



Message from the Superintendent

The National Park Service (NPS) invites your feedback on potential management strategies to enhance visitor access, protect park resources, and improve visitor experience along the Buffalo National River. In fall 2024, we invited you to join us in envisioning the future of the river while identifying key concerns related to your experience. Your feedback was instrumental in helping the planning team brainstorm preliminary strategies that are outlined below.

The National Park Service wants your help in reviewing the preliminary strategies that may affect how you recreate along Buffalo National River. This newsletter presents many ways to stay involved and how to access information, including through in-person and virtual public meetings. Thank you for your continued interest and support in this process.

Angela Boyers, Superintendent

Purpose of the Park

The purpose of Buffalo National River is to preserve a free-flowing river and to conserve and interpret the combination of natural, scenic, cultural, and scientific features characterized by deep valleys, towering bluffs, wilderness, and landscapes of the Ozark Mountains.



What Is an RMP and Why Is It Needed?

This river management plan is an update to the 1983 *River Use Management Plan* and provides a management framework for future decisions that will support a range of river-based recreational opportunities and visitor experiences. Sharing your feedback on your river management interests, concerns, and issues is integral to this planning effort.

The purpose of the river management plan is to ensure visitor access, protect park resources, and provide meaningful and enjoyable visitor experiences.

Specifically, this plan is needed to

- proactively engage park visitors, partners, landowners, neighbors, associated tribes, and other key stakeholders to identify management options;
- facilitate a broad array of commercial and noncommercial recreational uses by identifying the appropriate types and amounts of both commercial and noncommercial use at key river access points; and
- determine the appropriate type, scale, and mix of facility improvements that optimize visitor access while protecting resources.

Management Strategies

Management strategies described below represent preliminary ideas to address key issues based on the first round of public involvement for this project and on input from park staff and other subject matter experts. No single solution will meet all project goals and resolve all issues. While some strategies may be implemented parkwide, such as improving signs, other strategies are site specific. We look forward to hearing your ideas and feedback! Future implementation of management strategies is subject to plan completion and regulatory compliance, staffing, and funding availability.

Parkwide Management Actions

The National Park Service is considering the following parkwide management strategies:

- Simplify river management zones and update desired conditions for resource protection, visitor access and experience, and facilities and infrastructure.
- Improve road conditions and parking lots to manage congestion at key river accesses.
- Establish group sizes (maximum number of people per group) for the river corridor and set number of vessels per group.
- Relocate camping opportunities out of flood-prone areas and designate specific gravel bars as day use only.
- Evaluate potential future adaptive management strategies to support visitor access and experience.
- Explore opportunities to provide alternative transportation services for visitors to access the river from outside the park.
- Evaluate business opportunities for expanded visitor access and services.



Site-Specific Management Actions

Hasty:

The existing parking area would be expanded to accommodate approximately 50 vehicles with additional parallel overflow parking and designated concessioner parking. Park staff would develop a kayak slide to facilitate vessel access.



Potential Management Strategies: Hasty



Buffalo National River

Arkansas

Grinder's Ferry:

Park staff would develop facilities at this site to improve resource protection. Additional infrastructure includes a new parking lot and improved access to restroom facilities. The gravel bar, parking area, and bathrooms would be designated as day use only for visitor safety purposes and to enhance resource protection. Camping would continue to be allowed more than one-half mile from river access points.



Potential Management Strategies: Grinder's Ferry





Gilbert:

Park staff would develop a parking lot and access roadways. There would be designated concessioner bus and van parking and a turnaround loop area to maintain river access. This area, including the gravel bar, would be designated as day use only to improve visitor safety and enhance resource protection. Camping would continue to be allowed more than one-half mile from river access points.



Potential Management Strategies: Gilbert



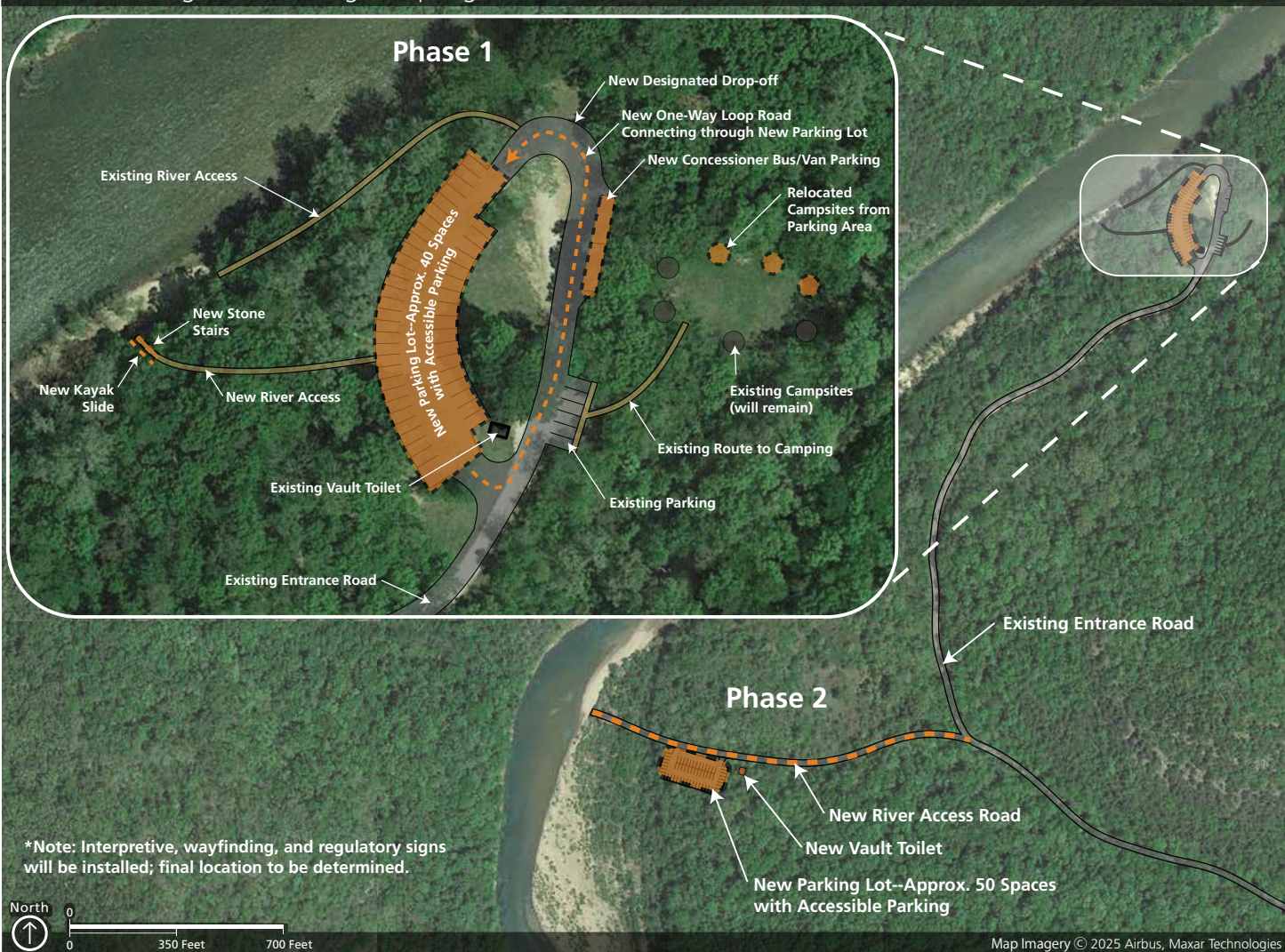
Spring Creek, Phase 1 and 2:

Park staff would improve infrastructure to enhance visitor access and recreation within this area. In phase 1, the campsites would be relocated farther from flood-prone areas and park staff would establish accessible campsites by the open meadow area. The existing parking area would be improved, and a new parking lot would be constructed with designated concessioner parking. A river access trail would be developed from the parking area to the river access area. Park staff would build stairs and a kayak slide to facilitate vessel access.

In phase 2, park staff would build a new road and access area upstream of the existing access point. The park would develop improved parking areas and restroom facilities.



Potential Management Strategies: Spring Creek





Rush Landing:

A parking area would be developed with designated concessioner bus/van parking. The gravel roadway to the river access point would be stabilized to prevent further erosion along Rush Creek. Park staff would stabilize the bank near the river access and designated drop-off to mitigate bank erosion. The bank would be revegetated, and a revetment, designed with the help of the Arkansas Stream Team and in accordance with Wild and Scenic River guidelines, would be installed to prevent continuing resource damage.



Potential Management Strategies: Rush Landing





You're Invited to Participate

Please share your thoughts and ideas on the development of the proposed river management plan for the Buffalo National River. This review is open for a 30-day period. Your input will help the planning team refine these preliminary strategies later this year. We are seeking your responses to the following questions:

1. What thoughts do you have about the proposed options for future river management shared in this newsletter? Do you have any suggestions to refine or improve these strategies?
2. The National Park Service has proposed various site redesigns for key river access points. What information do you think the planning team should consider when analyzing these ideas and strategies?
3. Which management strategies do you think best achieve both the experiences you desire to have on the river and the overall purpose of the plan?
4. Are there other ideas that should be considered that are not already presented? What is missing, and why should it be considered?
5. What other comments or suggestions do you have?

How to Comment

Write to the address below and/or comment through the NPS Planning, Environment, and Public Comment website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BUFFrmp>.

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

Scan the QR code to access the online public comment form and to access dates and locations for the in-person and virtual public meetings.



In-Person Engagement Opportunities

NPS staff will host open house public meetings in Spring 2026 at several locations throughout the area. For more information on meeting dates, locations, and times please visit the following link: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/BUFFrmp>.

