



Buffalo National River
402 N. Walnut
Harrison, AR 72601

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Buffalo National River News Release

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The National Park Service invites the public to review and comment on the Buffalo National River Plant Gathering for Traditional Purposes Environmental Assessment

Harrison, Ark. – The National Park Service (NPS) is requesting public comment of the Buffalo National River Plant Gathering for Traditional Purposes Environmental Assessment (EA). The purpose of this assessment is to evaluate the potential impacts of entering into an agreement with the Cherokee Nation to allow plant gathering for traditional purposes on the Buffalo National River. The park and the Cherokee Nation collaboratively prepared the EA, which is available for a 30-day public comment period. At the request of the Cherokee Nation, trusted information has been redacted.

The EA is available on the NPS Planning, Environment & Public Comment (PEPC) website through September 6.

<https://parkplanning.nps.gov/documentsOpenForReview.cfm?parkID=119&projectID=78896>

How to Comment: There are three ways to comment during the public review period from August 2, 2019 through September 6, 2019:

- Online through the PEPC <https://parkplanning.nps.gov/documentsOpenForReview.cfm?parkID=119&projectID=78896>
- By Mail to:

Buffalo National River
Attn. Plant Gathering Plan
402 N. Walnut, Harrison, AR 72601
Letters should be postmarked by September 6, 2019

- By Email to: buff_superintendent@nps.gov

Comments that merely support or oppose a proposal or that merely agree or disagree with NPS policy are not considered substantive. All commenters are encouraged to review the criteria for substantive comments below and respond

accordingly.

Substantive comments are those that:

- Question, with reasonable basis, the accuracy of the information in the NEPA document;
- Question, with reasonable basis, the adequacy of the environmental analysis;
- Present reasonable alternatives other than those presented in the NEPA document; or
- Cause changes or revisions in the proposal. In other words, substantive comments raise, debate, or question a point of fact or analysis.

In August 2016, the National Park Service issued a new rulemaking regarding gathering plants for traditional uses. The rule, *Gathering of Certain Plants or Plant Parts by Federally Recognized Indian Tribes for Traditional Purposes* (36 CFR 2.6), provides guidance for parks to work with tribal partners to enter a formal agreement for the activities. As part of this process, the NPS must evaluate potential impacts under the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969. Plant gathering is otherwise prohibited within national park lands according to federal regulations (36 CFR 2.6).

www.nps.gov

About the National Park Service: More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 419 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities.



Purple Beardtongue (*penstemon cobaea*) growing near Buffalo Point. *NPS Photo*

Casey Johannsen
Park Ranger - Interpretation

