

Ozark National Scenic Riverways Final General Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement
Key Changes to the Preferred Alternative

Current Management (No-Action Alternative)	Draft Preferred Alternative (as stated in the Draft GMP/EIS)	Final Preferred Alternative (as stated in the Final GMP/EIS)	Rationale for Change
<i>Seasonal Motorboat Access above Round Spring on the Upper Current River and above Bay Creek on the Jacks Fork River</i>			
25 HP motorboats allowed during off-peak season 10 HP motorboats allowed during peak season (March 15 through Labor Day)	No motorboats allowed year-round	25 HP motorboats allowed during off-peak season. No motorboats allowed on these stretches during peak season (defined as the day after the end of trapping season through the day before the start of gigging season, as established by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Currently those dates would be April 1-September 14.)	Allowing for the continuation of 25 HP motorboats during the off-peak season would provide for the continuation of gigging and trapping, which are traditional uses. Little conflict exists between motorized and non-motorized boaters during the off-season when use levels are low. Allowing only non-motorized boating on these stretches during the peak season would avoid boating conflicts that typically occur during the busy summer months. Low water levels on these stretches of the rivers during the summer are generally not favorable for motorboats.
<i>Motorboat Horsepower Limits on the Lower Current River below Big Spring</i>			
No HP limits for motorboats year-round	60/40 HP motorboats year-round	150 HP motorboats year-round	In recognition of the greater depth and width of this portion of the river, the NPS believes a higher horsepower limit can be accommodated compared to upstream reaches, but a reduction of unlimited horsepower is warranted to reduce boating conflicts and improve visitor safety.
<i>Gravel Bar Access and Camping</i>			
Vehicular access to gravel bars for day use and overnight camping would continue to be allowed. This includes those with existing designated sites. Gravel bar camping would continue to be allowed for those accessing gravel bars by motorized and nonmotorized watercraft, as long as the location of the campsite is 0.5 mile away from any designated campground and at least 50 feet away from any designated river access.	Vehicular access to all gravel bars would be eliminated. Gravel bar access would be by boat or walk-in only. Camping on gravel bars would be in designated campsites only. According to the errata sheet that was issued shortly after release of the draft plan, this text was corrected to state: The number of gravel bars accessible to vehicles would be designated and reduced. Camping on gravel bars such as Logyard would be allowed in designated campsites only. Camping on gravel bars accessed by vehicles would be allowed only in designated campsites	Designated campsites or camping areas may be established on some gravel bars that are accessed by licensed vehicles in order to reduce crowding, improve safety, and enhance visitor experience. On these gravel bars, all camping would be limited to the designated camping areas. These locations would be identified in a subsequent planning process. Visitors utilizing motorized and non-motorized watercraft could continue to camp on gravel bars, as long as the location of that campsite was 0.5 mile away from any designated camping area and at least 50 feet away from any designated river access.	The preferred alternative was revised to clarify the proposal for managing vehicular access and camping on gravel bars. NPS believes that establishing designated camping areas on some gravel bars that are accessed by licensed vehicles would improve visitor safety and resource protection. Doing so avoids the need to eliminate vehicular access from all gravel bars within the Riverways.
<i>Equestrian Trails</i>			
The current horse trail system of 23 miles of designated horse trails would continue to be provided, with seven designated stream crossings for horse riders. At least 90 miles of undesignated horse trails, with 24 undesignated stream crossings used by horse riders and 38 undesignated access points could continue to be utilized. Horse camping would continue to not be allowed.	A recreational horse use and trail management plan would be prepared. Approximately 35 miles of additional, designated horse trails would be provided, including some new stream crossings. Approximately 25-campsite horse campground may be established. Approximately 65 miles of undesignated horse trails would be closed and restored. Design of the existing, approximately 23-mile-long horse trail system would be improved to discourage creation of social trails; decrease the impact of horses on sensitive areas, including streams and riparian areas; reduce conflicts with other users; and reduce trail damage, erosion, and manure pollution. A permitting system would be established, as necessary, to manage impacts	The existing designated, approximately 23-mile long horse trail system would continue to be provided. Additional equestrian trails would be designated. As part of the roads and trails management plan, the National Park Service would consider designating some of the existing, unauthorized trails by incorporating about 25 to 45 miles of these trails into the existing Riverways' trail system, as well as some of the associated stream crossings. The remaining 45 to 65 miles of unauthorized horse trails and associated stream crossings would be restored to their natural condition. The roads and trails management plan would clearly identify authorized trails and corresponding trail uses, where trails should be redesigned	The preferred alternative was revised to provide points of clarification and to give flexibility for the implementation-level roads and trails management plan, which would provide a basis for making informed decisions about which trails to formally designate or restore to natural conditions. This is intended to reduce damage to sensitive resources and improve the navigability of the trail system for trail users.

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	of horse use. Horse camping may be allowed in designated sites.	or improved to reduce trail user impacts, and suitable locations for improved trail signage to more clearly delineate authorized trails and orient trail users. All horse trails would be designed to discourage creation of social trails; decrease impacts of horses on sensitive areas, including streams and riparian areas; reduce conflicts with other users; and reduce trail damage, erosion, and manure pollution. In the interim, until a roads and trails management plan is completed, unauthorized trails that pose the greatest threat to park resources and visitor safety could be closed on a case-by-case basis. An approximate 25-campsite horse campground may be established. A permitting system could be established, as necessary, to manage impacts of horse use. Law enforcement would be increased for compliance.	
Natural Resource Management			
Natural resource management would continue to preserve and protect the natural resources, processes, systems, and values of the National Riverways in accordance with NPS policies. In particular, programs would emphasize protection of outstanding natural features, including sites that encompass geological, scientific, and ecological characteristics that warrant special protection. Examples include caves, springs, and other rare habitats that support threatened and endangered species. Ongoing monitoring of listed species (e.g., Indiana bat, gray bat, and Ozark hellbender) would continue, along with involvement in associated interagency research efforts.	The National Park Service would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to conduct a programmatic consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for the general management plan. The National Park Service would also work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and implement conservation plans and strategies to protect all federal listed species in the NPS Riverways to fulfill the intent of Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act.	<p>The National Park Service would work closely with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service regarding programmatic consultation under Section 7 of the Endangered Species Act for the general management plan and would continue to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on all applicable phases of the plan’s implementation. The National Park Service would also work with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to develop and implement conservation plans and strategies to protect all federal listed species in the Riverways to fulfill the intent of Section 7(a)(1) of the Endangered Species Act. Ongoing monitoring of listed species (e.g., Indiana bat, gray bat, and Ozark hellbender) would continue, along with involvement in associated interagency research efforts.</p> <p>The National Park Service would strive to partner with surrounding communities about wastewater to improve water quality in the Riverways. It would also strive to work within a regional context to protect the night sky quality from light pollution and continue to foster partnerships for natural resource stewardship.</p> <p>A fisheries management plan would be developed and implemented. This plan would assess the effects of nonnative game fish stocking and the timing / locations of fishing activities on native aquatic species. The plan would be developed by the National Park Service in cooperation with the Missouri Department of Conservation, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and other appropriate partners.</p>	The preferred alternative was modified to emphasize that the National Park Service will continue to consult with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service on all applicable phases of the plan’s implementation. In addition, the National Park Service recommits to ongoing monitoring of listed species (e.g., Ozark hellbender), along with involvement in associated interagency research efforts. The preferred alternative was also updated to state that the National Park Service would strive to partner with surrounding communities on waste water management to improve water quality in the Riverways.
Public Outreach and Partnerships			
Currently, there are few partnerships. Unlike most national park units, the Riverways does not have a friends group. Management is currently working to develop a friends group.	The National Park Service would seek to develop a friends group.	Park staff would promote measures that foster a spirit of cooperation with neighbors and stakeholders. Various strategies would be undertaken to encourage compatible adjacent land uses and provide landowners, land managers, local governments and the public with important information	The preferred alternative was revised to emphasize the National Park Service’s commitment to work cooperatively with others to resolve issues in a more pro-active way and address mutual interests. It also expands opportunities for partnerships and commits the National Park Service to develop a
The park unit would continue to share office space at the Van	The park unit would continue to share office space at the Van Buren headquarters with other federal and state agencies.		

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Buren headquarters with other federal and state agencies.	<p>Under alternative B, the National Park Service would</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seek to partner with volunteers and others to accomplish cultural resource stewardship projects• seek to establish a partnership with the counties regarding road management, including closures• seek to partner with the county and state to replace Cedar Grove low-water bridge with a high-water bridge• seek to partner with communities about waste systems to improve water quality• continue to partner with the state to enhance healthy native game fish populations	<p>about NPS management activities. Collaborative partnerships would assist efforts to proactively anticipate, avoid, and resolve potential conflicts to protect the National Riverways’ resources, provide quality visitor experiences, and preserve the quality of life for community residents. Partnerships with local community organizations and chambers of commerce for park cultural demonstrations and special events could help generate additional business opportunities in local communities. Regional cooperation would involve federal, state, and local agencies, associated tribes, neighboring landowners, and all other concerned parties.</p> <p>In efforts to improve communications, the park would develop a communication plan to facilitate and expand communications, provide opportunities for more direct input with park staff, and help promote awareness and understanding of park issues. The plan would propose measures for regularly gathering and distributing information to the public, responding to concerns about park operations, and encouraging feedback on park issues.</p> <p>In addition to the above partnership initiatives, Ozark National Scenic Riverways would:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• seek to establish a friends group• continue to share office space at the Van Buren headquarters with other federal and state agencies• continue to use the services of a cooperating association to operate bookstores at park visitor contact facilities, such as the Van Buren headquarters, Round Spring, and Alley Mill• seek to partner with volunteers and others to accomplish cultural and natural resource stewardship projects• seek to establish partnership agreements regarding road management, including closures and maintenance• seek to partner with the county and state to replace the Cedargrove low-water bridge with a high-water bridge and construct a new bridge at Akers• seek to partner with communities about waste systems to improve water quality• work within a regional context to protect the night sky quality and natural lightscape by partnering with communities and participating in planning meetings at the state and county level to promote the protection of the night sky from light from new developments adjacent to the Riverways continue to partner with the state to enhance healthy native game fish populations• continue to regularly share information (such as a “Riverways Reflections” column) about park events and important issues (available on the park website, distributed	communications plan to ensure information sharing occurs on a regular basis.

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		to local and regional media outlets, and accessible via social media)	