



Currents

The official newspaper
of Buffalo National River

2016/2017 Centennial Issue

7 Wilderness

Buffalo National River includes three separate Wilderness areas, encompassing 36,000 acres. Find out what makes a Wilderness experience unique.

7 Elk viewing

Nearly 500 elk live in the Buffalo River area since their reintroduction in the early 1980s. Discover the best times and locations for optimum elk viewing.

11 Plan for Safety

A good plan can be the difference between a memorable day on the river or in the back-country and a miserable one. See page 11 for ideas and checklists of equipment for making your trip a great experience.

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Welcome to Buffalo National River

For the Benefit and Enjoyment of the People.
Inscription on Roosevelt Arch at Yellowstone National Park

WELCOME TO BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER. WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US IN celebrating the 100th anniversary of the National Park Service. We are proud to be a part of what author Wallace Stegner called, “America’s best idea.” Established in 1972 as the nation’s first national river, Buffalo National River is one of 410 areas administered by the National Park Service covering more than 84 million acres in every state, the District of Columbia, American Samoa, Guam, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. These areas include national parks, monuments, battlefields, military parks, historical parks, historic sites, lakeshores, seashores, recreation areas, scenic rivers and trails, and even the White House.

The National Park Service was created to help care for our nation’s natural and cultural treasures, to preserve our stories, and to provide opportunities for adventure in America’s most spectacular places. While we are celebrating our 100th anniversary this year, we also are looking toward the future and to what the next 100 years can bring. We are excited about new educational partnerships that can introduce new generations of students to this living laboratory, and new community partnerships to create meaningful experiences for our visitors.

For some of you, this may be your first visit. Others of you may be members of families who have come here for generations. We welcome all of you to find your adventure and enjoy your experience at Buffalo National River, and we hope you can join us for one or more of the many exciting events and programs we are planning for our Centennial.



2016

National Park Service
CENTENNIAL

Kevin G. Cheri
Kevin G. Cheri, Superintendent



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Buffalo National River
402 N Walnut, Suite 136
Harrison, AR 72601

Tyler Bend Visitor Center
870 439-2502

Steel Creek Visitor Contact Station
870 861-2570

Buffalo Point Visitor Contact Station
870 449-4311

24-hour Emergency Dispatch
888 692-1162

Park Headquarters
870 365-2700

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 for all to enjoy.
- Collecting of anything is prohibited (except designated edibles for personal consumption).
- Pack it in - Pack it out. Please help us contain litter by removing and recycling what you bring into the park.
- Glass containers are not allowed on gravel bars or along the waterway.
- Stay on hiking trails. Short cuts can create erosion and harm plants.
- Trees have rights, too. Carving your name in tree bark damages the tree and creates a pathway for disease.
- Help protect your park. If you see someone littering or damaging anything in the park, please report it to a park ranger.

Find Your Adventure



FLOAT

Most of our 1.6 million annual visitors who experience Buffalo National River by canoe or kayak, come between Memorial Day and Labor Day to take advantage of warm weather and abundant opportunities for swimming, floating, and fishing. This is a wonderful float stream all year long. Planning a trip in the cooler months can offer great views of fall colors and wildlife, as well as more opportunities for solitude and harmony with the river.

However you experience your park, the goal of the National Park Service (NPS) is to help provide a natural, safe, and enjoyable experience for all visitors, while protecting and preserving the wildlife and the unique features of this beautiful river. Check out our suggestions for planning a great float trip on page 11.



So, you want to be a Junior Ranger?

Junior Rangers explore nature and history in the park. They learn the stories animals, plants, and other natural features can tell us about how they survive and thrive in this important ecosystem. Junior Rangers help protect the park by sharing their knowledge with others.

To earn your Buffalo National River Junior Ranger badge, request an activity booklet at the visitor center or a contact station. When you complete the required activities, return it for your badge and official induction into the Junior Ranger ranks!

HIKE

Whether you want to take a short day hike or a week-long backpacking trip, Buffalo National River offers many options for those who like to take in nature one step at a time. You can enjoy breathtaking views while you walk in the footsteps of the hunter-gatherers, explorers, trappers, and settlers who inhabited these hills for thousands of years.

Several trail systems, including the Buffalo River Trail and the Old River Trail, wind their way through the park. Download trail maps from the park website at www.nps.gov/buff and start your adventure!

HUNT

Buffalo National River offers many opportunities for hunting. We recommend all hunters attend a Hunter Safety Course and familiarize themselves with current rules and regulations before heading out to the woods. Hunting is prohibited in developed areas, such as in campgrounds, on day use trail systems, and at river access points. Come by or call the Visitor Center or Visitor Contact Stations, or contact your local Arkansas Game and Fish Commission Wildlife Officer for information. You also can check Arkansas Game and Fish Commission hunting regulations at www.agfc.com.



CAMP

At Buffalo National River you can choose from among a wide variety of camping experiences. Pull your canoe up to a gravel bar and spend a night under the stars, reserve a space with electricity for your recreational vehicle at Buffalo Point, pick a spot in one of eleven designated campgrounds along the river, or backpack into the Wilderness for some solitude. Whichever way you choose to camp, you will enjoy an outdoor experience in a beautiful setting. For more information about camping opportunities, see the Camping section on the next page.



Fishing is another popular activity at the Buffalo. Don't forget your license - all state fishing regulations apply.

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 and most are available on a first-come, first-served basis. Visitors can reserve campsites at Buffalo Point campground. Reservations are necessary for group campsites and most park pavilions.

We do advise visitors to make reservations as early as possible. Reservations can be made one-year in advance for group campsites and pavilions, and six months in advance for campsites at Buffalo Point. Visit www.recreation.gov or call 877-444-6777 to make reservations. Please note that a fee is charged for making, changing, or canceling reservations.

Campground use increases as visitor use increases in a given section of the river. Spring weekends during peak floating season in the upper section of the river are busiest, while campgrounds in the middle and lower sections are busy in the summer and fall, particularly on holiday weekends.

Buffalo Point is the only campground in the park with electric (30/50 Amp) and water service at individual sites for RV's. Note: electric and water is not available at Buffalo Point in the off-season (mid-November to mid-March). Dump stations are available at Buffalo Point and Tyler Bend during the season.

Camping fees are charged from mid-March through mid-November. Campers should select a site then return to the campground fee station located near the campground entrance to complete the registration process. See the campground chart for amenities, fees, and a listing of campgrounds that can accommodate recreational vehicles and pull-behind style campers.

For a more enjoyable experience, please note the following campground regulations:

- Visitors may camp a maximum of 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 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 are permitted on a leash no longer than 6 feet, at all times.
- To avoid insect and animal problems, please do not release wastewater or scatter food onto the ground. Secure all food in animal proof containers.
- Dead and fallen wood in the park may be gathered for firewood. Cutting live trees or limbs is prohibited.

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, in caves, or on private land. For a more enjoyable camping experience, we recommend camping out of sight of all trails. Some areas and trails are closed to backcountry camping, including all of Lost Valley Trail, all Tyler Bend day-use area hiking trails, Buffalo Point campground trails, and the Indian Rockhouse Trail.

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 be upstream and out of

sight, can raise river levels rapidly. Rises of more than a foot per 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—do not camp on islands or on gravel bars that can become islands if the river begins to rise.

We recommend you let others know your itinerary and when you expect to return from your backcountry trip.

Leave No Trace

Leave No Trace is an outdoor ethics program specifically aimed to educate people who recreate on public lands. A few ways you can make a difference at Buffalo National River is to practice the following seven Leave No Trace Principles.

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns, or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses, or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- In popular areas:
 - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
 - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
 - Keep campsite small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
- In pristine areas:
 - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
 - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food, and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp, and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants, and other natural objects as you find them.
- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are permitted, use established fire rings, fire pans, or moundfires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sound prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

©Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics: www.LNT.org.



Campgrounds

Campgrounds					Campground Amenities										Campground Coordinates	
Areas	Campsites	 Campsites	Nearby Trails	 Trails	Picnic Tables	Drinking Water	Fire Grates	Showers	Flush/Vault Toilets	Water & Electricity	Dumping Station	Emergency Phone	Picnic Pavilion	Campground Fee **	Latitude	Longitude
Lost Valley	None		X			X			F/V			X	No Fee		36.009881	-093.37409
Steel Creek			X									X			36.03946	-093.34600
Walk-In Sites	12				X	X	X		F/V					\$12		
Horse Sites	14				X	X	X		F/V					\$12		
Kyles Landing	33		X		X	X	X		F/V			X		\$12	36.05560	-093.28045
Erbie			X	X								X		Free	36.07066	-093.21443
Drive-In Sites	14	1			X		X		V					Free		
Walk-In Sites	2				X		X		V					Free		
Group Sites	5				X		X		V					**		
Horse Sites	open															
Ozark	31		X		X	X	X		F/V			X	Fee	\$12	36.06324	-093.16078
Carver	8				X	X	X		V					Free	35.98350	-093.04030
Woolum	open		X						V					Free	35.970031	-092.882703
Tyler Bend			X	X							X		Fee		35.98577	-092.75918
Drive-In Sites	28				X	X	X	X	F					\$16		
Walk-In Sites	10				X	X	X	X	F					\$16		
Group Sites	5				X	X	X	X	F					*		
Maumee So.	open		X		X		X		V					Free	36.039591	-092.635646
Buffalo Point			X								X	X	Fee		36.072858	-092.556983
Drive-In Sites	81	2			X	X	X	X	F	X				\$22		
Walk-In Sites	21				X	X	X	X	F					\$16		
Group Sites	5				X	X	X	X	F					*		
Rush	12		X		X		X		V					Free	36.12316	-092.55048
Spring Creek	13		X		X		X		V					Free	36.029623	-092.584351

* Group sites are \$3 per person, per night and can be reserved through www.recreation.gov or by calling 877-444-6777. ** Group sites 1 and 5 are first come, first-served. Group sites 2-4 are reservable by calling 870-439-2502.

Why is fire important at Buffalo National River?



Over time, the landscape surrounding Buffalo National River has undergone considerable change. For some 8,000 years the landscape coexisted with periodic fires, both naturally-occurring and human-caused. These fires removed mostly brush and young, woody undergrowth while leaving larger trees unharmed. Much of the unique character of Buffalo National River is a result of plant communities and related ecosystems that are dependent on periodic fires for success and survival.

Early explorers described forests as having an open understory, but as these openings and grassy spaces on the forest floor began to disappear through the years, so too did once-abundant species such as the collared lizard.

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

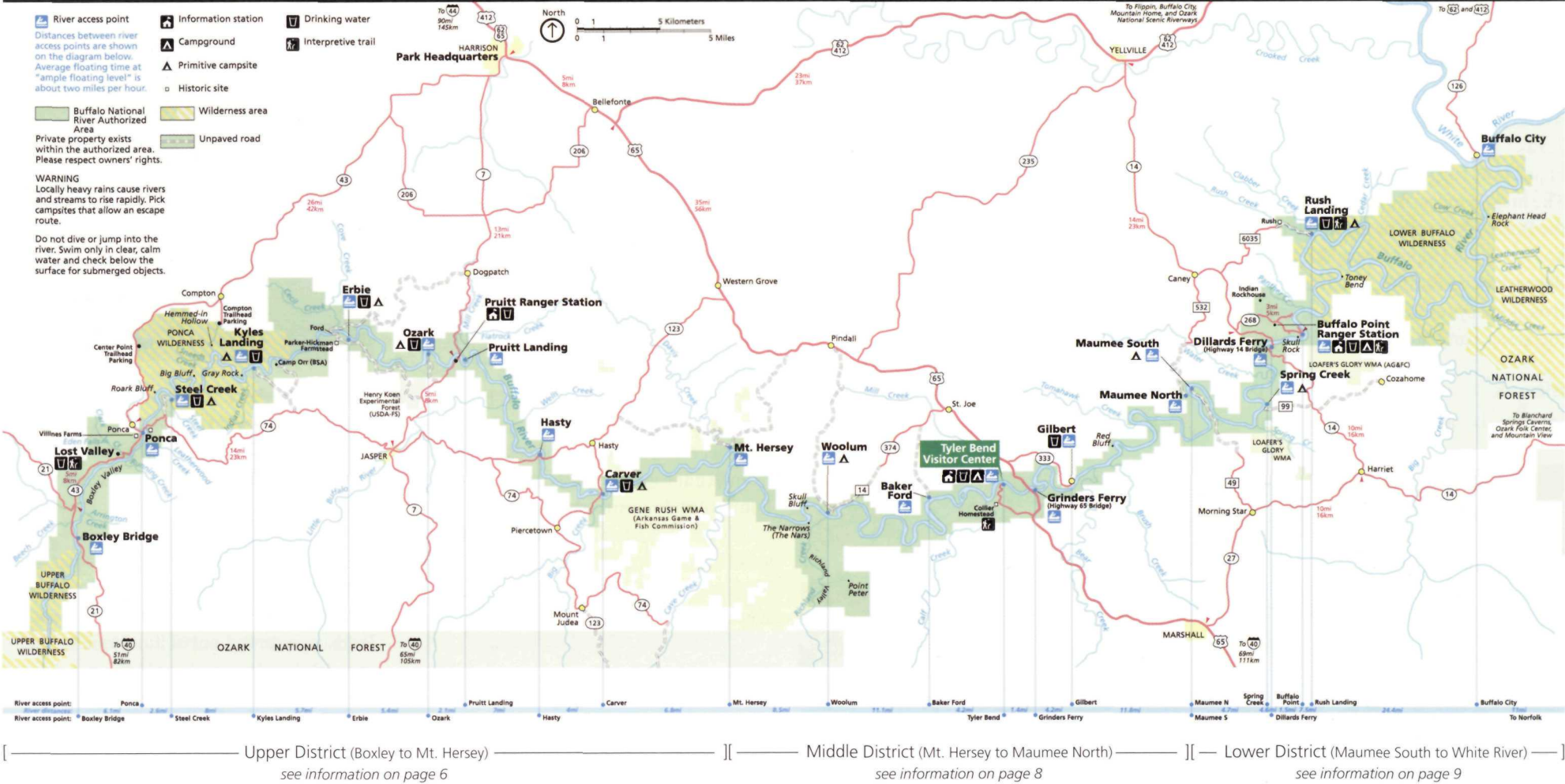


Forests throughout the United States are threatened by non-native insects that can kill large numbers of trees. Some of these insects are wood-infesting species that can be transported in firewood and infest trees in new locations.

HOW YOU CAN HELP:

- Leave firewood at home – do not bring it to campgrounds or parks.
- Use firewood from local sources.
- Wood that is dead and down in the park may be collected to use at your campsite.
- If you brought firewood with you, burn all of it before leaving your campsite.
- Researchers who are studying invasive insects may have traps in trees. Please leave them in place. If you find one that has been removed or blown down, please bring it to the nearest visitor center or visitor contact station .

Buffalo National River Map



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 the river is flowing.

Very Low: The river is very shallow in places. Portaging will be necessary in many sections of the river.

Low: The river moves slowly and many rocks and other hazards are exposed.

Moderate: River flow is adequate for canoeing/kayaking; some exposed obstacles may be encountered.

High: The river flows swiftly. All canoers/kayakers must possess good skills and should be familiar with rescue procedures.

Flood Stage: The river flows out of its normal banks. Floodwaters move quickly and carry debris. River conditions are hazardous even for highly-skilled paddlers.

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

- For current “real time” river level conditions please visit: <http://ar.water.usgs.gov/buffaloriver>, or
- Call the Tyler Bend Visitor Center at 870/439-2502, seven days/week, 8:30 am to 4:30 pm
- For 24 hour emergency dispatch services (law enforcement, fire, emergency medical services, search & 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 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 feet 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 dogs, causing them to behave unpredictably or bark excessively.
 - Pet excrement must be collected by pet owners, and disposed of in trash receptacles.
- 

Forest, Campground and Overlook trails at Buffalo Point and the Mill Creek Trail in the Upper District near Pruitt are open to pets. Maps of each trail are available at the Visitor Contact Stations.

Upper Buffalo River - Steel Creek

Steel Creek Visitor Contact Station • HCR 73, Box 222 • Marble Falls, AR 72648 • 870 861-2570 • Latitude 36.06100491 • Longitude 93.13948345

THE HEADWATERS OF BUFFALO NATIONAL River begin in Newton County. As folklorist Vance Randolph wrote, "If you take all of Newton County and spread it 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. The first 60 miles, from the headwaters in the Boston Mountains to Mt. Hersey, are known as the Upper River. Water levels are dependent on rainfall, which means the river is always either on the rise or fall in this steep, canyon-like terrain.

WILDLIFE

In the early 1980s the Arkansas Game

and Fish Commission reintroduced elk to Newton County. Rocky Mountain Elk were brought in to replace the extinct subspecies, the Eastern Elk. Today, the greatest concentration can be seen in the Upper River area on Highway 43 through Boxley Valley, south of the town of Ponca. Please drive carefully and watch for elk, other wildlife, pedestrians, and vehicles.

RIVER HIGHLIGHTS

Floating the upper parts of the river is an exhilarating experience, but one that requires canoe and kayak handling skills. The best time to float is in Spring or right after a significant rain event.

Dramatic bluffs line this upper stretch of river. Beginning at Ponca and floating downstream towards Kyles Landing takes you through the Ponca Wilderness. This section includes Roark and Big Bluffs. You must pay close attention on this section of river as there are many rapids to navigate with few pools to slow you down. Floating through the Ponca Wilderness is very popular March through May.

Kyles Landing to Erbie and Ozark offers a slower paced river experience. There are plenty of bluffs, like Bee and Briar, to admire from your canoe or kayak. The river becomes more tranquil as you float from Pruitt towards Hasty and Carver. Four miles downstream from Pruitt is the confluence with the Little Buffalo River and Flatiron Bluff. This is a beautiful spot on the river to pull over and take in the scenery.

Please note: While motorboats (9.9 HP or less) are allowed from the Erbie Launch downstream to the confluence with the White River, it is rare for this section of river to have sufficient water levels to safely use motors.

HIKING

The Upper River section has miles of trails waiting for you. Some are perfect for day hikes, while others offer more rugged experiences in the backcountry. Trails range from easy to strenuous. Check with a ranger to inquire about degree of difficulty before you head out. A good multi-use map, such as Trails Illustrated® West Half, serves



hikers, horseback riders, and paddlers. Take care to stay on established trails where available, as hiking off trail can contribute to erosion and damage fragile plants.

LOST VALLEY

Lost Valley is one of the most popular areas in the park. Visitors can hike the Lost Valley Trail to see Eden Falls and a dramatic landscape carved out of limestone by the sheer force of water. Lost Valley is a day use area and includes a pavilion that is free for groups or individuals on a first come, first served basis.



Bats, Caves, and White Nose Syndrome

THE FUNGUS *PSEUDOGYMNOASCUS destructans* causes White Nose Syndrome in bats. This disease has greatly reduced cave bat populations across eastern North America and has been observed as far west as the Great Plains. The disease kills bats by causing them to wake too frequently during their winter hibernation. The bats quickly use up their stored fat and starve to death when they are not able to find enough insects to eat during cold months.

White Nose Syndrome was first discovered in bats at Buffalo National River in

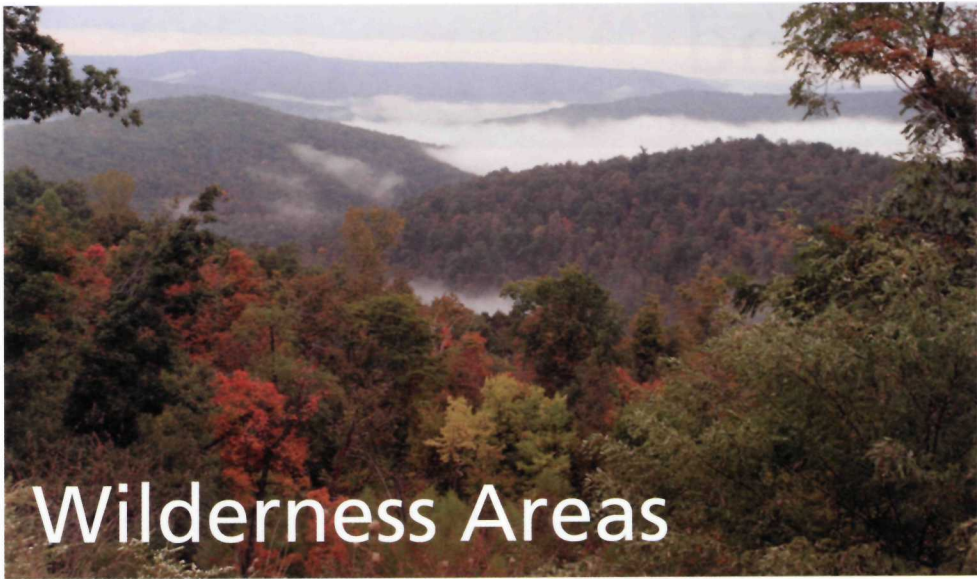
2015. So far, bat population declines in the park appear to be small, but significant declines usually are not observed until the second year of infection. Because bats are the major predators of night flying insects, they dramatically reduce the need for insecticides. In addition, they enrich cave environments with their guano (feces) upon which other cave-dwelling organisms depend for their survival. Bats are the only mammals capable of true flight and they have highly-developed echolocation abilities which allow them to fly in total darkness.

In order to protect the bats as much as possible, the National Park Service has established strict entry protocols for most caves within Buffalo National River. These restrictions are necessary to reduce the amount of disturbance the bats receive throughout the year and to keep visitors from inadvertently spreading fungal spores from an infected cave to an uninfected cave.

At this time, the caves along Lost Valley Trail and Indian Rockhouse Trail can still be entered by visitors without a permit.

These caves have only small populations of bats at any given time of the year. Entry to all other caves is allowed by permit only to support education and research, and requires researchers to follow strict procedures for decontaminating clothing and equipment.

If you visit one of the open caves, or caves outside the park that are open to visitors, please thoroughly decontaminate your clothing and equipment after exiting the caves and before entering others.



Wilderness Areas

Those who contemplate the beauty of the earth find reserves of strength that will endure as long as life lasts...

Rachel Carson, author of *Silent Spring*

LIFE IN THE UNITED STATES CHANGED dramatically in the 1950s and 60s, as the post-World War II economy shifted from wartime manufacturing to manufacturing consumer goods and building national infrastructure. Many people became concerned that the country's wild, natural places soon would no longer exist. In 1964 Congress passed the Wilderness Act establishing the National Wilderness Preservation System. This legislation immediately set aside 9 million acres of wilderness for federal protection. Today, there are more than 109 million acres of designated wilderness in 44 states. Buffalo National River Wilderness consists of 36,000 acres—more than a third of the park.

Buffalo National River Wilderness is divided into three separate areas. The Upper Buffalo Wilderness lies upstream of Boxley Valley, and continues into the Ozark National Forest. The Ponca Wilderness is the most visited wilderness area in Arkansas. It is centered on an area of the river between Ponca and Camp Orr. The Buffalo River through this section is famous as a white-water canoeing stream. The Lower Buffalo Wilderness, the largest of the three areas in the park, is located downstream of Buffalo Point and joins the Leatherwood Wilder-

ness in the national forest. Because of a long history of use, boats with motors of under 10 HP are allowed on the Buffalo River within this section.

The Wilderness Act specifically says that wilderness is for the “use and enjoyment of the American people.” Indeed, Americans participate in numerous recreational activities in wilderness areas across the country—including hiking, horseback riding, swimming, boating, fishing, and hunting. Wilderness is different from other areas, however, in that it is supposed to be undeveloped and natural, and it should provide opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences. Because of this, mechanized transportation and equipment, such as bicycles, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), chainsaws, and generators are not allowed in wilderness areas. These restrictions even extend to park staff who remove hazard trees with hand tools in wilderness areas and conduct other operations on foot or on horseback.

If you're looking for a wilderness adventure, contact the park for more information. To learn more about opportunities for wilderness experiences outside the park, please visit www.wilderness.net.

Elk: History and Habits

Have you ever seen an elk in the wild? You can see them at Buffalo National River. Increase your chances of a 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 Mountain Elk in Franklin County. These elk multiplied until about 1950, but no one knows for sure why they did so well initially and then disappeared. The Arkansas Game & Fish Commission (AGFC) released 112 Rocky Mountain Elk in Newton County between 1981 and 1985. For a while it began to appear that these elk, for one reason or another, also would disappear from Arkansas. Through the cooperation of the AGFC, USFS, NPS, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and park neighbors, these original 112 elk have continued to thrive and multiply to a current estimated herd of 500.

Although elk have free range and can occasionally be seen at several different

locations in and near the river, the majority of elk sightings are in Newton County along the six miles of Hwy 43 and Hwy 21, known as Boxley Valley.

To increase your chances of seeing elk take into consideration the season. In summer, elk often stay under the shade of a tree, along the river's edge in 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.

Visitors have a better chance of seeing elk in the fields in 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 back into the shade until the evening. On cold winter days it may be possible to see elk any time of the day.

Elk are wild animals. Even if they are not looking directly at you, you can be sure they know you are there. Do not attempt to get close to elk, particularly during the rutting season when bull elk are sparring and fighting each other.

Whether it is your first sighting or one of many, seeing elk along the river is an experience to remember.



Volunteers in Parks – The Real VIPs

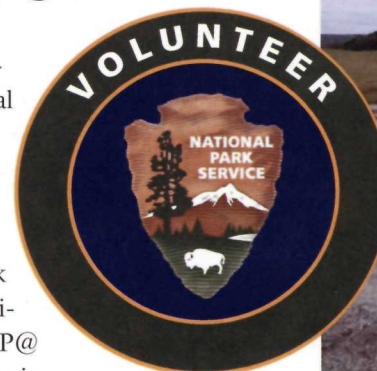
VOLUNTEERING FOR THE NATIONAL Park Service is a personal commitment to conservation, education, outdoor recreation, and visitor safety. With nearly 100,000 acres and 140 miles of river to preserve within the boundaries of Buffalo National River, our staff relies on volunteers to help ensure that trails are maintained, the river is kept litter-free, campgrounds and information centers are sufficiently staffed, and search and rescue missions go smoothly and efficiently.

Who better to fill these roles than those who have a vested interest in Buffalo National River? Who better than you?

People who use and cherish their national parks often are the unsung caretakers with the greatest sense of ownership. Volunteers at Buffalo National River can choose to help out long-term, as-needed, or for a one-time event. From campground hosts to trail crews to emergency first responders (and the list goes on), Volunteers in

Parks are invaluable and essential assets to any national park's operation.

Contact the park volunteer coordinator at Buff_VIP@nps.gov for more information about volunteering at Buffalo National River.



Middle Buffalo River - Tyler Bend

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

THE MIDDLE DISTRICT OF BUFFALO National River spans 41.3 river miles from Mt. Hersey to Maumee South. Sections of the middle river offer quiet, gentle floats through a pastoral setting with 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. Do note, that if the rainfall has been low, the riverbed can be dry for up to three miles where the water flows underground. The second largest tributary, Richland Creek, enters the river near Woolum. 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. 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. Gilbert, the only town remaining on the river, offers a store, restaurant, and accommodations in season. Just past Gilbert are the remains of a railroad crossing and Red Bluff.

EXHIBITS

The Tyler Bend Visitor Center is 2 miles into the park on the access road off of Highway 65 between Marshall and St. Joe. The visitor center is open year-round and provides information about the park, exhibits, a park film, and a bookstore. Ranger guided programs are provided in season as staffing permits.

Access to the river, a picnic area and pavilion, and a campground are located at Tyler Bend.

HISTORY

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 Hwy 65 on Tyler Bend road.

HIKING

More than 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.

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 use, but the horse trail fords the river to cross to the north side upstream of Tyler Bend. Hikers may stay on the south side through the Tyler Bend area to cross the river on the highway bridge.

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, be aware that both the Richland Creek crossing and the Woolum river crossing can be swift and deep in winter and spring.

Horse Sense

THERE IS A LONG, RICH CULTURAL HISTORY OF equestrian use along the Buffalo River. Farming and logging with horses and mules was once a common practice along the river. Mail delivery and traveling "circuit rider" judges and preachers also depended on their horses and mules. Today, equestrian use remains a popular recreational activity and gives riders access to many of the park's scenic and historic areas.

Whether in a developed campground or as part of a backcountry experience, the park offers folks several options for horse camping and trail riding. There are more than 75 miles of designated horse trail (marked with yellow trail blaze) within the park. Many trails follow old road traces and other trails that crisscross the river. Riders are strongly advised to have the park's Trails Illustrated map on hand to properly identify

designated trails and access points.

The forces of nature determine the condition of the trails. Be prepared for swollen streams, washouts, downed trees and obstacles that may require dismounting. Arkansas state law requires each rider to have proof of a negative Coggins test on

hand for their mount. Please use established hitching rails, high lines or pickets to secure animals. Dogs are prohibited on all horse trails, so please leave them at home. Riders are responsible for removing or scattering manure from camp and loading areas and trailheads. See the matrix below for designated routes and mileage.



Upper Buffalo District	Distance
Chimney Rock Trail	3.4 miles
Center Point Trail	3.5 miles
Sneeds Creek Trail	4.1 miles
Bench Trail	4.3 miles
Ponca to Steel Creek	1.6 miles
Steel Creek to Kyles Landing (Old River Trail - ORT)	5.7 miles
Grey Rock Trail	.9 miles
Kyles Landing to Cherry Grove Cemetery (ORT).	4.4 miles
Pruitt Launch (ORT)*	2.7 miles
Cherry Grove Cemetery To Ozark Campground (ORT).	5.2 miles
Cecil Cove Trail	5.3 miles
Erbie Horse Camp Trail.	1.0 mile
Middle Buffalo District	
Old River Trail	23.8 miles
Lower Buffalo District	
Cow Creek Trail.	10.5 miles

For trailhead locations, consult the Buffalo National River Trails Illustrated map.

Lower Buffalo River - Buffalo Point

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

THE LOWER DISTRICT OF THE BUFFALO National River spans 42.7 river miles from South Maumee to the confluence with the White River, offering 6 access points for canoeing and kayaking. Trips can range from a half hour float from Dillard's Ferry to Buffalo Point to a three to four-day trip through the Lower Buffalo Wilderness.

HISTORIC RUSH VALLEY

In the 1880s, farmers on Rush Creek discovered zinc ore, and soon the "rush" to Rush began. By the 1890s the mining boom was well established and miners and investors arrived from all over the country. The heyday of the mining district came when all of the mines were in full production to support the need for zinc (used to produce brass and to galvanize steel to prevent it from rusting) during World War I. As the war wound down so, too, did the market for zinc. Soon Rush seemed a ghost town in comparison to its busy years with several thousand inhabitants. The last residents left shortly after the post office closed in the early 1950s. Now listed in the National Register of Historic Places, the Rush Mining District offers views of period structures, a self-guided interpretive loop trail, and two other trails that meander around Rush Mountain. Because of the instability of the mine shafts and to help prevent bats from contracting White Nose Syndrome, the mines are closed. The Rush access area of-



fers boat, fishing, and swimming access to the river and a primitive campground.

BUFFALO POINT

Established in 1938 as Buffalo Point State Park, this area was developed in part by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC), a federal relief program which put thousands of men back to work during the Depression. Workers built roads, retaining walls, six cabins, a lodge, and a pavilion that are still in use today. The rustic cabins (Cabins 1 through 6) were listed on the National Register of Historic Places in 1988.

HIKING

The Lower District offers 24.3 miles of hiking trails, of which 3.3 miles are pet friendly. Stop by the Buffalo Point Visitor Contact Station for a map of the trail options.

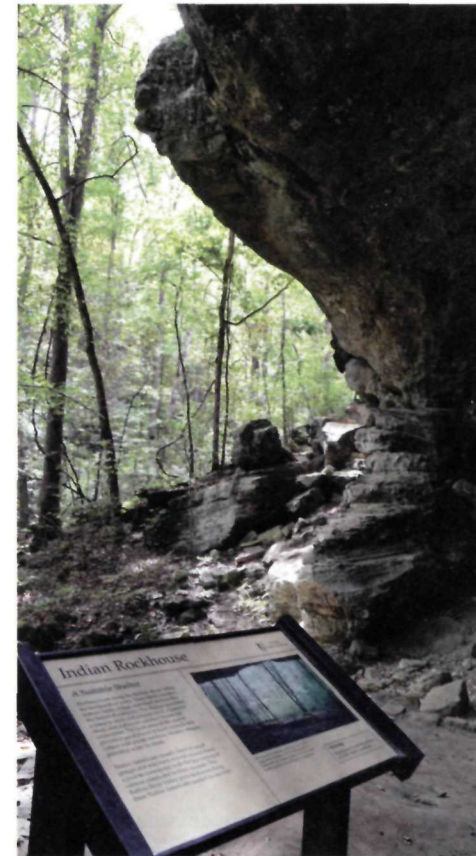


INDIAN ROCKHOUSE

The Indian Rockhouse is one of the more popular destinations for hikers. This majestic bluff shelter can be reached via the 3.5 mile loop trail. The trail is moderately strenuous, and a portion runs along Panther Creek.

OVERLOOK TRAIL

The Overlook Trail is part of a larger network that connects the campground, trailhead, and cabin area. 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. 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. If



you are hoping to capture that inspiring photo be there for first light or late in the afternoon.

RIVER HIGHLIGHTS

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 Parks



THE GREAT DEPRESSION WAS IN FULL swing by 1933. At that time, nearly a quarter of the working population was unemployed and natural disasters were causing hardships for farmers. One of the more popular federal relief 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, resulting in the planting of millions of trees and the construction of countless bridges, trails, and structures still in use today.

Buffalo Point State Park was established by the State of Arkansas in March 1938. That year a resident CCC camp of men began building roads, cabins, and a pavilion at the park in an effort to promote tourism and recreational activities and make the area more accessible to the local population. The structures were constructed between 1938 and 1945, using designs developed by the National Park Service. The cabins were constructed of local stone and rough cut wood. The red rock, which is St. Joe limestone, was quarried nearby. The quarry site can be seen today from the Indian Rockhouse



hiking trail. This limestone also was used to construct the many retaining walls, culverts and guardrails along the roadside at Buffalo Point. In all, a pavilion, six cabins, and a lodge were finished by the CCC, but not all of the interiors were completed before the camp dissolved in 1942. With the beginning of World War II 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 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 Buffalo Point State Park. In 1988 the cabins were listed on the National Register of Historic Places. 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 workers can still be appreciated by visitors today.

For information on reserving a cabin, call 870-449-6206 or visit www.buffalopoint.net.

Need a Life Jacket?

YOUR LIFE JACKET WON'T WORK IF YOU DON'T WEAR IT.

Swimming in the river is a different experience from swimming in a pool or even a lake. Because the water level rises and falls along with the amount of rainfall, what sometimes is a deep pool can become shallow in periods of dry weather. The bottom of the river is uneven and can include hazards such as tree limbs. Even experienced swimmers can get into trouble. Personal Flotation Devices (PFDs) or “life jackets” are required for boaters and are highly recommended for swimmers, especially children.

GET A PROPER FIT.

Check the label for size. Buckle all straps and/or zip all zippers. If you can't buckle or zip it, the PFD is too small. For children, lift jacket at the shoulders. If the PFD goes up past their ears, it is too large. Remember that swim rings and other inflatable pool toys do not offer protection from drowning.

The park does have some PFDs available for loan. Please check at the Visitor Center or a Visitor Contact Station for more information.

Pack In/ Pack Out

You may notice that the park has installed “Trash Free Park” signs at all river access points. In recent years, we have reduced the number of trash dumpsters and cans in the park. In an effort to support “Leave no Trace” principles and better conserve the beautiful natural scenery, we are asking you to help out by packing out all trash you bring into the park. Please join us in this campaign to reduce the amount of trash in the park and create a more sustainable future.



Water Quality Monitoring

The Buffalo River is renowned for its clear, clean water and over the past few years millions of visitors have come to recreate and enjoy the scenic beauty their national park has to offer. The safety and health of visitors is our top priority, so we collect more than 700 water samples every year along the river and its tributaries to ensure that water based recreation is safe for all

who want to come and swim, float, fish, or just relax in America's first national river. While most samples are processed in our park's certified laboratory, additional samples are sent to state labs for nutrient analysis to help monitor trends. Our combined monitoring efforts ensure that you will experience the best your national park has to offer.



Buffalo National River Concessioners & Guided Services Canoe, Kayak and Raft Rentals & Shuttle Services

UPPER RIVER:

(Boxley to Carver)

BUFFALO OUTDOOR CENTER

1-800-221-5514
www.buffaloriver.com

BUFFALO RIVER CANOES

(870) 446-2644
www.floatatthebuffalo.com

GORDON MOTEL

(870) 446-5252
www.gordonmotel.com

LOST VALLEY CANOE & LODGING

(870) 861-5522
www.lostvalleycanoe.com

RIVERVIEW MOTEL

(870) 446-2616
www.riverviewmotelandcanoe.com

MIDDLE RIVER:

(Carver to S. Maumee)

BUFFALO CAMPING & CANOEING

(870) 439-2888
www.gilbertstore.com

BUFFALO RIVER OUTFITTERS

1-800-582-2244
www.buffaloriveroutfitters.com

CROCKETT'S CANOE RENTAL

1-800-355-6111
www.buffalorivercanoe.com

SILVER HILL FLOAT SERVICE

(870) 439-2372
www.silverhillcanoe.com

For a list of current businesses that provide guided services such as fishing trips, photography, hiking and overnight backpacking, please contact the Tyler Bend Visitor Center at 870-439-2502.

LOWER RIVER:

(N. Maumee to Buffalo City)

BUFFALO RIVER FLOAT SERVICE

(870) 449-2042
www.buffaloriverfloatservice.com

DIRT CANOE RENTAL

(870) 449-6636
www.dirtcanoerental.com

WILD BILL'S OUTFITTER

1-800-554-8657
www.wildbillsoutfitter.com



An Ounce of Prevention - Staying Safe on the River

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER IS MAGNIFICENT country, but it is not your neighborhood playground, city park, or backyard pool. It is rugged and conditions can be unpredictable. Your safety depends on your own good judgment, adequate preparation, and constant attention.

Each 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 encounter trouble with the steep terrain and high cliffs. If you need to be rescued, it will take time for help to reach you in remote areas. Prepare for your adventure and remember to take these essential items with you when you go:

- Drinking water and high energy food
- Shelter (tent, tarp, poncho)
- First Aid kit
- Whistle, signal mirror, cell phone
- Sunscreen and insect repellent
- Adequate clothing, including footwear, hat, jacket
- Sturdy knife
- Light sources (more than one)
- Topographic map, compass, GPS
- Means to make a fire.

SAFETY TIPS

- Cell phone service is not available everywhere in the park. Please plan accordingly.
- Make sure someone at home knows your plans.
- Stay on maintained trails.
- Check the weather forecast and plan accordingly. Give yourself enough day-time hours to complete your trip.
- Know your abilities and limits. Seek training for your activity before you begin your trip.
- Take a first aid kit.
- Keep children in sight at all times.
- Avoid hypothermia by keeping dry.
- Cliffs and ledges can be unstable – stay back from the edge.
- Drink responsibly and have a designated driver. Remember, glass containers are strictly prohibited on the river.



Pinned canoe on Buffalo River. Never attempt to unpin a boat.

WHEN HIKING

- Stay on designated trails. If you hike in wilderness areas, carry a topographic map and know how to read it.
- Eat before you're hungry and rest before you're tired.
- Treat all water before drinking.
- Only climb rocks with proper equipment, and never around waterfalls.
- Get back before dark or plan to camp out for the night.
- Wear sturdy footwear.
- Hunting is permitted in season in most of the backcountry areas – wear high-visibility orange outerwear during hunting seasons.

WHILE PADDLING

- Use your mesh trash bag to keep the river clean.
- Check for obstacles ahead.
- Never attempt to unpin a pinned boat – Leave it where it is and report it to a park ranger.
- Plan ahead, make sure everyone knows what to do if separated.
- If your abilities do not match the river level, do not go.
- Take and wear your personal flotation device (PFD). All boaters are required to have a PFD. Children 12 and younger are required to wear them.
- Use waterproof containers for extra clothes, shoes, matches, cell phone, first aid kit.
- Take emergency equipment such as a bailer, handsaw, rope/bungee cords, weather radio, locator beacon, throw bag, extra paddle, extra PFD.
- Take sturdy footwear in case you need to portage or hike out.

WHILE SWIMMING

- Wear a Personal Flotation Device (PFD).
- Swim with a buddy.
- Do not dive from cliffs.

OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL HAZARDS

Buffalo National River's backcountry is wild country. There are many bluffs, sinkholes, and caves within the park. Be careful along bluffs – the rock may crumble and landslides can 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.

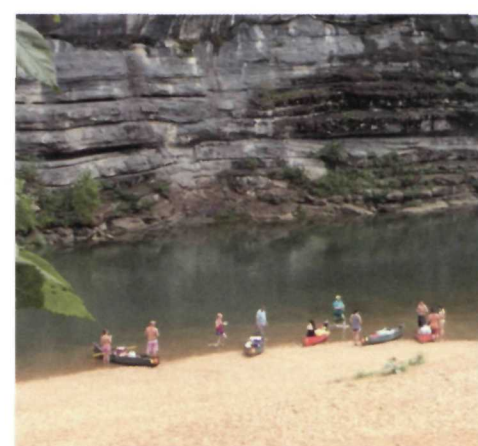


PLANTS AND ANIMALS

Leaves of Three – Let it be. Poison Ivy may cause an allergic reaction in some people. 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. Avoid walking through thickets or tall grass, and use insect repellent.

Snakes are found throughout the park and some are venomous including copperhead, cottonmouth, and rattlesnakes. This is their home and you are the visitor. Please leave all snakes, as well as all other wildlife, alone. Other wildlife may include black bears, wild hogs, or bobcats. You cannot predict what you might encounter, but you can prepare for your trip and have a pre-plan in mind.

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.





National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Buffalo National River
402 N Walnut, Suite 136
Harrison, AR 72601

EXPERIENCE YOUR AMERICA™

Do You Accept the Challenge?

Centennial Iron Ranger Challenge

JANUARY 1, 2016 MARKED THE BEGINNING OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE'S 100th anniversary and the seven National Park Service sites in Arkansas kicked off the celebration by launching the Centennial Iron Ranger Challenge – a year-long program to encourage visitors to “Find Your Park” and improve their health and fitness by completing 100 miles of physical activity over the course of the year. Participants may choose to hike, bike, paddle, walk, or run 100 miles in any of the national parks in Arkansas or any public lands within the state. Visitors who complete 100 miles of activity will receive a certificate and commemorative patch to recognize their accomplishments. The real reward, however, will be experiencing the parks and the many benefits of physical recreation.

Participating Arkansas national park sites include: Arkansas Post National Memorial, Buffalo National River, Fort Smith National Historic Site, Hot Springs National Park, Little Rock Central High School National Historic Site, Pea Ridge National Military Park, and President William Jefferson Clinton Birthplace Home National Historic Site. Visitors also can log miles on other public lands in the state including Arkansas State Parks, US Forest Service lands, Army Corps of Engineers lands, and Fish and Wildlife areas.

Buffalo National River Deputy Superintendent Laura Miller encourages visitors of all ages and fitness levels to participate in the Centennial Iron Ranger Challenge. “The National Parks in Arkansas have so much to offer. Visitors can see spectacular views paddling the Buffalo River, take a bicycle tour of President Clinton’s hometown at the Clinton Birthplace Home, hike in the Ouachita Mountains and then relax with a

thermal bath at Hot Springs National Park, and see places where history was made from the Civil War to the Civil Rights Movement. There are so many great options in Arkansas, so get out and have fun.”

You can join us at Buffalo National River for one of our many guided hike or float opportunities this year, or you can create your own outdoor experiences on any public lands within Arkansas and start logging your miles today!

For more information and to register for the Centennial Iron Ranger Challenge of 2016 go to www.ironranger2016ar.org.

