

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
FLYING W VICINITY**

---

**OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS**

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
FLYING W VICINITY**



**Prepared by:**

**Ozark National Scenic Riverways  
P.O. Box 490  
Van Buren, MO 63965**

**June 2007**

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FLYING W VICINITY

---

### SUMMARY

The National Park Service (NPS), Ozark National Scenic Riverways (ONSR), is proposing the rehabilitation of a high use undeveloped area locally known as Flying W. The proposed site is located on the upper Current River in Shannon County, Missouri, at the end of the Flying W Road (NPS road 2-3006) off of state Highway K.

This document discusses alternatives designed to achieve the following objectives:

- Implement necessary modifications and management actions to protect resources, and visitor experiences
- Reduce or eliminate cultural and natural resource damage
- Rehabilitate environmentally degraded and user impacted areas
- Redesign river access, river fords, roads, and parking areas

The potential impacts associated with actions identified within each of the proposed alternatives will be analyzed.

*The following elements are common to all of the action alternatives (Alternatives B, C, & D):*

- Rehabilitate parking area at top of bluff and the severely eroded trail connecting the parking area and gravel bar
- Install gate and vehicle turn-around on the Gouldsmith Tract Road across the Current River north of Flying W to eliminate vehicle traffic (ATV, 4-wheel drive, etc.) across the river ford (e.g. close river road through Flying W to vehicle traffic)
- Eliminate vehicle traffic (ATV, 4-wheel drive, etc.) accessing the river ford at the south end of the site near the Bluff Schoolhouse
- Sign roads and trails appropriately (i.e. those that are designated or open/closed to vehicles, horses, ATVs, or people)
- Designate a horse trail through the site

#### **Alternative A**

No action

#### **Alternative B**

Provide vehicle access to the northern end of Flying W for day-use activities

#### **Alternative C**

Provide walk-in access to the northern end of Flying W

#### **Alternative D**

Provide vehicle access to the northern and southern ends of Flying W for day-use activities

**We are seeking public and agency comments on this environmental assessment from June 5, 2007 to July 6, 2007.**

You may post or mail your comments via any of these three methods:

1. Planning, Environment, and Public Comment (PEPC) website (select Ozark National Scenic Riverways from the dropdown menu): <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/>
2. Mail to Ozark National Scenic Riverways headquarters: Superintendent, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, P.O. Box 490, Van Buren, MO 63965
3. Electronic mail to Ozark National Scenic Riverways headquarters: OZAR\_superintendent@nps.gov

**ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
FLYING W VICINITY**

---

Table of Contents

|   |  |                                     |
|---|--|-------------------------------------|
| <b>1.0</b>                              | <b>PURPOSE AND NEED .....</b>                                      | <b>1</b>                            |
| <b>2.0</b>                              | <b>APPLICABLE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS &amp; COORDINATION .....</b> | <b>2</b>                            |
| 3.1                                     | ELEMENTS COMMON TO ALL ACTION ALTERNATIVES .....                   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 3.2                                     | DESCRIPTION OF ALTERNATIVES .....                                  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 3.3                                     | ALTERNATIVES CONSIDERED BUT DISMISSED.....                         | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 3.4                                     | COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVE EFFECTS .....                            | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 3.5                                     | ENVIRONMENTALLY PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE..                            | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 3.6                                     | AGENCY-PREFERRED ALTERNATIVE.....                                  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>4.0</b>                              | <b>AFFECTED ENVIRONMENT .....</b>                                  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1                                     | IMPACT TOPICS SELECTED FOR ANALYSIS .....                          | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.1                                   | SOILS .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.2                                   | VEGETATION.....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.3                                   | WATER QUALITY .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.4                                   | FLOODPLAIN .....   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.5                                   | SPECIES OF CONCERN .....   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.6                                   | CULTURAL RESOURCES – ARCHEOLOGY .....                              | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.7                                   | VISITOR USE AND EXPERIENCE.....                                    | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 4.1.8                                   | PARK OPERATIONS .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>5.0</b>                              | <b>ENVIRONMENTAL CONSEQUENCES .....</b>                            | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.0.1                                   | CUMULATIVE IMPACTS .....   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.1                                     | SOILS .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.2                                     | VEGETATION.....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.3                                     | WATER QUALITY .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.4                                     | FLOODPLAIN .....   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.5                                     | SPECIES OF CONCERN .....   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.6                                     | CULTURAL RESOURCES – ARCHEOLOGY .....                              | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.7                                     | VISITOR EXPERIENCE.....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 5.8                                     | PARK OPERATIONS .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>6.0</b>                              | <b>CONSULTATION AND COORDINATION .....</b>                         | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 6.1                                     | PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT.....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| 6.2                                     | AGENCY CONSULTATION .....  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>7.0</b>                              | <b>REFERENCES.....</b>   | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>8.0</b>                              | <b>LIST OF PREPARERS.....</b>                                      | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| <b>APPENDIX.....</b>                    |  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |
| APPENDIX 1: PUBLIC SCOPING LETTER ..... |  | <b>ERROR! BOOKMARK NOT DEFINED.</b> |

## LIST OF TABLES

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Table 1. Summary of the four alternatives for Flying W.....            | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| Table 2. Comparison of effects for the four analyzed alternatives..... | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |

## LIST OF FIGURES

|  |                                     |
|--|-------------------------------------|
| Figure 1. The Flying W bluff scene .....                                       | 1                                   |
| Figure 2. Existing Conditions at Flying W .....                                | 2                                   |
| Figure 3. State and Vicinity Location of Ozark National Scenic Riverways ..... | 4                                   |
| Figure 4. Flying W Location within Ozark National Scenic Riverways .....       | 5                                   |
| Figure 5. Existing Conditions (Alternative A – No Action).....                 | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| Figure 6. Actions of Alternative B.....  | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| Figure 7. Actions of Alternative C .....                                       | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |
| Figure 8. Actions of Alternative D .....                                       | <b>Error! Bookmark not defined.</b> |

## 1.0 PURPOSE AND NEED



The Flying W site is a high use recreational area that has been used for activities such as swimming, hiking, fishing, picnicking, camping and horse back riding (Figure 1). An increase in public use and a lack of defined roads, trails and parking areas has led to unauthorized off road travel and other unregulated visitor uses leading to a “party” atmosphere. The increasing number of roads and trails is having a tremendous negative impact on the natural and cultural resources of the area. The park is proposing to address the negative environmental impacts at the Flying W site. Each alternative would be in compliance with the 1984 GMP and DCP.

**Figure 1. The Flying W bluff scene**

The purpose of creating Ozark National Scenic Riverways as stated in the park’s enabling legislation is for “...*conserving and interpreting unique scenic and other natural values and objects of historic interest, including preservation of portions of the Current River and Jacks Fork River in Missouri as free-flowing streams, preservation of springs and caves, management of wildlife, and provisions for use and enjoyment of the outdoor recreational resources thereof by the people of the United States...*”

Using this legislation as guidance, the purpose that has been defined for this project is to rehabilitate and protect the natural and cultural resources impacted by the intense visitor use that is not currently being managed. The park’s main objective in rehabilitating the area is to protect resources while providing for a quality recreational experience. The park intends to:

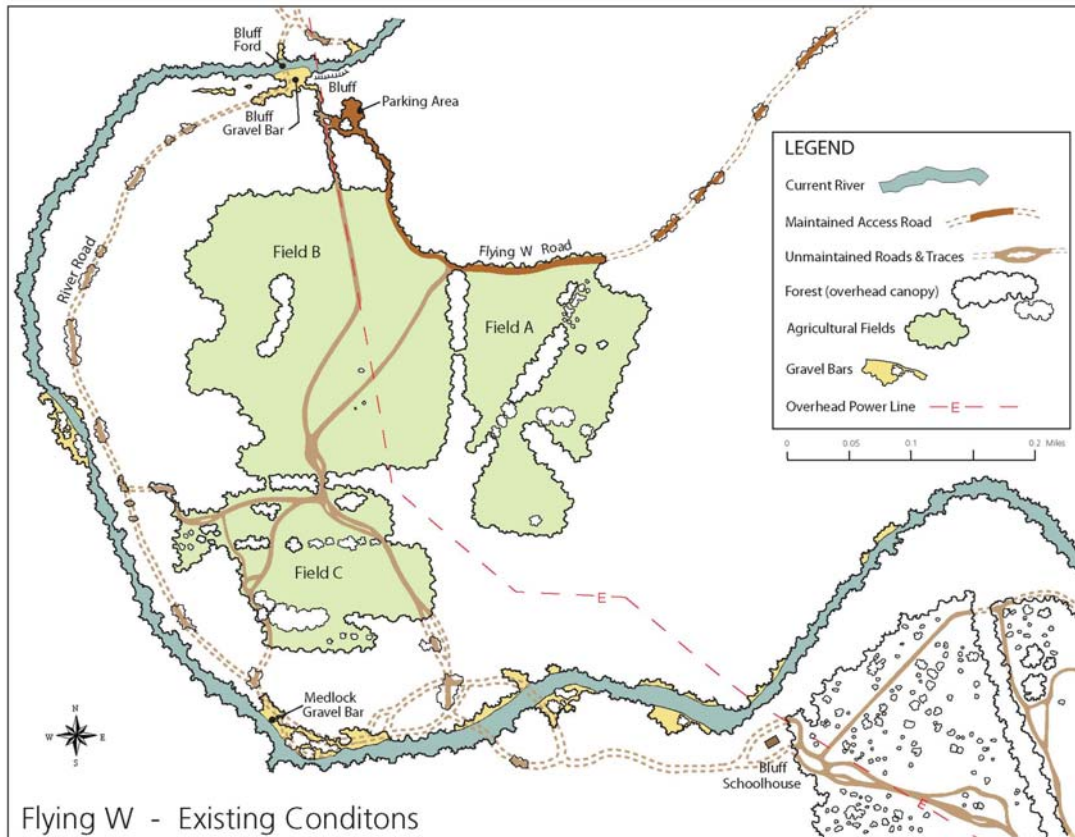
- Implement necessary modifications and management to protect resources and visitor experiences
- Reduce or eliminate resource damage
- Rehabilitate environmentally degraded and user impacted areas
- Redesign river access, river fords, roads, and parking areas

The need the park is addressing is an increase in public use and a lack of defined roads and parking areas leading to unauthorized off-road travel (Figure 2). Soil erosion from an increasing number of trails is having a tremendously negative impact on the natural and cultural resources of the area, resulting in soil ending up in the river and a loss of integrity for qualities on which the park was founded. The unmanaged appearance of the area does not show a National Park Service presence and contributes to unacceptable behaviors by large crowds of visitors thereby degrading the National Park Service (NPS) quality experience.



## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FLYING W VICINITY

Figure 2. Existing Conditions at Flying W



### 2.0 APPLICABLE REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS & COORDINATION

This Environmental Assessment (EA) has been prepared to evaluate the impacts of the alternatives described in Section 3.0. The EA is prepared in accordance with the *National Park Service's Director's Order No. 12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision Making*, and its accompanying Handbook, and the provisions of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (NEPA) (PL91-190, 42 USC 4321-4247). Detailed procedures for developing this document comply with the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

Regulatory requirements, which may be applicable to the activities addressed in this EA, include:

- Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act addressing any activities directly or indirectly impacting prehistoric or historic archeological sites, historic structures, or cultural landscapes eligible for or listed in the National Register of Historic Places.
- Section 106 consultation also includes coordination with any Native American Tribes as appropriate.
- Section 404 of the Clean Water Act permitting and state water quality certification through Section 401 of the Act.

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FLYING W VICINITY

---

- Section 7 consultation with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service under the Endangered Species Act.
- Executive Order 11990, Protection of Wetlands
- Executive Order 11988, Floodplain Protection

### Relationship of the Proposed Action to Other Planning Efforts

A variety of NPS, federal, and state plans, policies and actions influence the management of the ONSR and the writing of Environmental Assessments. The most pertinent plans and policies are summarized as follows:

2006 National Park Service (NPS) Management Policies. This volume is the basic policy document of the NPS for managing the National Park System which administers a broad range of programs that serve the conservation and recreation needs of the nation. Adherence by NPS employees to policy is mandatory unless specifically waived or modified by the Secretary of the Interior, the Assistant Secretary for Fish and Wildlife and Parks, or the Director.

Director's Order #12: Conservation Planning, Environmental Impact Analysis, and Decision-Making (DO-12). A supplement to NPS Management Policies, DO-12 contains uniform Servicewide implementing procedures for, and such supplemental material as may be necessary to carry out, NPS responsibilities under NEPA and related statutes. Where other directives and guidelines appear to differ from this Director's Order and Handbook in the areas of impact analysis and other responsibilities under the National Environmental Policy Act, this Director's Order and Handbook take precedence.

1984 General Management Plan (GMP) and Development Concept Plan (DCP). A GMP provides park managers with the direction, goals and objectives for making decisions on park operations. The GMP is the foundation of previous developments in the park and will continue to be used to develop management actions for Flying W. A new GMP is in the beginning phases and is expected to be put into operation within the next 4-6 years. Until that time, any proposals in this EA must be consistent with the 1984 GMP.

1991 Roads and Trails Study & Environmental Assessment (RTP). Intended to inventory and evaluate the roads and trails system in ONSR, this study identified issues and tasks associated with; (1) roads and traces, (2) horse trails, and (3) foot trails. A range of alternative management approaches was created to address the issues identified within the three areas of investigation. Under the guidance of the RTP, "When resource damage is occurring, the federal government has the responsibility and authority to close traces to vehicular use under the establishing legislation, Public Law 88-492 '...for conservation of outdoor resources in the watersheds of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers.' "

### 1989 River Use Management Plan

Due to dramatic increase in the number of canoes within the ONSR in the 1970's and 1980's, park managers noticed problems that included resource damage, crowding, increased conflicts between river users, a need to protect water quality, a lack of sanitation facilities, proliferation of litter, and congestion at river accesses and campgrounds. In order to address these issues, the River Use Management Plan (RUMP) separated ONSR into zones and designated the amount of canoe use allowed within each zone on a scale of low, medium and high. The 7.7 mile zone that includes the Flying W area is designated as being in the high use zone on weekends (an average of 41-70 canoes per mile.)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR  
FLYING W VICINITY

---

Figure 3. State and Vicinity Location of Ozark National Scenic Riverways





## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT FOR FLYING W VICINITY

---

**Figure 4. Flying W Location within Ozark National Scenic Riverways**

