Latitude 36.07372554 • Longitude 92.55685466

HISTORIC RUSH VALLEY

In the 1880s farmers on Rush Creek discovered zinc ore, and soon the “rush” to Rush began. Claims were staked out along the Rush Valley and that of neighboring Clabber Creek. By the 1890s the mining boom was well established and miners and investors arrived from all over the country. The most famous mine at Rush was the “Morning Star” which awed observers with its quarry-like production of ore. Around the Morning Star Mine a community of homes and businesses developed. This community endured until the 1960s. The heyday of the mining district came during World War I. All of the mines were in full operation producing zinc for the war effort. As the war wound down so did the need for zinc. Soon the valley seemed a ghost town in comparison to the busy years of several thousand inhabitants. A mining revival in the 1920s was short-lived, but “free-oreing” supported local miners until World War II. During the 1940s several of the processing mills were dismantled for salvage. Until the closing of the post office in the 1950s Rush maintained a community identity. Gradually, the remaining inhabitants left until Rush became known as a ghost town. Today the Rush mining district is part of Buffalo National River and is entered on the National Register of Historic Places as significant in the history of mining in Northern Arkansas. This area includes a trail network that can be enjoyed all year, one of the more popular river access points and a primitive campground. When fishing downriver near Clabber Creek, be aware that the rules for keeping a smallmouth bass change. Enjoy!

INDIAN ROCKHOUSE

The Indian Rockhouse is one of the more popular destinations for the hiking visi-



tor. This majestic bluff shelter is situated at the back of a 3.5 mile, moderately strenuous, mostly single track trail system. It is strongly suggested that each person take stock in their ability to negotiate this trail beforehand. Those that embark on the trip should take plenty of water, a snack, a first aid kit, and wear sturdy shoes. There are several landmarks along the trail which are also identified on the handy trail map to allow the hiker to track their progress while taking in the natural beauty and cultural history. A portion of the trail runs parallel to Panther Creek which can be challenging during periods of high water; be careful. This trail network offers a wide range of viewing opportunities depending on the time of year. At the trailhead you should take note of the presence of shortleaf pines and dogwood trees. As you traverse the trail, you will notice a transition from pines to hardwoods, and then to eastern red cedars. The mountain azalea, with its cinnamon fragrance, can be found near the waterfall in the early spring, along with columbine, Jack in the pulpit and brown trillium. The May apples make their annual appearance in, you guessed it, early May. The female plants have a split stem and bear the flowering fruit; while the male plants, with the same shape leaf, have a single stem. The American hornbeam or “musclewood”



trees come into prominence as you make your way down into the Panther Creek valley (notice the sinewy shape of these small, yet dense trees). Take note of the signage at the Panther Creek bed crossing, and the return trail off to your left near the Natural Bathing. Enjoy the scenic views of the bluffshelter, but please do not add to the, already abundant, signs of human presence. Remember to pack out everything you pack in, and leave the area cleaner than when you arrived. The single track return trail winds its way back up the ridge to a series of switchbacks below the old CCC (Civilian Conservation Corps) quarry. Once you take that last right turn at the intersection it is a short jaunt up to the trailhead. Notice there is a trail to the left that runs parallel to the road. For your safety, please use that trail to get back to the parking lot instead of entering the roadway on a blind curve. The Indian Rockhouse Trail is challenging, yet enjoyable, and well worth the effort.

OVERLOOK

The Overlook Trail is part of a larger network that connects the campground, trailhead, cabin area and Ranger Station. The 1.2 mile loop traverses through several “micro-environments” ranging from a mature pine stand to a hardwood forest and a cedar glade, all of which have their own

character and attributes. Before stepping off into the wood line all participants should take into consideration the temperature, humidity, individual physical condition, time of day, adequate hydration and resupply, length of the hike and proper footwear. Familiarize yourself with the map and informative wayside exhibits. Starting from the Trailhead Parking take the path to the east (left) for a 15-20 minute walk downhill to the scenic overlook. You will be able to see the river and campground below, as well as a panoramic view of the valley. This is an East-facing slope and heats up quickly in the morning. If you are hoping to capture that inspiring photo be there for first light or late in the afternoon. From the overlook follow the trail through a cedar glade where another world of moist, miniature vegetation thrives among the sun-bleached rocks and gnarled cedar roots. Be on the lookout for the elusive Eastern Collared Lizard or “Mountain Boomer” and its food source: the perfectly camouflaged grasshopper.

Once past the glade take note of the signage at the next trail intersection as this trail connects with the Campground Trail that leads down to the Amphitheater and Walk-in Tent Area. Take a right, and head back up hill. Make sure and take a right at the next fork to head back to the trailhead, or you’ll end up across the street from the Ranger Station, which is open seven days a week, from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm as staffing allows. Remember to pack out everything you pack in, and take only pictures and leave only footprints.

FLOATING IN THE LOWER DISTRICT

Canoeing and kayaking is a year-round activity in the Lower District. See page 11 for details on how to plan a float trip and how to stay safe on the water.

Civilian Conservation Corps: the public’s contribution to the Parks System

The Great Depression was in full swing by 1933. At that time, approximately a quarter of the working population was unemployed and natural disasters were causing woes for farmers and many people had lost their homes. By 1933 the country had a new president, Franklin D. Roosevelt, whose main focus was to bring economic relief to the public. As a result, he initiated federal programs that were developed to assist in the country’s financial recovery. One of the more popular programs created during this era was the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). This program was developed to put thousands of men back to work while making improvements to public lands. It was a very successful program that resulted in the planting of millions of trees, the construction of countless bridges, trails and permanent structures still in use today.

Buffalo Point State Park was established by the

State of Arkansas in March, 1938. By May of that year the park had a resident CCC camp of men that were making plans to build roadways, cabins and a pavilion at the park in an effort to promote recreational activities and make the area more accessible not only to the local population, but to promote tourism as well. The structures were constructed between 1938 and 1945, utilizing designs that the National Park Service had encouraged the CCC to use. The cabins were largely comprised of local stone, rough cut wood, and natural paint colors. The red rock, which is St. Joe limestone, was quarried very close to the work site. The quarry site can be seen today from the Indian Rockhouse hiking trail. This limestone was also used to construct native looking retaining walls, culverts and guardrails along the roadsides at Buffalo Point. In the end, a pavilion and the exteriors of six cabins and a lodge were finished by the CCC, but not all of the interiors were completed before the camp dis-

solved in 1942. World War II was underway by this time and all CCC camps were ordered to disband so that the country could focus on the war effort.

Arkansas State Parks completed and operated the cabins as rental units starting in 1942. Annual park visitation in the early 1950s was approximately 25,000 and the cabins were in high demand. In the 1960s, it was determined that a campground was becoming a necessity. The campground’s 83 camp sites, in addition to tent and group sites were also built using natural features and native stone to enhance the park, much like the construction design of the rustic cabins.

In 1972 Buffalo National River was established and the National Park Service took on the responsibility of stewardship for the 135 miles of protected waterway and adjacent lands. As a result, Buffalo Point State Park was absorbed into the National

Park System. While the National Park Service has ownership over the CCC cabins, they are run by a concessionaire that rents the cabins out to visitors. The cabins have been rehabilitated several times in the past 38 years, and while maintenance repairs have been needed the rustic craftsmanship remains sturdy.

In 1988 the cabins were listed on the National Register of Historic Places due to the structures’ historic and natural designs. Over the years, visitation to Buffalo National River has increased to approximately 1.5 million visitors per year. Buffalo Point offers one of most popular campgrounds in the park, with most sites occupied throughout the entire summer. The hard work and skill of the CCC is still being appreciated and utilized 70 years later.

For further information contact the Buffalo Point Ranger Station at 870-449-4311.

Planning your float trip

ESSENTIALS

- Boat (canoe, kayak or raft)
- Paddle/spare paddle
- Personal flotation device (PFD)
- Safety whistle
- Knife
- Fire starter (matches in waterproof case, waterproof lighter, etc.)
- Float plan (left with friend). For multiple day trips, please leave a plan with the local ranger station.
- Map/charts in waterproof case
- Sufficient water and food items to satisfy the needs of everyone on the trip
- Items that can protect you from the elements as needed, e.g. umbrella, rain jacket, poncho, emergency space blanket

CANOE GEAR

- Bailer with lanyard for getting the water out of a boat if you are swamped without tipping over
- Sponge - for getting water out of the boat and to clean the inside of the boat as necessary
- Floating bow/stern lines (painters) – for guiding the boat through rapids while you walk safely along the bank
- Bungee cords or net, cordage
- Throw bag with floating line for rescuing another boater
- Spare PFD
- Tarp – in the event that you need to seek cover from the weather conditions

SAFETY AND EMERGENCY GEAR

- First-aid kit that is appropriate for the size of your group
- Signal mirror
- Light sticks or a flashlight
- Cell phone in waterproof case
- Weather and two-way radios and personal locator beacon if float camping for several days
- Headlamp
- Hand saw to cut dead and downed wood

GEAR STORAGE AND TRANSPORT

- Dry bags to keep clothes and electronics dry
- Backpack or portage pack as needed
- Heavy-duty garbage bags (lining for inside of pack and other gear)
- Ziploc bags (protection for non-electronic items)
- Cooler – Polystyrene or more commonly known as Styrofoam coolers are prohibited on the river. Each solid side cooler must also have a strap around it to keep it closed if overturned
- Mesh trash bag for refuse items

Judging your own abilities in a boat is paramount when electing to navigate a stretch of river. Too many people consider running

ivers, whether in a canoe, tube or kayak, as a leisurely activity without any inherent danger. This can be the case, if a few general guidelines are considered before launching:

1. Is the condition or level of the river within my scope of ability to safely navigate? Is this the case for everyone in my group?
2. Are the weather conditions consistent with my plans, and am I sufficiently equipped for that and some possible contingencies?
3. Do I have the ability to swim for survival in this river? Realizing there is no shame in not having that ability, but it is imperative that we know now instead of after the fact. Can we all swim? If not, have those people been identified by the whole group, and provided with a properly fitting life jacket?
4. What obstacles will I encounter while casually floating down this river? Am I confident enough in my paddling ability to safely negotiate these obstacles? What might increase the possibility of me “getting in over my head”?
5. Do I or any of my group have any medical conditions that could be negatively impacted by going on this float? What preventative measures can I take to minimize the risks?
6. Does everyone know where we are going? Where to take out and what to do if we get separated?
7. What do I do if something bad happens to me, a member of my group or another floater?

Just like preparing for any trip: you fill the gas tank, make sure you know where you are going, check the oil and tire pressure, clean the windshield, make sure the kids have a snack, withdraw some cash from the ATM machine, make sure mother has her medicine and some peanut butter crackers, and ensure everyone goes to the restroom before getting into the car. We should all take the same steps to prepare. Once all of that is said and done, then we can sit back and enjoy the scenic beauty of this free-flowing national treasure.



What's new on the Buffalo? Buffalo recycles

Frequent visitors to the park are already familiar with the mesh bags provided (and required) for trash containment while on float trips. This year the concessions management program at Buffalo National River purchased white mesh bags bearing the familiar recycling symbol to encourage visitors to recycle aluminum cans. Park concessioners will provide these bags to visitors at the beginning of their float trips. Both the trash and recycle bags must be secured to the canoe or kayak during the trip so that they don't end up in the river. At the end of the day, the bags containing aluminum cans may be deposited with the concessioner. Many campgrounds and launch sites have the standard blue dumpster for placing all types of recyclable materials, including plastic water bottles which are now a major component of river and roadside litter.

In addition to the common sense of recycling, regulations govern the use of other materials in the park. Glass containers are prohibited on trails, in caves, on or in waterways, and within 100 feet of any river or stream in the park. Broken glass is difficult to clean up and creates a safety hazard. Glass containers are allowed in developed campsites and picnic sites as well as in vehicles on designated roads and parking areas.

The possession of polystyrene coolers, (commonly known as styrofoam) is prohibited while floating or camping along the Buffalo River, except in developed campgrounds, picnic areas, landings, roads and parking lots. This prohibition includes coolers, ice chests, and containers. High density bait containers, used

solely for that purpose are allowed. Discarded polystyrene does not biodegrade, remaining as a visual component of the environment for decades. The slow degradation of polystyrene also creates potentially harmful liquid and gaseous by-products that could contaminate groundwater and air. In addition to the prohibition, visitors should try to use alternative containers even in the campground: paper plates that can be safely burned, ceramic cups (the coffee tastes better).

The “disposable culture” became part of the American landscape during and after World War II when the production of highly efficient materials to support overseas actions translated to a domestic market. House sites on the Buffalo prior to WWII tend to have very little trash associated with them as their occupants made use of containers until broken or exhausted. After WWII, disposable containers became common on the landscape, first near houses, then in landfills. Consequently, our sensitivity to recycling rapidly evaporated.



Cub Scout Eamonn Clark of Bergman Pack 179 models the new recycling bags.

Decreasing our footprint on the landscape of the park, of Arkansas, and the planet, is part of the mission of the National Park Service and we encourage all visitors to assist us in this effort.

Feral Hogs on the Buffalo



Wild or feral hogs are not native to Arkansas and the Buffalo National River. They have become established due to

inadvertent or illegal release and high reproductive success. The problem with feral hogs is that they compete directly with many native animals for food and destroy habitat for many wildlife species. They can also pose a threat to humans, pets, and domestic livestock through the spread of disease, such as swine brucellosis, pseudo rabies, and trichinosis. Feral hogs root and wallow in the ground searching for food, causing soil erosion, which in turn affects water quality. They destroy sensitive natural areas within the Buffalo National River such as glades, marshes, and springs. Feral hogs feed most heavily at dawn and dusk, spending the majority of the day either wallowing in mud holes or resting in dense vegetation.

The National Park Service has been working with the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission and the U. S. Department of Agriculture Animal & Plant

Health Inspection Service in an effort to reduce the feral hog population in the state and on the Buffalo National River. Hunting and trapping methods are currently being used by the National Park Service as means to reduce the population of feral hogs on the park.

How Can You Help?

Help is needed in the effort to control feral hogs on public lands. Any and all visitors are encouraged to report feral hog sightings and sign. Some signs of hog activity are pig tracks, scat, rooting, wallows, and rubs.

Licensed hunters can greatly increase the effectiveness of our efforts by shooting feral hogs while they are hunting game. According to Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and National Park Service regulations, hunters may kill feral hogs on the Buffalo National River during daylight hours during any open hunting season. They must use a weapon that is legal for that season. All general regulations for hunting safety must be observed.

An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of Search & Rescue

By Middle Buffalo District Ranger Kevin Moses, Search and Rescue Coordinator

EVERY YEAR, DOZENS OF VISITORS ARE rescued from the backcountry and wilderness areas of Buffalo National River. Some get into a tight spot on the river, some become lost off trail, and others fall off cliffs. Occasionally, folks even die in Buffalo River's backcountry.

When these search and rescues (SARs) occur, a team of highly-trained rescuers, about half of whom are volunteers, go forth into the woods, over the cliffs, underground, and down river in all weather conditions to help those in need. Though this team of rescuers, called BUFFSAR, is more than willing to participate in SAR missions, each time they do, they place themselves in harm's way, "... *that others may live.*"

These SARs are not only sometimes dangerous, but also expensive. Each incident costs the rescuers themselves time, effort, and money, and each costs the taxpaying public money, as well.

So how do we prevent, or at least reduce, SAR missions? Part of the answer to this dilemma rests on the shoulders of YOU, the individual visitor. Heading into Buffalo National River's backcountry and wilderness areas, whether by foot, horseback, or boat, is a challenging prospect, and it should not be taken lightly. Rather, visitors should take time to prepare themselves for such a visit and heed some sound advice from BUFFSAR: We call it Preventive Search and Rescue, or P-SAR:

A. Tell someone where you're going.

Leave an itinerary and map of the area with a responsible person at home or work whom you can rely on to report you overdue in the event that you become overdue. Give them the telephone number to Buffalo National River's 24-hour dispatch: 1-888-692-1162.



Pinned canoe on Buffalo River. Extremely dangerous situation! Never attempt to unpin a pinned boat.

B. Seek training prior to your trip.

Whether canoeing, kayaking, rafting, caving, rock climbing & rappelling, fishing, hunting, or horseback riding, be sure to seek proper training in your pursuit BEFORE you start your trip. Being skilled in your recreational activity can help you avoid becoming the object of a SAR.

C. Know your limits.

Several of our SARs result from visitors who get in over their heads and quickly become overwhelmed, either by trip duration, trip difficulty, or environmental conditions, such as air and water temperature and weather. Are you a strong swimmer? Do you possess basic survival skills, such as lighting a fire, and can you perform those skills while soaking wet and shivering? Are you healthy and do you have your doctor's approval of strenuous activity? Can you walk for several miles while carrying a heavy pack? If you're floating the river and conditions change, are you skilled enough with your craft to continue floating, or should you consider pulling off the river to wait for better conditions?

D. Carry the Ten Essentials and know how to use them.

1. Drinking water & high energy food
2. Shelter (tent, bivvy, tarp, poncho, etc.)
3. First aid kit
4. Whistle, signal mirror & cell phone
5. Sunscreen & insect repellent
6. Adequate clothing, footwear & hat
7. Sturdy knife
8. Light sources (more than one)
9. Topographic map, compass & GPS
10. Means to make fire & dry tinder

E. Wear a life jacket—or personal flotation device (PFD).

All persons floating the Buffalo River are required to have a personal flotation device (PFD). All children ages 12 and under are required to actually WEAR their PFDs. This isn't just a good idea, it's the law. Be sure your PFDs are US Coast Guard approved, in serviceable condition, and wear them properly. BUFFSAR recommends that ALL persons, even those over 13, actually wear your PFD. It might just save your life one day. Remember, "It won't work if you don't wear it."

F. Waterproof and secure everything in your boat.

Capsizes are practically inevitable. Be sure to place all your equipment in sturdy waterproof bags and tie everything down in your boat to prevent it from washing downstream in the event of a capsize. The Ten Essentials will do you no good if they're washed away.

G. Bring sturdy footwear even if float-

ing. Every year, some of the people needing rescued could have avoided calling for help if they had only brought proper footwear with them. Flip-flops or slip-on water shoes can get pulled off your feet and swept downstream. If your canoe becomes pinned or swept downstream, you must be able to hike out—have sturdy footwear with you just in case.

H. Do not attempt to unpin a pinned boat.

This is a very dangerous situation with extremely powerful forces being exerted on the boat. Leave it where it is and report its location to a park ranger.

I. Look at a map before you go.

Knowing your intended route ahead of time will help you prepare the trip itinerary mentioned earlier, as well as help you know your options in the event of a mishap, such as a boat pinning. Many stretches of the Buffalo River have trails that parallel the river, but which are out of sight from the actual river. By knowing if a trail is nearby, you can hike out on your own if you lose your boat.

J. Obtain a weather forecast.

If the forecast warns of foul or severe weather, consider postponing your trip. If you decide to proceed with your trip, be sure that you're prepared for: lightning, strong winds, high summer temperatures, winter weather, and rapidly rising river levels.

K. Give yourself enough daylight.

If you're only planning to do a day trip, give yourself enough daytime hours to complete the trip. Know what time sunset is. Be honest with yourself about how fast you hike. Plan for unexpected delays and carry several light sources.

L. Stay on designated trails.

Carry a topographic map and know how to read it. Straying off trails is not prohibited, but unless you have an intended purpose for doing so, it is also not encouraged. If you're hunting, know where trails are and remember that non-hunting visitors might be hiking nearby.

M. Be aware of hunters.

Hunting is permitted in most of Buffalo National River's backcountry. Consider wearing high-visibility orange outerwear when hunting seasons are in.

N. Cotton kills.

When cotton gets wet, it loses insulation ability and quickly contributes to a hypothermic state. Hypothermia results when your body loses heat faster than it produces it, and it can be deadly. The quickest route to hypothermia is to get wet



and stay wet. Your best defense against it is to wear wool, or synthetic fibers such as polypropylene, or a wetsuit. Gore-Tex or waterproof outer garments are also a must. During cold or even chilly times of the year, avoid cotton at all costs.

O. Stay clear of edges.

Buffalo National River is crisscrossed with cliffs ranging in height from ten feet to several hundred feet, providing some of the most stunning landscapes in the Midwest. But they can be treacherous if not respected. Gravity is always "on" at Buffalo National River, and when folks step too close to the edge, they risk falling over. Stay well clear of their edges!

P. Other environmental hazards.

Buffalo National River's backcountry is wild country. It is strewn with cliffs, fast-flowing streams, rocky trails, pit caves, rugged terrain, poison ivy, and is home to several dangerous animals including copperheads, cottonmouths, rattle snakes, black bears, wild hogs, bobcats, ticks, spiders, and several venomous insects. You cannot predict what you might encounter, but you can prepare for your trip and have a pre-plan in mind.

Q. Alcohol and glass.

Persons over the age of 21 are allowed to enjoy alcoholic beverages while visiting Buffalo National River. We only require that you do so responsibly. Keep in mind that alcohol slows one's reaction times and depresses the central nervous system. If you become intoxicated, you might not be capable of doing the same type or amount of endurance activities that you can do while sober. Do not drink and drive. If you drive drunk at Buffalo National River, Rangers will arrest you. Don't "come on vacation and leave on probation." Be smart and use a Designated Driver. All glass is strictly prohibited on the Buffalo River itself and its gravel bars. Help us keep it off our waterway so that visitors can enjoy the sand and water barefoot without worry of a painful injury.

Buffalo National River is magnificent country! Some of the most exquisite you'll ever experience. But it's rugged, unpredictable country, too, and we want you to come out of it alive and in one piece. Thank you for taking the time to read some of BUFFSAR's advice for a safe and enjoyable visit to our park. Consider it as an "ounce of P-SAR that is worth a pound of SAR."



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U.S. Department of the Interior

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EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

You are responsible for your own safety!

Travel in Buffalo National River back-country areas and floating the river have inherent risks. Hikers and floaters assume complete responsibility for their own safety. Rescue is not a certainty. Your safety depends on your own good judgment, adequate preparation, and constant attention. Proper equipment and the knowledge of how to use it are essential for a safe trip. The park is not responsible for monitoring your whereabouts. Let someone know where you are going and when you expect to return. Keep your group together, especially children.

Buffalo National River encompasses over 95,000 acres including a variety of natural hazards. Be aware of your surroundings and the plants and animals near you. If you have an accident, it will take time for help to reach you.

PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Poison Ivy may cause an allergic reaction in some people. It may be found at ground level, as a shrub or a vine climbing a tree. Leaves of Three – Let it be. If you touch any part of a poison ivy plant, wash with soap as soon as possible.

Chiggers and ticks are particularly numerous in the summer, but may be present all year. Stay on trails; avoid walking through thickets or tall grass, and use insect repellent.

Snakes are found throughout the park and some are venomous including the Copperhead, Cottonmouth and Rattlesnake. This is their home and you are the visitor. Please leave all snakes, as well as all other wildlife, alone.

OTHER WILDLIFE

Feeding wildlife is dangerous to you and the animal. Animals that are fed by people learn to expect it and can become aggressive and bite. Our food is not appropriate for wildlife and can make them sick. Observe wildlife from a safe distance. If an animal's behavior changes because you are there, you are too close to it.

ENVIRONMENTAL

There are many bluffs, sinkholes, and caves within the park. Be careful along bluffs – the rock may crumble and landslides occur. The limestone and dolomite rock erode to form caves and sinkholes.

These can be dangerous to explore without proper equipment. People who lived here before the park was established dug wells for water and mined ore from the rocks. Known wells and mine openings are covered or gated. Please do not enter any mine. Be careful around historic sites in case a well is uncovered.

Water is the primary resource of the park. Without it, there would be no Buffalo National River. Most recreation on or in the water is safe, but there may be hazards to consider before you float or swim. The river level rises and falls so make sure you have the skill required for the current water level. If rain has made the river high and fast, there will be debris in the river and you will have less time to react to any problems.

Cold water and/or cold air temperatures will cause hypothermia (the dangerous lowering of body temperature) quickly if you get wet. Be sure you have dry clothes in case you need them. The sun can be severe, especially reflecting back from the water. Wear sunscreen to prevent burns.

Swimming and diving are fun in the river. Swim with a buddy and don't dive from cliffs. When the river is clear, shallow water may look deep. Muddy water or glare from the surface may hide rocks. Remember to wear your lifejacket or PFD (personal flotation device). It will keep you afloat.

ALWAYS REMEMBER – No glass is permitted within 100 feet of any water whether it is the river itself or one of the smaller streams.

SAFETY TIPS

- Stay on officially maintained trails.
- Do not climb on rocks around waterfalls.
- Avoid hypothermia by keeping dry.
- Eat before you're hungry and rest before you're tired.
- Treat all water before drinking by either filtering or boiling.
- Parents should keep children in sight at all times.