

Buffalo



N a t i o n a l R i v e r • A r k a n s a s

Dear Friends and Neighbors,

Buffalo National River was established by Congress on March 1, 1972. The park includes 135 miles of the Buffalo River in northern Arkansas. The clean, clear waters of this free-flowing stream, its beautiful bluffs and waterfalls, its rugged wilderness, and its combination of natural and pastoral landscapes provide outstanding recreational and educational opportunities. The last comprehensive plan for Buffalo National River was completed in 1977. Much has changed since then, and I am pleased to announce that the National Park Service (NPS) is beginning a planning process to chart the future of the national river. I invite you to participate in this journey.

In July we will hold the first round of public meetings to start developing the general management plan (GMP) for Buffalo National River. Once completed, this plan will guide management decisions for the next 15 to 20 years and help us in preserving the national river's resources while providing opportunities for high-quality recreational experiences.

This is an opportunity for you to help us shape the future of Buffalo National River. I look forward to hearing from you now and as we proceed through the planning process for your national river. Please plan to attend one of the upcoming meetings.

Sincerely,

Kevin G. Cheri

*Kevin G. Cheri
Superintendent*



INVITATION TO ATTEND PUBLIC MEETINGS AND COMMENT

Please join us in July for public meetings to discuss your ideas and concerns about the future of Buffalo National River. For your convenience, we have scheduled seven meetings in the following locations: Fayetteville/Springdale, Marshall, Jasper, Mountain Home, Yellville, Harrison, and Little Rock. See the table below for specific dates, times, and locations.

If you are unable to or prefer not to attend, you can still ask questions of, or provide input to the planning team using the enclosed, postage paid comment form or the planning website at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/buff>. You can also reach the planning website via the link on the Buffalo National River website (www.nps.gov/buff). In addition, you can send a letter to Superintendent, Buffalo National River, Attn: General Management Plan, 402 N. Walnut, Suite 136, Harrison, Arkansas 72601.

City	Date and Time	Location
Fayetteville/ Springdale	Wednesday, July 8, 2009 3:30 p.m. – 7:00 p.m.	Jones Family Center • 922 E. Emma Ave. Springdale, AR 72764 • 479-756-8090
Marshall	Thursday, July 9, 2009 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Marshall Elementary School Cafeteria • 201 W. College St. Marshall, AR 72650 • 870-448-3011 (Supt Office)
Jasper	Friday, July 10, 2009 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Carroll Electric Coop • 511 E. Court St. Jasper, AR 72641 • 870-446-5114
Mountain Home	Saturday, July 11, 2009 12:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.	Pinkston Middle School • 1310 College St (located behind ASU) Mountain Home, AR 72653 • 870-425-1236 (office)
Yellville	Saturday, July 11, 2009 6:00 p.m. – 9:00 p.m.	Yellville-Summit High School Cafeteria • 1124 N Panther Ave Yellville, AR 72687 • 870-449-4067
Harrison	Monday, July 13, 2009 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	North Arkansas Community College, Durand Center • 302 Main St. N Harrison, AR 72601 • 870-391-3211 (President's Office)
Little Rock	Tuesday, July 14, 2009 5:00 p.m. – 8:00 p.m.	Arkansas Game & Fish Commission • #2 Natural Resources Drive Little Rock, AR 72205 • 501-223-6309

We want to share with you as much as possible about the general management planning process, and hope to hear your opinions. To have the best give-and-take, we plan to hold seven public open houses. During the open houses, you are invited to come and go as your time allows. The superintendent will provide an overview of the planning process at the beginning of each open house. There will be several stations in a large room where you can talk to park staff about the future of Buffalo National River.

You may want to think about your answers to the following questions before attending the meeting: (1) What do you enjoy about the national river? (2) What issues and concerns do you have? (3) What kinds of facilities, resource conditions, or recreational opportunities do you want?





GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The general management plan (GMP) is the basic plan for all park units in the national park system. Participation in the planning process by the park staff, partners, neighbors, and the general public is crucial to the success of this planning effort.

GMP planning is organized around three questions: **WHY** was this park established? **WHAT** is the vision for this park's future? **HOW** do we accomplish our future vision?

WHY WAS THIS PARK ESTABLISHED?

Answers to the **WHY** question form the foundation for the general management plan. This foundation is based on legislation and the legislative history; it begins with statements of Buffalo National River's purpose and significance, which are presented in this newsletter. The planning team will refer to the purpose and significance of the national river to direct and test each step of the plan as it is developed.

WHAT IS THE FUTURE VISION OF BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER?

The primary role of the general management plan is to answer the **WHAT** question: What kind of place do we want the national river to be in the future? What are the resource conditions we want to maintain and the visitor experiences we want to have at the national river? Several possible visions for the park's future will be developed during the planning process. These visions, also

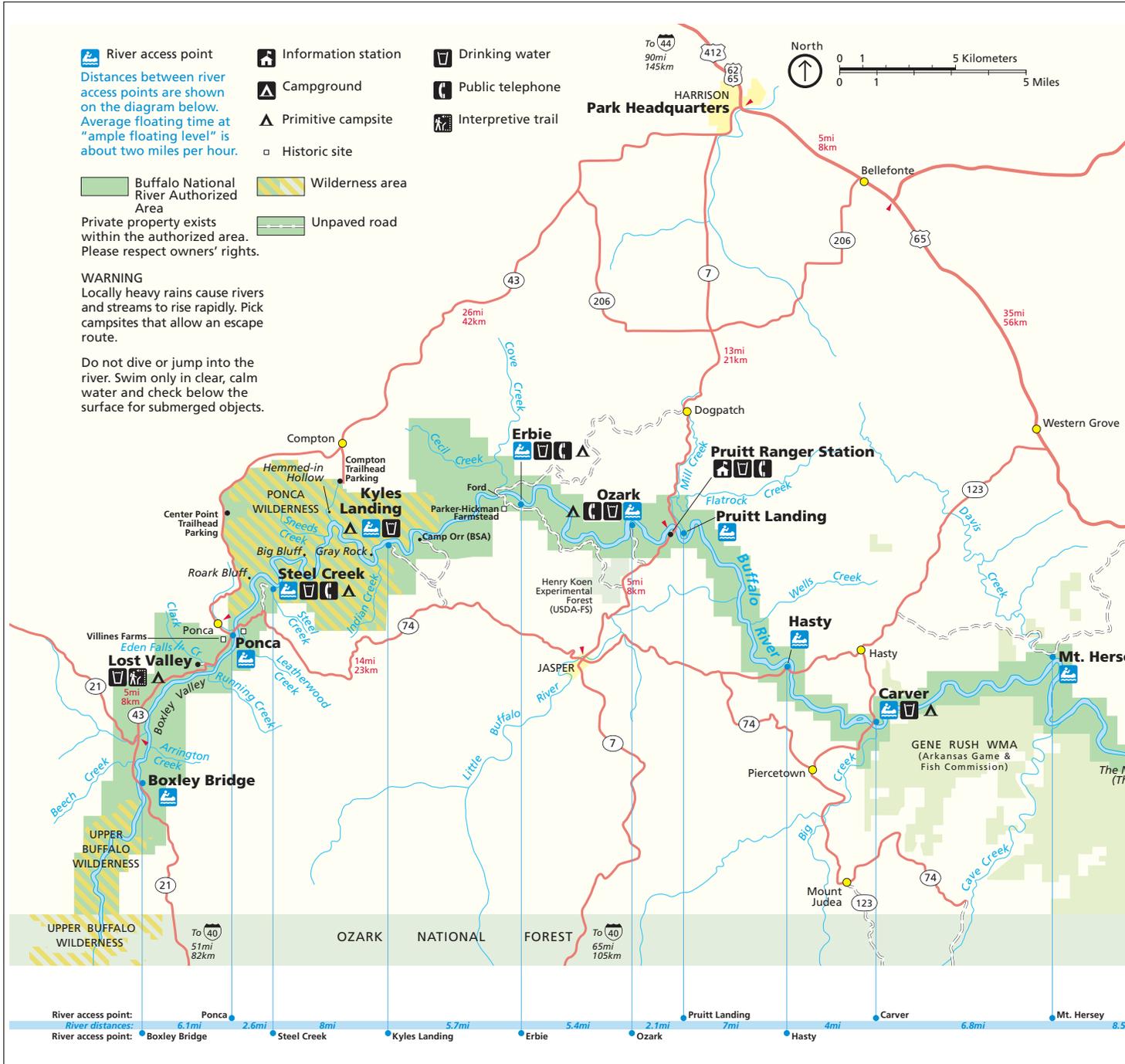
called management alternatives, will present different approaches to managing the park while achieving the national river's purpose and maintaining its significance. It is the public's ideas, comments, and answers to this question that are most important.

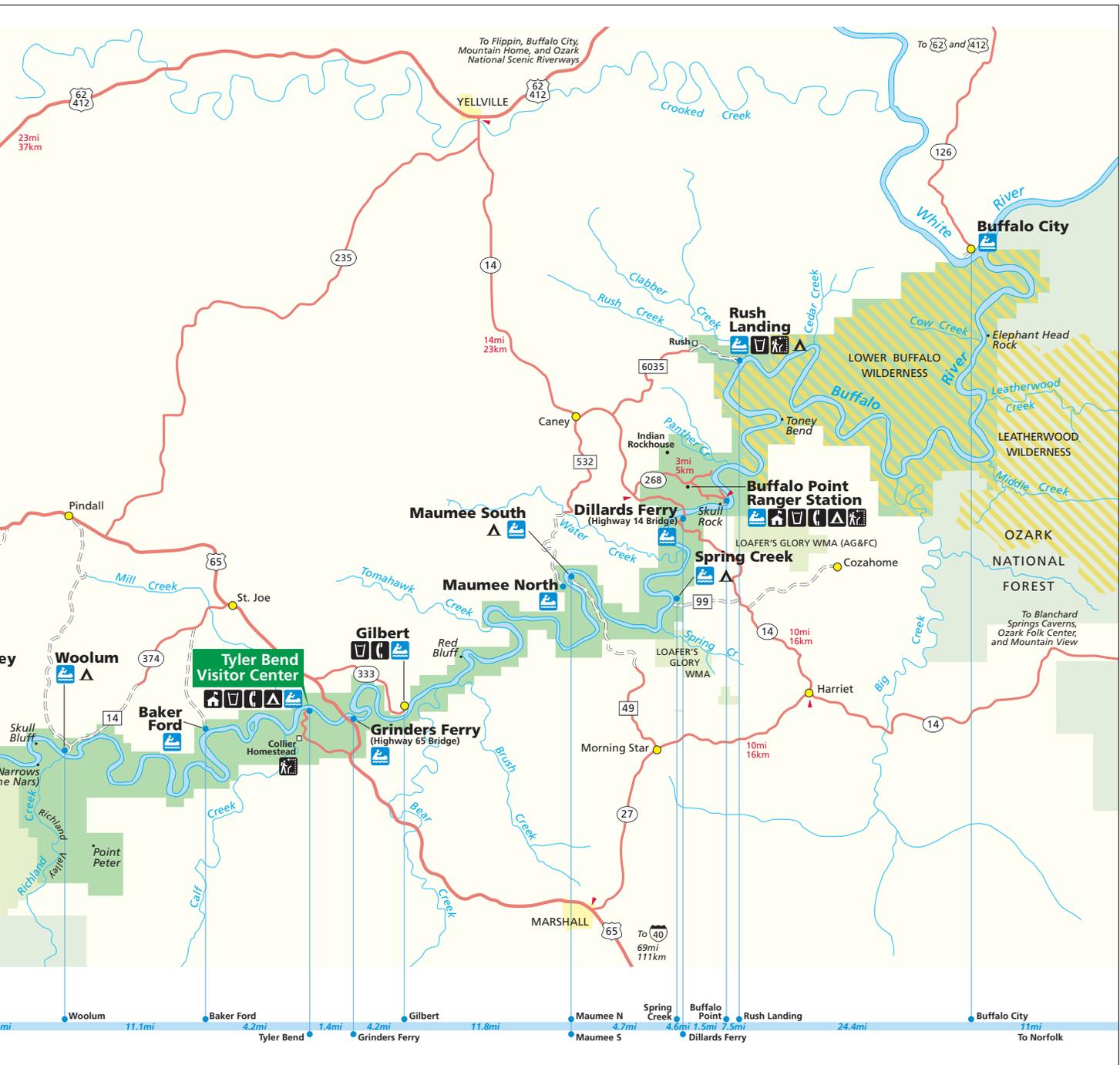
HOW DO WE ACCOMPLISH OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE?

Although it may be necessary in some cases to include specific proposed actions in the general management plan, most **HOW** questions are answered in future implementation plans. For example, the desired future conditions for the national river's natural and cultural resources and the visitors' experiences will be described in the plan, but specific actions, such as those needed to manage exotic vegetation, would be identified in a subsequent vegetation/habitat management plan. All existing park management plans will be evaluated and revised as necessary to be consistent with the new general management plan.



BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER





Buffalo

National River • Arkansas

Kevin G. Cheri, Superintendent
 402 N Walnut St, Suite 136
 Harrison, AR 72601

Buffalo National River is a long, narrow park that is crossed by three main highways. Using Harrison as a starting point, to reach the Upper District, visitors travel south from Harrison on Highway 7, or Highway 43; to reach the Middle District, visitors travel 31 miles south of Harrison on Highway 65; to reach the Lower District, visitors take Highway 65 south from Harrison for 5 miles, then take Highway 62/412 to the east to Yellville, and Highway 14 south.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE OF BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

PURPOSE

The park purpose identifies the reasons why Buffalo National River was established as part of the national park system. The purpose provides the foundation for the management and use of the national river. Purpose statements for national park system units are based primarily on the park's establishing legislation and legislative history.

The purpose of Buffalo National River is to preserve, conserve, and interpret a clear, clean, free-flowing river and its Ozark mountain setting of deep valleys, towering bluffs, wilderness, and pastoral landscapes. It is not one single quality, but the combination of natural, scenic, cultural, and scientific features that are protected for the benefit and enjoyment of present and future generations.

SIGNIFICANCE

Significance statements identify the resources and values that are central to managing the national river and express the importance of the national river to the nation's natural and cultural heritage. This helps to place the park in regional, national, and international contexts. Understanding the national river's significance helps managers make decisions that will preserve the resources and values necessary to accomplish the park's purposes.



BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER IS SIGNIFICANT FOR THE FOLLOWING REASONS:

A Free-Flowing River. Buffalo River is an exceptional example of a free-flowing Ozark mountain river. Undammed and undiminished by the hand of man, it is the only river protected for its entire length within the Ozark Plateau. As a dynamic river ecosystem, Buffalo River is important for scientific discoveries and advances in ecosystem management and restoration.

Karst Geology. Buffalo National River contains a dense array of karst features, including more than 360 caves and thousands of sinkholes, sinking streams, springs, and other natural features related to karst processes. In several places the entire river runs underground for more than a mile. Outstanding examples of faulting, landslides, ore mineralization, and world renowned fossil deposits have formed during its long geologic history.



Ozark Cultural Landscape. The entire park is an outstanding cultural landscape that embraces the overall story of Ozarks settlement and history from the first prehistoric inhabitants to today's living rural community of Boxley Valley, providing opportunities to study and interpret cultural, environmental, technological, and social adaptations.

A Complex Ecosystem. The convergence of northern and southern ecosystems, the joining of western and eastern species, a rich blend of botanical communities, and an abundance of fire-adapted habitats create an ecosystem recognized locally, nationally, and globally as unique.

Exceptional Recreation Setting. Buffalo National River's spectacular waterfalls, limestone bluffs, clear water, wooded canyons, and wilderness provide an exceptional setting for recreational opportunities that are unequalled in this part of the country.

THE PLANNING SCHEDULE

The management plan is expected to take about five years to complete. A summary of the process and anticipated time frame is presented below. You will have opportunities to share ideas and comments throughout the process.

STEP AND TIMEFRAME	PLANNING ACTIVITY	PARTICIPATION OPPORTUNITIES
1 (We are here) Fall 2008- Summer 2009	Initiate Project, Define Planning Foundation, and Identify Concerns The team examines and reaffirms the purpose and significance of the unit, and determines the primary issues and concerns for the GMP. Team members collect and analyze relevant data and public comments.	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns orally or by using a comment form, mailing a letter, or commenting online.
2 Fall 2009- Spring 2011	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives Using staff and public input, the team will identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the national river's future, analyze public reactions to these preliminary alternatives, and select a preferred alternative.	Read newsletter(s) and send us your ideas and comments on the preliminary alternatives. Attend public meetings to provide additional input.
3 Summer 2011- Summer 2012	Prepare and Publish the <i>Draft General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement</i> A draft plan will be published and distributed to the public. The draft document will describe the alternatives and their impacts.	Read the draft plan and send us your ideas and comments via mail or the Internet. Attend public meetings to provide more input.
4 Fall 2012- Fall 2013	Revise and Publish the <i>Final General Management Plan / Environmental Impact Statement</i> The team will analyze public comments on the draft document, prepare responses to substantive comments, and make appropriate revisions to the draft document. The final document will then be distributed to the public.	Read the final document
5 Winter 2014	Implement the Approved Plan A "Record of Decision" will be issued to approve the final GMP. The plan will then be implemented as funding allows.	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
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