

Salem Open House
Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Public Comment on Preliminary Alternatives*
June 24, 2009

Overview

The public comments provided below were recorded on flip charts during the Salem Open House, held at the Ozark Natural and Cultural Center, on June 24, 2009. A total of 116 people attended (signed in). At this open house the public was invited to provide their comments on the preliminary alternatives for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways General Management Plan. Here is some information to help you understand what is shown on the transcribed flip charts:

- National Park Service employees have typed up this record from the original flipchart pages, and every effort was made to type everything as originally written. We apologize in advance if any mistakes were made in transcribing these notes from the original.
- At the meetings, most flip chart comments were recorded by National Park Service staff. The name or initials of the recorder(s) is usually noted at the top of the first page.
- There were four open house stations, each one labeled for one of the alternatives—No Action Alternative; Alternative A; Alternative B; Alternative C. There were usually two flip charts at each station. (Different labeling and numbering approaches were used by the recorders to distinguish between the two sets of flipchart notes.)
- Each flip chart page was numbered. Next to the number is a letter to identify at which station the comment was recorded (and sometimes which flipchart):
 - N, NA—No Action alternative station
 - A—alternative A station
 - B—alternative B station
 - C—alternative C station
- The recorders sometimes abbreviated words. Some of the common abbreviations are:
 - HP—horsepower
 - NPS—National Park Service
 - BS—Big Spring
 - VB—Van Buren
 - LE—law enforcement
 - JF—Jacks Fork
 - TR—Two Rivers
 - RS— Round Spring

****Note:*** *Handwritten comments that were placed in the comment boxes at the open houses have been recorded into the comment database separately.*

OZARK - SALEM-JUNE 2009

Dale Counts

NA-101

- No changes (just like it is).
- Quit changing everything.
- Quit taking away "locals" rights and catering to the tourist.
- Keep Park Superintendent more than just a few years. (They come up with new rules and regulations then just leave).
- Leave Sinking Creek alone, not just for floaters.
- Keep it like it is, but make no HP limits.
- Keep HP below RS at 40 HP.
- Have seasonal HP from R.S. to AK be 40 HP.
- Leave it just like it is, but enforce laws.
- Establish yearly fee for ATVs in park.
- Keep it like it is, but maintain roads.
- Keep horse trails non-commercialized.

NA-102

- Bring back the road and trails to 1964 status.
- Keep things like they are, but add canoe access at Current River "Presley Center" location.
- Keep passion about the park with staff.
- Park needs to do a trails impact study as well as river use study; "are we good or are we exceeding its capabilities".

- Do long term clean water planning not only in and around park, but how other areas/communities affected with watersheds.
- Abide by original legislation.
- Unrestricted recreation of current accepted activities (canoes, motorboats, hunting, fishing, gigging, horseback riding, ATVs).

NA-103

- ONSR established for recreation and should stay that way.
- More signs along river all across the park (Banks & Wide Fords, Lipps Hole, mileage markers).
- Signs (i.e. _____ miles to _____).
- More bathrooms (i.e., every 3 or 4 miles along rivers).
- More "Leave no trace" education programs.
- Base permit system on demand system (more on Sat/Sun when visitors are here and less through week when no one is around).
- Need more LE & Interp Staff year round vs. Seasonal or STF.
- Need more dumpsters year round.
- Need more trout and expand area to Pulltite (especially during winter).
- Private canoeist and park users should have a user fee.
- Restrooms need more handicap access.
- Money ear-marked for a project should stay with that project.

- Need more maintenance workers.

NA-104

- No Park Service – return land back to original owners (indigenous people).
- They love the land and was better custodians than the Park Service of other gov't agency (i.e., MDC, etc.)
- Wild and Free should be good on paper, but what it means is unmanaged and don't care – i.e., river bank erosion, gravel build up, build up of undesirable trees and plants (thorny locus, multi-flora rose, etc.).
- Remove gravel from river bank, gravel bars and river corridor, this will benefit fish and wildlife.
- Retain present trails which are old logging roads and those which go to old home places.
- Provide more resources for present numbers of recreationists – bathrooms, horse trails, boat access points, assistance and help by NPS staff along the rivers.

NA-105

- Have park rangers and staff be informative and helpful to recreationist – not harassment.
- Remove the river otter. Restock with natural fish.
- Provide more resources. Season long cultural demonstrations, i.e., blacksmithing, woodworking, sorghum molasses making, lye making, native food preparation.
- Nature is to be seen, touched, felt and experienced. People are a part of nature. Current numbers of recreationists don't damage flora & fauna. ONSR was founded to provide people the opportunity to experience nature personally.
- Locals see the ONSR as their background and take care of it well.

- Locals take trash out of ONSR and don't ask for publicity. They are about the environment as much or more than any other group of extra locals.

NA-106

- Do not limit horse power for johnboats.
- Provide more secure jobs for local people.
- Show what a working farm prior to 1964 was like.
- Do not limit current numbers of canoes.
- Do not limit current numbers of horseback riders. Study data about river pollution was biased and skewed.
- Do not limit where camping and picnicking can occur.
- Do not limit swimming and bluff jumping.
- By having NPS personnel visible on the rivers many of the problems that are said to happen would not occur because of the respect of people in uniform.
- Open all old roads along the river for access for all campers, hunters, ATVs, 4-wheel drives, horses for use during camping, etc.

NA-107

- NPS must have more enforcement officers on 135 mile of river.
- Enforce the laws you have.

NA-01

- Leave the Park the way it is; no changes.
- Smaller HP throws a bigger wake than larger HP.
- All horse trails from Akers Ferry North, to be retained at no cost. Horsemen will maintain them like they have for last 50 years.

- More pit toilets at Flying W, Walter Lipps, etc. (congregation).
- Leave it the way it is currently managed.
- Remove alcohol from river.

NA-02

- No wilderness areas.
- More Rangers in boats being seen.
- Enforce the laws you got – No more regulations!
- More wilderness areas.
- More walking trails.
- Leave the 40 HP alone!

Ozark – June 2009
Alt A – Salem

A-1

- I would like to see ATV use but have it licensed and regulated.
- Why does the Park LE go to the extreme i.e. as in moving leaves to find worms.
- Horses cause more damage than ATVs
- Don't lower the horsepower to less than 40 hp below Round Spring.
- How will these plans affect Current River State Park or will they.

A-3

- Park upper management needs to be required to stay in their job long enough to see the results of what policy change does.
- I would like to see the park managed to be more family friendly on the river.
- I am against closing roads.
- Maintain the grounds in the developed areas so people can get to the rivers edge without going through tall grass or weeds & brush.
- Open more roads and a few more river crossings.

A-2

- What does the "National River Law" state regarding who owns the river...i.e. the high water mark.
- Against any kind of hp limit
- Cure many problems on Current River by raising the HP limit
 - a) smaller engine requires more boats to haul same # of people.

b) 4-stroke motors more environmentally friendly

- It seems like with each planning effort the St Louis "type" visitor gains more and the local people lose more.
- Seems like the local folks have to cater to outside interests (people & government)
- Seems as if we see fewer officers than we used to see.
- If you make rules, enforce them. Provide signage to speak to the rules.

A-4

- Seems there needs to be more signage to inform visitors of rules.
- Supports the notion of closing roads & trails that have been developed. (NPS has a reason for not developing)
- NPS needs to fund adequately to be able to enforce their policies and regulations.
- I don't want multi-thousand horse parties on land that cannot sustain those numbers.
- In the smaller communities the local people use the river for recreation and enjoyment for little cost. They respect it.
- Any changes would negatively impact several counties – revenue – Carter, Reynolds, Dent, Shannon
- "No Restriction" is a good Restriction.
- While outside visitation helps the local economy – outside visitors often show little respect for our river.

A-6

- Do not mess with nature
- Husband suggests work with her to preserve existing riverbanks, fields, etc.
- The gravel clogs up areas – allows sycamores, willows to take over & channels the river toward river bottom fields, allowing them to wash away.
- Cannot underestimate how important trails are for hunting, fishing, showing people how life used to be and where it used to be.
- Trails provide for emergency access, limited mobility and management needs.
- Not able to get to Blue Spring without walking long distance – Hard to do for some and impossible for others.
- Enforcement needed to ensure Horsepower requirements are not avoided by disguising their equipment. i.e. 200 hp covered by a 40 hp sticker.

A-8

- Ensure campgrounds are developed and built with proper guidelines and designs. i.e. waste management.
- The restrooms need to be more handicap friendly..i.e. Two Rivers
- Improve signage along the river to let those who don't know the river.
- Need more restrooms on Upper Current
- No Wilderness
- Remember original enabling legislation.

- What about more primitive sections to float
- Big Spring wilderness has been enjoyed as wild land long before the NPS – Lets keep it that way.
- Support “A’s” motorboat zones.

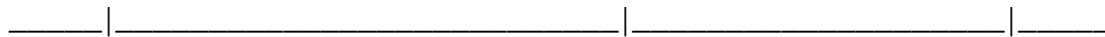
A-10

- NPS has enough regulations and rules but not enough resources to enforce them.
- Can not enjoy a family outing with a 25 hp motor – restricting
- Many river bottom farm areas and fields have disappeared or grown-up. Habitat is disappeared.
- Need mile markers on the river

3 miles to Akers

2 miles to Akers

Akers



- Do away with permits-overcrowding takes care of itself.
- If you don't like the crowds, pick a better day or a better season.
- Add more automated visitor info in Salem.
- Need more interpretation/education.

SALEM – 06/24/09

Dena Matteson – Bill O'Donnell

B1-1

- Throw out alternatives A, B and C and leave "No Action" alternative for continued management.
- I would like to see "No Action" alternative, but would also like that to incorporate the "No HP Limit" that used to be in place and let boaters use common sense while operating. Also ensure there are enough Park Rangers on the river to monitor behavior.

B1-2

- Law enforcement should use common sense while enforcing regulations.
- While boaters are operating jet boats they are often helping floaters who are in trouble and collecting trash from river.
- We would like campgrounds that have been closed to be opened back up. Also, re-open accesses that have been closed.

B1-3

- I would like to see funding go towards regulations such as enforcing already existing laws rather than learning centers.
- NPS needs to allow removal of gravel because river is filling in with gravel. Water that used to be 15 ft. deep is only 5 ft. deep now due to accumulation of gravel.
- NPS shouldn't allow removal of gravel that destroys ecosystem.

B1-4

- NPS should hire more locals for jobs other than just seasonal jobs.
- Accumulation of gravel is causing damage to the ecosystem.
- I'd like to see small backcountry campsites, maybe with fire ring, pit toilet, etc., to accommodate 2 tents.
- I don't like any of the alternatives – Leave it alone!

- I want the gov't to go back to the enabling legislation.
- You're doing a fine job.

B1-5

- Would like a backcountry permit system like at Boundary Waters to control crowding. I think it helps preserve area; maintains it as picturesque without damaging it.
- Wants a "No wake zone" around tubers. They go too fast and it's dangerous.
- Private (non-rental) canoes should pay a user fee.
- NPS should maintain the bottomland fields and old farms rather than letting them grow up in brush and timber.
- You need mile markers along the river to help canoers know where they are.

B1-6

- Protect the public values in the easement. Keep the scenic protection intact.
- Protect Big Spring Wilderness. Work with Mark Twain NF on their adjoining trail.
- Add more hiking trails throughout the Park.
- Lets put the Current River trail down the river valley.
- ATVs and UTVs should be allowed on gravel bars. We need more ATV & UTV trails in the park.
- Light pollution – keep it in mind when developing areas.

SALEM – ALT B – 06/24/09
Bill O'Connell – Elisa Kunz

B2-1

- Do not develop trails too good for bicycles/mtn. bikes to use them.
- From Round Spring South, 25 HP does not make sense. Boats cause a bigger wake with lower speeds. From Round Spring North it makes some sense because the river narrows.
- Establish designated horse trails in Upper Current.
- Welch Spring – need some access to hospital ruins without going thru Spring Branch.

B2-2

- Like fishing and camping; want it to be for family use, like taking grandkids for swimming.
- Would like to keep horseback riding as is, with places to cross the river.
- Would like to see less horses on the river and more regulation of illegal trails. Does not mind horses, but in smaller/reasonable numbers for the ecological resources.

B2-3

- Leave things the way they are.
- Designated horse trails should be created and maintained in the Upper Current.
- Like the way things are now. Leave the roads open. Like to camp without people around.
- Is there a way to limit the number of horses in the park/near the river? Does not want to impact tourism.

B2-4

- Traditional horse use okay. Need a better way to handle commercial use.

OZARK – SALEM – ALT C

C-1

- Leave horse trails as is.
- Why change it? The HP was already lowered once, why do it again (Cedargrove, Round Spring. . .).
- Do not want HP limits reduced below R.S. because I have 40 HP boat and I have a cabin between R.S. and T.R. A smaller boat is not powerful enough to carry 3 to 4 people in shallow water. Could not recreate with my family to get up and down the river. If have to reduce HP, at least make the HP limits be seasonal use.

C-2

- No action on HP and no action on anything. No action keeps the regulations where the local people can use and enjoy the river. A small motor, 25 HP will throw a larger wake than an HP of 40.
- The Park Service needs to start dredging the river, to remove gravel. If they don't, before long there may not be a river in places.
- I would like to see a dedicated hiking trail in the upper Current above R.S. Trails that have shared use are often difficult for hiking. The hikers often get kicked off.

C-3

- Can we still use the existing roads and river crossings? (Upper Current-Cedargrove to Akers). A lot of times it is the only access to certain areas with a boat to hunt, etc. One ranger may say the road is useable one day, then another may restrict use.
- I would like to see Akers Ferry campground reopened for camping and picnicking.
- Have a non-motorized section above R.S. on river. I love the idea of not having to compete with boaters.

C-4

- Continue to promote the family friendly use/environment on the river. The Ozarks are much more fun than the Meremac.
- Would like to see funding put for staff to regulate existing rules and regulations.

- The park needs an impact study done for people, horses, boaters, canoes, etc. Use of the river period.
- I would like to see a family friendly park. I like to spend time with my family in the park. I love to swim, float, fish, etc.

C-5

- I would like to see the drinking, partying regulations enforced more. There has been an improvement and we appreciate that.
- I would like the motorboat limits stay the same. Makes it easier to use boat. The boat w/large motor is safer to carry the grand kids in.
- Locals pick up trash on river. They help canoers, floaters. Pick up their trash and save their lives at times.
- Gasoline motors on boats should not be allowed except for emergency vehicles.

C-6

- The NPS needs to utilize social networking to target a more rounded audience, i.e., Facebook, Twitter, linked-in, etc. Possibly needs a media specialist to better understand and target unreached groups for public forum. It is frustrating to want to find out important information and cannot. Missing certain demographic groups. I do not own a TV or listen to radio so it is difficult to receive information. I listen to my iPod, listen to podcast and am on the internet. Community radio is big with my age group, etc.

C-7

- Make sure that whatever plan is decided upon can be funded in the coming years.
- UTVs should be allowed on all NPS roads so (65 & older) they have access to the park.
- There is too much motorized access to the river. A lot of people look for more primitive stretches of the river without motorized access.
- Don't use development to solve use problems. Does not always achieve what is set out to achieve.

C-8

- ATVs and UTVs should be allowed on gravel bars. We need more ATVs and UTV trails in park.

C1-1

- Leave HP as is – measure at pump.
- Quit asking anywhere else how to manage down here - need it left just like it is.
- Park Service does an OK job – but don't want it over regulated so can't do what we have been.
- Leave as is – go back to old HP regs (i.e., no limits) – common sense will take care of upper river sections.
- Need restrooms along the river where there is drive-in access – have signs upriver informing boaters that restroom ahead.

C1-2

- Restrooms needed at Jerktail and Williams.
- Alt C concerns me because it focuses on immediate desires. It doesn't take into account long-term use planning.
- The river isn't just for recreation. I'm worried about the ecology and environmental conditions of the river.
- I worry about the watershed pollution from overuse by recreation like horses or human miss-use.

C1-3

- Not as many people at 197's-80's. We had canoeing/camping then – change is 10% economy – most due to miss-handling by law enforcement – Leave 'em alone, let them enjoy themselves.
- Traditional use of camping at Sinking Cr. Ancestors camped there, constantly closing campgrounds. Open them back up. People want to be at river.
- Want to see HP stay the same all throughout park.

- Want to see it (river in particular) managed for family use – have ids & grandkids.
- Want drinking reduced/eliminated.
- Want less canoes – too crowded to run boat from Two Rivers to Round Spring.

C1-4

- Changed boating habits to avoid crowding by canoes on weekends in RS – 2 River Section.
- 4th generation enjoyment of Current River – teaching grand children to swim & learned in johnboat, from grandfather, without motor. See eagles, wild horses, keep these opportunities.
- 4-wheel drive pick-ups need to be more respectful to canoeists when crossing river. They speed up in the river hard splashing water on canoeists, like if you lift a jet motor.
- Bathrooms all over need to be more handicap-accessible. Should be able to drive up to them, e.g., like at Two Rivers.

C1-5

- More bathrooms needed on Upper Current between Baptist & Akers Ferry. The only one row is at Cedargrove & you have to walk up and out to get there. There are places you could put a vault toilet out of the flood plan.
- NPS plan should go back & review enabling legislation & accompanying Senate/Congressional committee report for guidance on managing this National Park as it was intended.
- Close all the Fords.
- Improve the campground – campsites are right on top of each other. The snoring in the next site keeps you awake.

C1-6

- Make accesses for fishing – provide a nice parking area, then no vehicles beyond this point. Vehicles don't need to be down on the river's edge.

- Designate horse trails, staging sites and then close all the others. Don't want horse use near campgrounds. No one wants to smell the manure. Separate these uses – horse & camping.
- Finish the Dee Murray camping area, by making parking, closing gravel bar to driving.
- Re-build the dam at Welch Spring – it was beautiful – restricted access to spring.
- All of the alternatives are too vague; if I'm gonna vote I want to know what I'm voting on. Need to be more spelled out. (e.g., what does "more development" mean – some? Everywhere? Need details).

C1-7

- More and more people are asking for hiking – make more hike up/canoe down loops. People enjoy the Pulltite & Devils Well trails. Add a trail to Schafer Spring.
- More interpretation in the Upper Current. We're more than just Round Spring Cave.
- Make campsite along Schafer branch, then trail past Susie Nichols to Schafer Lakes picnic area.
- Make a horse or hiking trail along old mail route that Susie Nichols rode.