

Ozark Riverways

Official Map and Guide

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Missouri

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



The sunlight sparkles on the flowing waters of the river as it hurries along—now slowing as it enters a quiet, deep pool, now rushing as the banks narrow and the bed becomes shallower. Fish laze in the shaded waters. Overhanging trees line the shoreline creating patterns with their branches in the wintertime and catching breezes with their leaves in the summer. Limestone bluffs rise abruptly above some stretches of the Jacks Fork and Current Rivers; a climb to the top gives a good view over the

surrounding countryside. On gravel bars canoeists and boaters bed down for a night's rest after floating the river for a day. It wasn't always so. More than a century ago a mature pine and hardwood forest grew here and the rivers ran quietly and smoothly along their courses. Timbermen joined the subsistence farmers in the area and began to cut the trees, sawing millions of board feet of lumber each year to build the cities of this expanding Nation. Fires took their toll, too. The rains washed topsoil off the hillsides

baring the rocks and gravel underneath. For the first time gravel bars—now regarded as a fixture of an Ozark river—appeared as the rains washed the rock out of the hills. Once the trees were gone the lumbermen moved on but the farmers remained, only slowly surrendering their ties to the land. The forests began to grow back, and the rivers continued to adapt to the changing environment. A series of record floods have struck the area in the last few years, leaving changed channels, new gravel bars, and

rootwads as the most recent sign of natural change. Today the National Park Service is here to keep the rivers accessible, to help people come to know their beauty and to become acquainted with the special character of the people of the area, and to let nature continue to take its course. This, then, is Ozark National Scenic Riverways, more than 134 miles of clear, spring-fed streams and superb scenery. Welcome.

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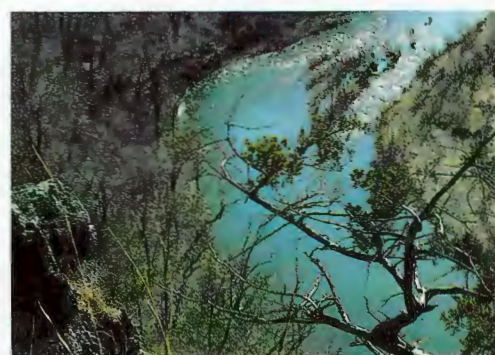
The Alley Spring mill is a human contribution to this landscape, and it is the prettier for it.



An Ozark craftsman fashions a paddle.



Barred owl



Atop the bluffs the noise of the rushing water becomes a distant, echoing, low roar.



Black-eyed Susans



Wild turkey



A rainbow signals the end of another thunderstorm, one of many each year in the Ozarks.



If you didn't know this water was cold, you'd think it was boiling from the looks of it.

When To Go

More than half—64 percent—of the people who come here in a year float the two rivers in the summer. Only 2 percent come during the winter months.

By Season

17%	64%	17%
Spring	Summer	Fall

By Days of the Week in Summer

42%	18%	40%
Saturdays	Sundays	Weekdays

Floating

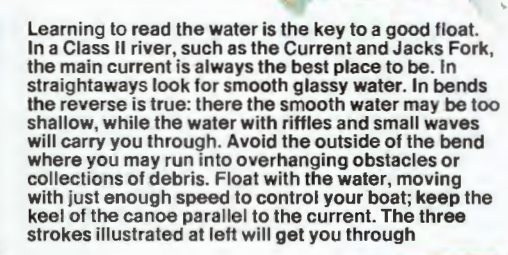


Note: Hand on top

"J" stroke



Drawstroke



Prystroke

The Chute As you approach a series of obstacles, look for a long glassy "V" pointing downstream. This is the chute, the safest route through.

Ledge

Reversal

Pillow



Getting Under Way



Learning to read the water is the key to a good float. In a Class II river, such as the Current and Jacks Fork, the main current is always the best place to be. In straightaways look for smooth glassy water. In bends the reverse is true: there the smooth water may be too shallow, while the water with ripples and small waves will carry you through. Avoid the outside of the bend where you may run into overhanging obstacles or collections of debris. Float with the water, moving with just enough speed to control your boat; keep the keel of the canoe parallel to the current. The three strokes illustrated at left will get you through



Cross Section of Typical River Bend

Avoid the Dreaded Rootwads The upended roots and trunks of downed trees present disastrous traps for the unwary. Be alert.



Camping



Swamping If you get hung up on a rock or a submerged log, lean downstream. If you lean upstream, rushing water will tend to roll the hull over and fill the canoe. If you capsize, stay upstream from the canoe to avoid being pinned against the obstruction by the water-filled canoe.

Gravel Bar Camping Camping on a gravel bar is one of the delightful aspects of floating. In the heat of summer this will usually be one of the cooler places with fewer mosquitoes. Set up your tent out of sight of any nearby dwelling and use existing firepits. Always pay attention to changes

in the river's level; set up a gauge. As the river starts to rise, time the rate so you will know if danger is imminent. The Jacks Fork has risen 14 feet in 1½ hours. Plan an escape route to higher ground. Don't underestimate the river. Never go back on the river during high water.

Camping Ethics Use the restrooms provided or dig a cathole at least 100 feet from any water in sand or earth; don't dig one in gravel. Use only white toilet paper.

Fishing

A Missouri fishing license is required for all fishermen between 16 and 64 years of age. Licenses are available at local stores, sporting goods

suppliers, and canoe rental outlets.

Seasons vary for different species, so check before you bait your line.

Largemouth Bass Minimum length: 12 inches.

Smallmouth Bass Minimum length: 12 inches.

Trout Check with ranger for restrictions; trout tag required.

Goggle-eye No minimum length.

If you are floating, do not cross a fishing line. If you are fishing from a powerboat, do not swamp canoes with your wake. Respect each other's source of enjoyment.



Safety and Regulations

- Do not dive or jump into the river. This means from the bluffs or fallen trees. Do not swing on vines.
- Do not drink the water unless you boil or treat it first.
- Make sure all fires are out when you leave.
- Pack out what you bring in.
- Stay out of caves until you check with a park ranger. If you do go in, be sure to have three light sources.
- Always wear a life jacket when on the river. It will do you no good if it is in the bottom of the canoe.
- Move your campsite if flood conditions begin to develop. Never go back on the river during high water; head for higher ground on foot.
- Park rangers are here to help you whether the situation is an emergency, or you just need an answer to a question. Ozark National Scenic Riverways is administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. If you need more information, write to: Superintendent, P.O. Box 490, Van Buren, MO 63965.

The park is home to five poisonous snakes: cottonmouth, copperhead (below), and pygmy, massasauga, and timber rattlesnakes.



Watch out for poison ivy, which is rampant in this area. Remember the adage: "Leaflets three, let it be."



Illustrations by Greg Harlin.

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- **Caution!** Don't break your neck. Before diving or jumping always check the water depth. Check for objects below the water surface. Swim only in clear, calm water.
- Locally heavy rains cause rivers and streams to rise rapidly. Pick campsites that allow an escape route. Park all vehicles on high ground; look valuables in the trunk; take your keys with you.
- For river conditions, weather, emergency, and general park information tune to the **Traveler's Information Stations (TIS)** at 1610 AM when near Mountain View, Salem, or Van Buren.
- River and spring water may not be suitable for drinking. Boil all water not from approved sources.
- Rivers must be clean and litter-free to support life and recreation. Bury all human waste at least 100 feet away from the river. Carry out all garbage.
- Caves present dangers of falls, deep water, and other hazards. Take at least one dependable source of light; more are preferred. Tell a friend of your plans and anticipated time of return.

