

Ozark

National Scenic Riverways • Missouri



General Management Plan

Newsletter # 1 / Summer 2006

Dear Friends of Ozark National Scenic Riverways,

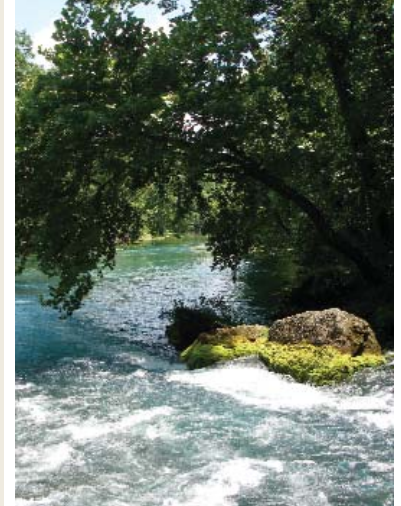
Several of you have heard me mention the upcoming General Management Plan (GMP) update. The last GMP for the Riverways was completed in 1984. Thus, I am pleased to announce that the National Park Service (NPS) is beginning the planning process to chart the future of Ozark National Scenic Riverways and I want to invite you to participate in this journey. Ozark National Scenic Riverways was established by an Act of Congress on August 24, 1964. It includes 134 miles of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers in the Ozark Highlands of southeastern Missouri. Most of the rivers flow from seven major springs, such as Big Spring, Round Spring, and Alley Spring. The clean, clear waters of the two scenic rivers, along with the adjoining parklands, provide outstanding recreational opportunities in a beautiful and biologically important setting.

In September we will hold the first round of public meetings to start the General Management Plan and wilderness study for Ozark National Scenic Riverways. For the next 15 to 20 years, the GMP will guide management decisions in our efforts to preserve the Riverways' resources while providing opportunities for high quality recreational experiences. As part of the GMP, a wilderness study will be conducted on one tract of NPS land that has been found potentially eligible for wilderness designation in the Big Spring area.

This is an opportunity for you to help us shape the future of the Riverways. I look forward to hearing from you now as we proceed through the planning process for your Riverways. Please plan on attending one of the upcoming meetings. For more information on the GMP and the wilderness study, please go to the park's web site, <www.nps.gov/ozar>.

Sincerely,

Noel Poe, Superintendent



Public Meetings

What do you enjoy about the Riverways?

What issues and concerns do you have?

If you were superintendent for the day, what changes would you make?



We will hold at least five public open houses to hear your issues and concerns for the GMP and Wilderness Study. (Any additional open houses will be announced in the local newspapers.) NPS staff will be present to answer questions and listen to your comments throughout the evening of each open house.

We want to share with you as much as possible about the GMP process and wilderness study, and hope to hear your opinions. In order to have the best give-and-take, we plan to hold public open houses. You are invited to come and go as your time allows. There will be several stations in a large room where you can talk to park staff about the future of the rivers. The park superintendent will be available to talk to you one-on-one, as well as in groups. During the meetings, there will also be an opportunity to attend separate breakout groups to give us more detailed thoughts on how to address the management challenges associated with planning for the future of the Riverways. The superintendent will provide an overview of the planning process prior to each of the breakout group meetings at **5:15 pm, 6:00 pm, and 6:30 pm**. The breakouts will begin at **5:30 pm, 6:15 pm, and 6:45 pm**. Questions that might be asked in these group breakouts are: **(1)** What do you enjoy about the Riverways; **(2)** What issues and concerns do you have? **(3)** If you were superintendent for the day, what changes would you make? If you would like to participate in one of these smaller sessions, you will be able to sign up when you arrive.

All of the open houses will run from **5:00 - 8:00 PM**. Look for articles in the local newspapers for more information about these meetings.

Monday, September 18	Van Buren Community Center , Intersection of Bus. 60 and D Hwy
Tuesday, September 19	Eminence , Eminence Elementary School, Just west of Jct. of Hwys 19 & 106
Wednesday, September 20	Poplar Bluff , Three Rivers Community College, Admin. Bldg.
Thursday, September 21	Salem , Salem City Hall, 202 N. Washington
Friday, September 22	St. Louis Holiday Inn Southwest & Viking Conf. Center , 10709 Watson Rd.

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's 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 overall mission of this area)?

WHAT is the vision for the unit's future (what kind of place do we want it to be)?

HOW do we accomplish our future vision (what actions are needed to create desired future conditions)?

Why was this park established?

Answers to the **WHY** question form the foundation for the GMP. This foundation is based on legislation and the legislative history. For Ozark National Scenic Riverways (ONSR), the planning foundation begins with statements of the Riverways' purpose and significance, which are presented in this newsletter. The planning team will refer to the purpose and significance of the Riverways to direct and test each step of the plan as it is developed.

What is the future vision of ONSR?

The primary role of the GMP is to answer the **WHAT** question: What kind of place do we want ONSR to be in the future? What are the resource conditions we want to maintain and the visitor experiences we want to have in the Riverways? 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 manage the park while achieving

the Riverways' purposes and maintaining their significance. It is this question where the public's ideas and comments 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 GMP, most **HOW** questions are answered in future implementation plans. For example, the desired future conditions for the Riverways' natural and cultural resources and the visitors' experiences will be described in the GMP, but specific actions 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 GMP.

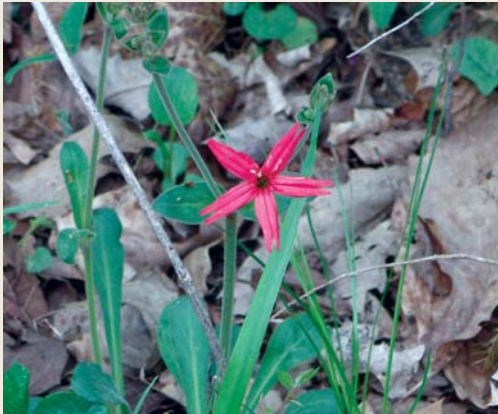
The Wilderness Study

Wilderness is intended specifically for recreational use by people who want to enjoy a primitive, get-away-from-it-all experience — whether for hunting, hiking or backcountry camping. The Wilderness Act of 1964 states that wilderness “shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people” and “shall be devoted to the public for purposes of recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historic use” (Sections 2a and 4b). Visitors to parks with wilderness areas enjoy a wide range of visitor experiences. Many do not realize that they are in areas managed as wilderness. We want to clarify what wilderness would mean at the Riverways, so that people can make fully informed comments.

The 1984 GMP evaluated a portion of the Big Spring area for wilderness suitability, but noted that wilderness

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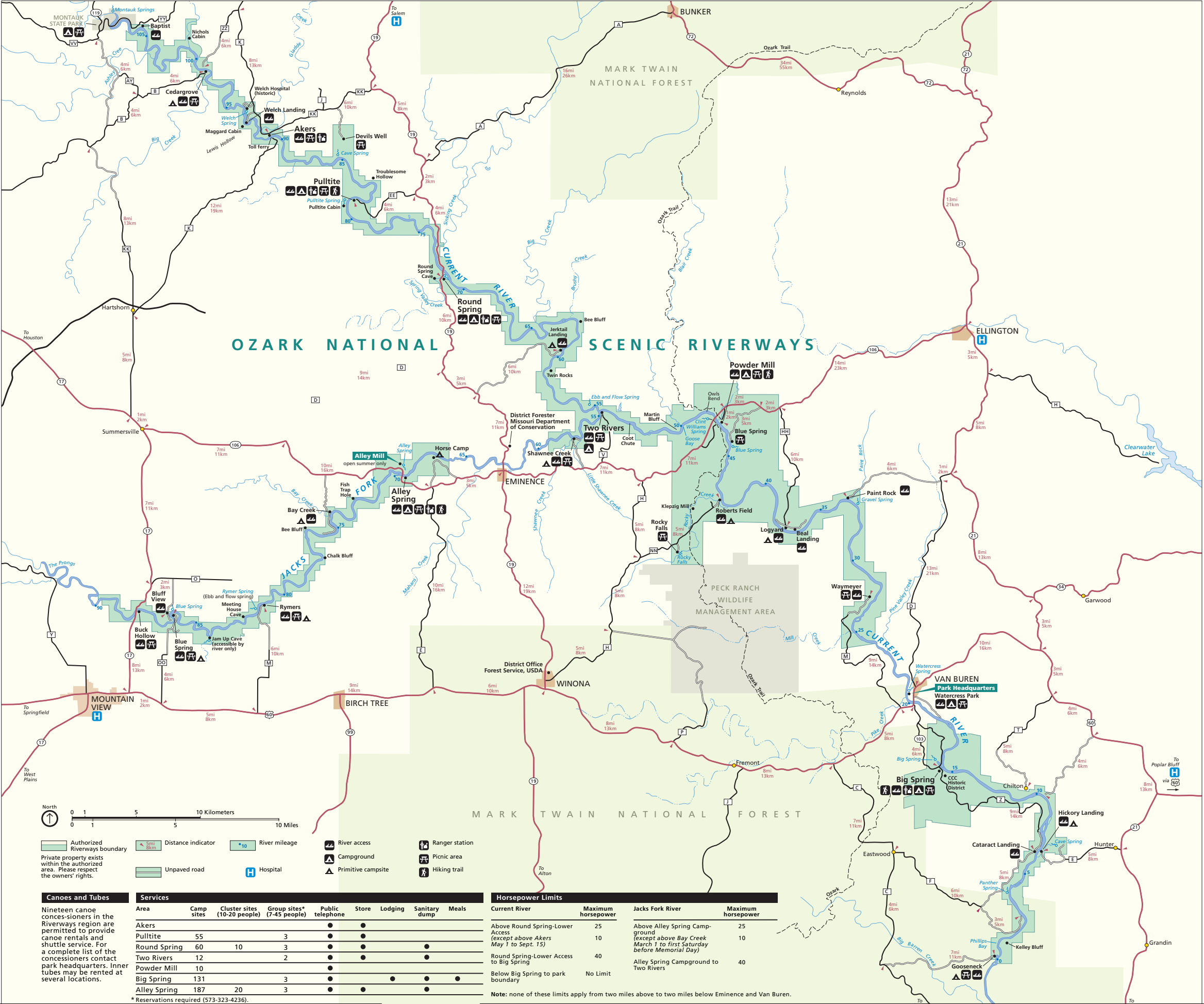


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designation would not be pursued in 1984, because of non-conforming uses. However, those non-conforming conditions were removed in the early 1990s. The new GMP/wilderness study will identify and evaluate alternatives for possible designation of the Big Spring tract, approximately 3,400 acres in the southeast part of ONSR, adjacent to the Mark Twain National Forest. This new planning effort will include a range of alternatives to protect the primitive and solitude values of this tract.

It is important to note that the GMP and wilderness study will be integrated together but will follow two separate tracks. The GMP, once approved by the NPS Midwest Regional Director, will be implemented immediately. The findings and conclusions of the wilderness study will be forwarded to the NPS Director. If the Director decides to recommend wilderness, that wilderness proposal is sent to the Secretary of the Interior. The Secretary's office decides whether to forward the recommendation to the President, and the President's office decides whether to submit draft legislation to Congress. Regardless of what the GMP/wilderness study recommends, ultimately it is up to Congress to enact necessary legislation to designate an area as wilderness.

Purpose and Significance of Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Purpose

Purpose statements identify the reasons why ONSR was established as part of the national park system. They provide the foundation for the management and use of the Riverways. They are based on the Riverways' establishing legislation and legislative history.

The park's purposes are to:

- preserve and protect the unique scenic and natural values, processes, and unspoiled setting derived from the clean, free-flowing Current and Jacks Fork Rivers and springs, caves, and their karst origins
- provide for and promote opportunities for the scientific and public understanding of the Riverways natural resources
- provide opportunities for understanding and appreciation of the human experience associated with the Ozark Highlands landscape
- provide for uses and enjoyment of the outdoor recreation opportunities consistent with the preservation of the Riverways' resources

Significance

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

The following significance statements have been identified for ONSR:

- The ancient Ozark Highlands is an important center of biodiversity in North America, including over 200 endemic (native) species. The high variety of species found within ONSR is due to the rich array of aquatic, terrestrial, and subterranean habitats concentrated within the river corridors. In particular, the Riverways supports unique species found nowhere outside of this region.
- The impressive hydro-geologic character of the Ozark karst landscape supports an amazing variety of natural features in the Riverways, including a spring system that is world-class and unparalleled in North America. The Riverways features over 300 springs, including the largest spring in the National Park System, and a total of six first magnitude springs. The cave system is equally impressive, with over 325 caves — the highest density of any unit in the national park system.
- ONSR contains 134 miles of clear, spring fed rivers. Because of their high water quality, both the Jacks Fork and Current Rivers have been designated by the State of Missouri as two of the three Outstanding National Resource Waters in the state.
- The complex and dynamic resources and systems of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways provide opportunities for high quality and diverse outdoor recreation available year round on and along free-flowing rivers.
- The Riverways feature archeological sites, historic structures, objects, and landscapes reflecting more than 12,000 years of people living along, adapting to, and interacting with these Ozark Highland rivers.

The Planning Process Schedule

The GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS is expected to take 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	Timeframe	Planning Activity	Participation Opportunities
	1	Spring 2005	Initiate Project The planning team assembles, begins to identify the project's scope, customizes the planning process, and begins to establish contacts with participants.	
We Are Here	2	Fall 2005-Summer 2006	Define Planning Context and Foundation The team examines and reaffirms the purpose and significance of the unit, and determines the primary issues and concerns for the GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS. Team members collect and analyze relevant data and public comments.	Attend public meetings and voice your concerns orally or by using a response form, mailing a letter, or commenting online.
	3	Fall 2006-Spring 2008	Develop and Evaluate Alternatives Using staff and public input, the team will identify a range of reasonable alternatives for the riverways' future, analyze public reactions to these preliminary alternatives, and identify a preferred alternative.	Read newsletter(s) and send us your ideas and comments on the preliminary alternatives. Attend public meetings to provide additional input.
	4	Summer 2008-Summer 2009	Prepare and Publish the <i>Draft General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/EIS</i> A draft GMP/Wilderness Study/EIS 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 and the wilderness study hearing(s) to provide more input.
	5	Fall 2009-Fall 2010	Revise and Publish the <i>Final General Management Plan/Wilderness Study/ EIS</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.	
	6	Winter 2010-and Beyond	Implement the Approved Plan A record of decision will be issued to adopt the final GMP. The GMP will then be implemented as funding allows. The findings of the wilderness study will be transmitted, as appropriate, to the NPS Director, Secretary of the Interior, President, and Congress.	Stay involved throughout the implementation of the approved plan.

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