



# *Visitors Guide*

SPRING 2024

*Newton County*  
ARKANSAS

# Visitors Guide

Newton County  
ARKANSAS

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**ALUM COVE WATERFALL**  
This waterfall, located off the Alum Cove National Recreation Trail, was captured by FS employee Ellen McWhirter last spring.

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NEWTON COUNTY:

# Land of Waterfalls

There's just something about waterfalls. They look different, they sound different and they even smell and feel different. And they are always changing. Most of the waterfalls in this part of the state are wet weather driven. Spring is the time when they are most active. Some of the waterfall in Newton County are easy to find. They can be located along major highways, such as Marble Falls on state Highway 7 at the community of Marble Falls. Others are hard to get to such as Hemmed In Hollow, the tallest falls between the Rockies and Appalachians, located near the Buffalo National River. It is accessible by either the trail or by the river. While the Hemmed-in Hollow trek is strenuous there are some others that are easier access: Alum Cove Waterfall and Triple Falls.



TRIPLE FALLS IN PONCA

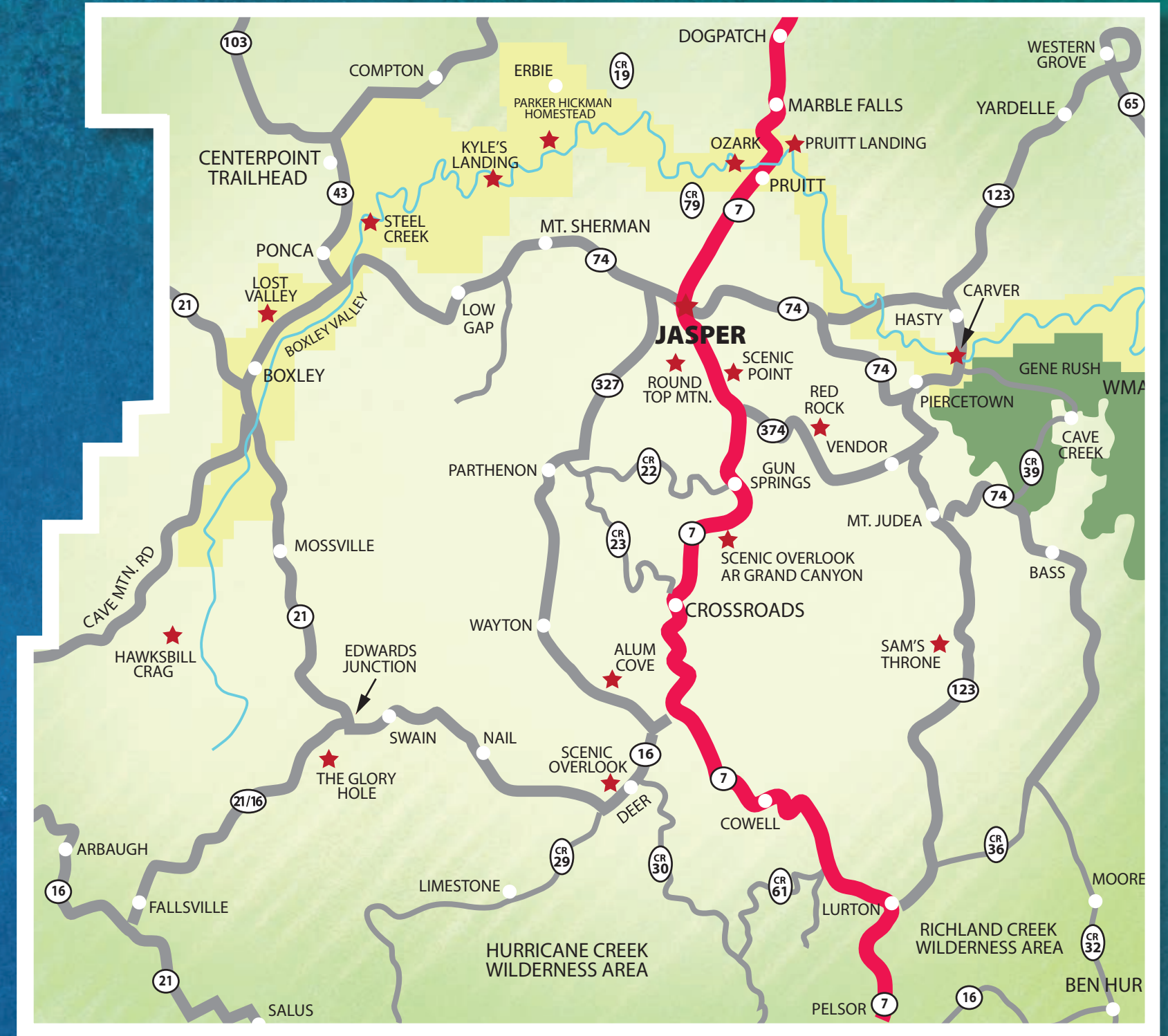
**TRIPLE FALLS IN PONCA**  
 With ample rainfall, the normally and officially named "Twin Falls,"s at Camp Orr turns into Triple Falls. To get here, take state state Highway 74 West from Jasper and turn on to Camp Orr and Kyle's Landing road at County Road 2300. Proceed 1 mile then turn right on County Road 2306, continue down this very steep road for 1.8 miles and cross a small slab. Parking is to the right. Signage points you in the direction of the falls. The hike is only 0.3 mile each way. Although the falls are open to the general public, Camp Orr is an operational Boy Scout reservation and is closed to the public past the trailhead.



EDEN FALLS AT LOST VALLEY

NPS PHOTO

**EDEN FALLS AT LOST VALLEY**  
 This is Eden Falls. When humans see a waterfall, we are often in awe of their beauty and grace. But have you ever thought of how improbable it is for nature to form a steep cliff necessary for a waterfall? Waterfalls normally form when there is a change in rock type or a tectonic stress in the area. Geologists often refer to waterfalls as "knickpoints". They are nature's way of evening out slopes in rivers. Over time water breaks down the rocks at the lip of the waterfall, causing the waterfall to recede upstream, decreasing the slope. Over millions of years the waterfall will become less steep until the slope is even throughout the entire river. Next time you see a waterfall, think about what may have caused it to be there! (pp)



# Newton County ARKANSAS

# Arkansas Wildlife

## Bear den surveys reflect population health

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

Arkansas's black bear reproduction, is monitored by visiting their dens each spring.

Last year, Myron Means, the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission's large carnivore program coordinator worked with biologists and technicians from the AGFC's Wildlife Management and Research divisions during February and March to visit female bears at their dens and evaluate their condition and the condition of their cubs to identify trends that may impact the entire population.

"We try to maintain about 60 female bears with radio collars throughout the state to help us with our monitoring work," Means said. "Of those, about half will be with yearlings and the other half will have cubs with them in their dens."

Means explains that female bears typically take two years to have and raise their young. During the first winter, the sows will have their cubs with them and allow them to nurse. Those cubs will stay with the mother throughout the year and through the next winter "learning to be bears." Upon emerging from their second denning cycle, the yearlings will be pushed from the mother's home.

"She'll actually let her female yearlings stay in a part of her home range, but she'll push the males out," Means said. "That does two things: it ensures that her female cubs have a good place that provides adequate food and resources, and it prevents issues that can arise from inbreeding. It's one of those ways Mother Nature works that's just really interesting."

Typically, a female black bear is sexually mature at 3-5 years old. Arkansas bears tend to begin reproducing at age 3 or 4. They can have cubs until they are around 20 years old. That gives them 16 years of opportunity to reproduce.

"But with an every-other-year cycle, we're really only looking at raising young eight times at most," Means said. "With the average litter size being two cubs, a female bear will produce about 16 cubs if she survives throughout a bear's typical natural lifespan."

This fascinating two-year reproductive cycle also means biologists must keep constant tabs



**BEAR VISITS**  
The AGFC visits dozens of female bears during late winter to measure cub production and survival.

AGFC PHOTO

on the population, as it is much slower than other game species in Arkansas.

"We have much fewer bears than deer and other game, and they reproduce much more slowly, so we really want to identify trends as soon as possible," Means said. "That means we really need to keep a close eye on reproduction each year. If you overharvest bears, it can take a long time to recover. We have different regulations and season frameworks that can help prevent that if we have this annual data."

The process of bear den monitoring actually begins in summer when biologists and technicians across Arkansas's bear range set and monitor snare traps to catch bears they are seeing on game cameras and during their work on wildlife management areas. They sedate the bears, take their measurements and outfit them with radio collars. Each collar has a signal emitter that biologists can later use to locate the bear using special equipment. It can take days of driving and hiking to discover exactly where a female bear has decided to make her den for the winter.

"Our south Arkansas bears were given GPS collars, which give locations a bit easier," Means said. "Those are much more expensive, so the majority of our collared bears still use the radio-signal version for now."

Biologists look for the dens in late winter and have a list of bears that should be with cubs to visit. They will quietly approach the mother bear and again sedate her using a special mix of chemicals.

"We're actually working with researchers from Texas testing a new drug for the trips," Means said. "The previous drugs we used were highly monitored by regulatory agencies, and this one should be safer for the bears. It has the ability to be reversed. This lets the mother bear get back to the business of raising her cub as soon as we're gone."

Despite popular belief, Means says bears aren't true hibernators. Many animals like groundhogs can lower their body processes – for example, pulse rates and breathing rates – to the point they are catatonic. It can take several hours for a hibernating animal to rouse from this state. This is not the case with a mother bear.

"She'll lower her heart rate and breathing rate as well as other bodily functions during the winter denning cycle, but not to that catatonic state," Means said. "If she sees, hears or smells an intruder, she can instantly respond. Just about every bear we approach in our research will be awake when we arrive to sedate her."

In 2023, the bears in the Ozarks and Ouachitas showed reproductive rates at roughly 45 percent of what they typically record. While this might be cause for concern, Means says the bear population was still very healthy and should be able to withstand one poor year of reproduction.

"We're seeing sows without cubs and sows with only one cub," Means said. "The female bears and the cubs produced are in good condition, there are just less cubs this year. That's normally an indication of poor habitat quality during the first few months of the bear's reproductive cycle."

Means says that although breeding takes place in spring, the bear's body can reject the pregnancy if conditions are not good.

"Last year's (2022) drought hit the berry crop hard in the northern half of the state, reducing the amount of wild blackberries and wild cherries these female bears would normally have been eating. But the acorn crop was good, so those bears who did have cubs recovered quickly and are showing very good health. The drought conditions weren't as bad in the southern half of the state, and we had a really good berry crop in the Gulf Coastal Plain. Those bears continue to show good reproduction."

# The story of Arkansas Elk

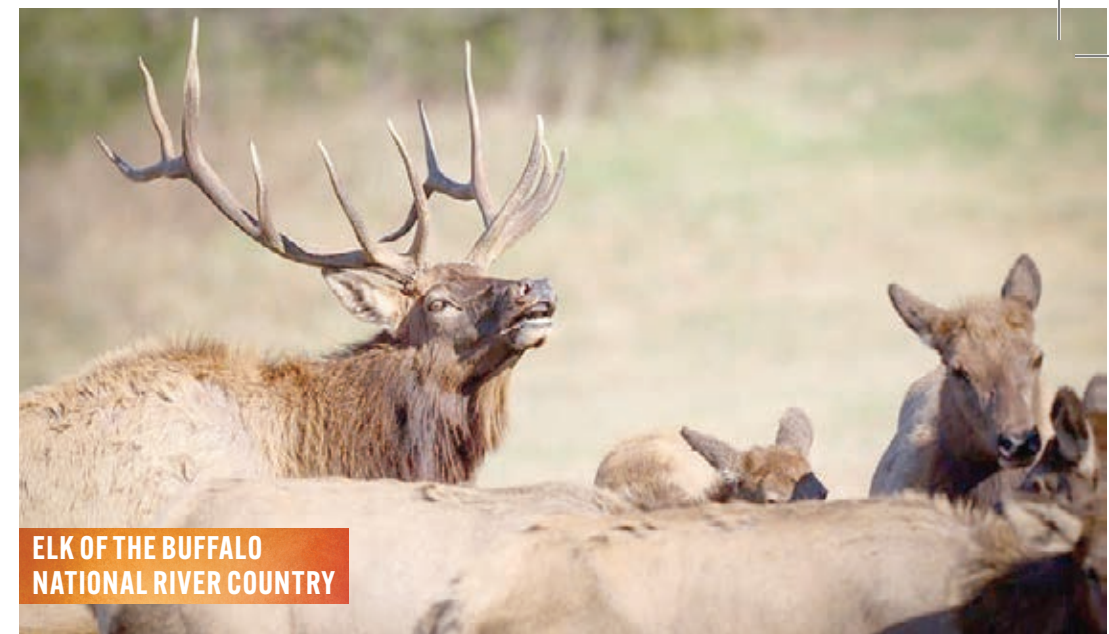
From the Encyclopedia of Arkansas

Among the many success stories involving wildlife in Arkansas, a high-profile example is the elk of the Buffalo National River country. Wiped out in pioneer and early settlement days, the elk were brought back beginning in 1981, and, since then, the big animals have become well enough established that they can be hunted on a limited basis. The elk have also become a reliable tourist attraction in Newton County and the surrounding area.

Elk were native to Arkansas but were wiped out by changing habitat, mostly the clearing of land. The variety in the area in the early days was the eastern subspecies of elk, which is extinct. By the time Arkansas became a state in 1836, elk were dwindling, and they were gone entirely by the 1840s. The name "elk" persisted in several locations, however. Elkhorn Tavern was used in the Battle of Pea Ridge in northwest Arkansas in the Civil War. Elkhorn Bank is a venerable institution in Arkadelphia (Clark County).

Two attempts at bringing elk back to Arkansas were made in the early and mid-twentieth century. One was a commercial venture near Eureka Springs (Carroll County). The second was conducted by the U.S. Forest Service in the Ozark National Forest north of Ozark (Franklin County). Neither succeeded.

In 1979, Governor Bill Clinton named Hilary Jones to the Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AGFC), Clinton's first AGFC appointment. Jones lived at Pruitt (Newton County), close to the Buffalo River. He and a handful of friends, fellow elk hunters and appreciators, thought the public lands of the Buffalo River would make suitable habitat for elk and began work on reintroducing them in 1981. After an agreement was made for a swap with the state of Colorado—elk in exchange for Arkansas channel catfish—Jones and friends, cattle raisers, and truckers convoyed stock trailer rigs to Colorado and brought the first elk back to the Buffalo River. These were a Rocky Mountain subspecies of elk. More convoys followed, with a few surplus elk from Nebraska's Sand Hills country joining those from Colorado.



ELK OF THE BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER COUNTRY

The elk did well, and concerns faded about the ability of the high country elk of the Rocky Mountain variety to adapt to hot and humid Arkansas. In 1982, the first elk calf was born in Arkansas, and the herd has slowly grown to an estimated 450 to 500 animals as of 2009.

The restoration that began in 1981 was an AGFC project, but the agency soon included the National Park Service, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and local landowners. They partnered on extensive habitat work, a prime factor in the program's success. Equally significant has been the protective attitude of residents in the Buffalo River country toward

the elk, as the herd became a new Arkansas tourist attraction. The AGFC operates two facilities in Newton County connected to the elk—the Ponca Elk Education Center and the Hilary Jones Wildlife Museum at Jasper. The Buffalo River Elk Festival is an annual late June event around Jasper's courthouse square.

Limited hunting of Arkansas elk began in 1998 with twenty permits issued. The number of permits was increased to twenty-six in 2008, with three of them designated for hunters fifteen and younger. Several thousand Arkansas hunters apply for the free permits each year.

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AGFC PHOTO

**GRAY FOX**  
Slightly smaller than red foxes, gray foxes are one of The Natural State's most secretive furbearers.

## Natural State fox at home in gray areas of habitat

By Randy Zellers  
Assistant Chief of Communications

Mention seeing a fox in the woods of Arkansas and most people will immediately think of a red animal with a white-tipped tail they've seen in depictions of European fox hunts or from animated films. The red fox is definitely at home in The Natural State, but another native fox species calls Arkansas home, and it may be even craftier than its ginger canid cousin.

Gray foxes, standing slightly smaller than red foxes, sport a grayish coat with a rusty

red hue along the sides of their necks and the underside of their tails. Their belly is cream-colored, as are their cheeks and throat. Their bushy gray/red tail ends in a black tip. Adult gray foxes typically reach about 42 inches long and weigh around 11 pounds.

Slightly smaller than red foxes, gray foxes are one of The Natural State's most secretive furbearers. Unlike red foxes that try to outrun pursuers or hide in snags and thickets on the ground, gray foxes are adept climbers. In fact, gray foxes are the only North American members of the canine family that readily climb trees. This enables them to have temporary dens in tree hollows above ground level, avoid larger predators like coyotes, and pursue rats and mice that scamper up tree trunks.

Although foxes are omnivores that will eat berries and other available vegetation, rabbits and rodents make up a large portion of a gray fox's diet.



PHOTO BY CASEY BREWSTER- UNIVERSITY OF ARKANSAS

### COLLARED LIZARDS

Colorful collared lizards are making a comeback in the glades of Arkansas after many years of habitat restoration on the Ozark National Forest. They can once again be spotted running across rocky outcrops on their hind legs. Re-population of this keystone species is affecting the ecosystem in colorful ways. It's a great reason to grab your camera and hike through the glades.

vibrant blue-green body and contrasting black and white "collar." It is also one of the largest lizards in the Ozark region and can run on its hind legs, which is quite interesting to watch.

The Eastern collared lizard was once prevalent across the Ozarks 40-50 years ago. Now, it's a rare treat to see these iconic lizards because the population has dwindled. In Arkansas they are considered a species of greatest conservation need.

"It's listed so high because somewhere between 70-80% of our populations have disappeared in the past 40-50 years," said Casey Brewster, a research affiliate with the University of Arkansas. Brewster has been studying this lizard for several years, even for his Masters of Science and Ph.D. degrees.

"The reason for that really goes back to a lack of fire – prescribed fires or burns and even some wildfires to a certain extent," said Brewster.

### Fewer fires meant fewer lizards

A lack of fire on this landscape caused the habitat to go through successional changes, from rocky with little soil, to mosses and lower plants, to prairie, to savannah, and finally woodland.

"If you don't have fire, then everything goes toward that late succession mature forest," said Brewster. "The biggest thing we can do in Arkansas and Missouri is prescribed fire to restore the habitat where the Eastern collared lizard can thrive."

"It needs to be thinned and then burned every two to three years," said Brewster. "It will typically take at least three or four burns before you get the habitat back to a decent level. When the habitat is restored, the next part of my project is to release lizards to that site so they can recolonize it."

## Collars make a comeback

By TRACY FARLEY  
Office of Communication

What is green and gold, sports a collar, has four legs but runs on two? It's not a riddle. Some have called it a "mountain boomer," but it is actually an eastern collared lizard.

Thanks to intentional forest management, they are becoming a more common sight dotting rocky outcrops in the Ozark Mountains of Arkansas and Missouri, most especially on the Sylamore Ranger District of the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests in northern Arkansas.

### Forest fashion icon

The eastern collared lizard (*Crotaphytus collaris*) is a unique and striking species, with its

Kirsten Bartlow, AGFC Watchable Wildlife Program coordinator, said this rodent-heavy diet should be welcome news to people who live in rural areas and even cities as gray foxes help control mouse and rat populations in some of the most unlikely areas.

"We've seen a lot of gray foxes in trail camera photos from a research project stretching right through the heart of downtown Little Rock," Bartlow said. "Quite a few have mice, rats or other small rodents in their mouths. They've adapted quite well to urban development."

Kim Sparks, research project analyst in the AGFC's Research Division, says gray foxes have been found throughout the Central Arkansas Urban Wildlife Project, a collaboration between the AGFC, Hendrix College and the Urban Wildlife Information Network.

"We placed 30 cameras in a variety of locations along an urban-to-rural gradient within 2 kilometers of the Arkansas River in central Arkansas," Sparks said. "We collect photos and upload them to a large database organized by the network."

While it began as a project in around 20 U.S. cities, UWIN has expanded to include 49 official partners on an international level.

"More locations than that are contributing, but haven't signed in as official partners yet," Sparks said. "We have images coming from Germany, France, and even Madagascar signed up a few weeks ago to contribute to the project."

Data from the project can be used to guide future access projects to build wildlife-viewing areas within urban and suburban areas locally, but it has much more potential for researchers.

"Arkansas's contribution to the project is being included in a manuscript looking at a multicity study on the impacts of gentrification on wildlife communities," Sparks said. "It's interesting to see just how many ways this information can be shared to benefit wildlife and help connect us with it. Many people would be surprised by the amount of foxes and bobcats we see in some of the semirural spots pretty close to urban areas."

Foxes have an affinity for a scent lure used in the Central Arkansas Urban Wildlife Project. In the case of gray foxes, Sparks said this species has a real affinity for a particular lure disk placed at a few of the camera locations.

"[The lure] smells horrible, but they love it," Sparks said. "We get lots of images of them inspecting it and even rolling around on it."

Most images found of gray foxes in the project are taken in the trail camera's infrared setting, as the species is primarily nocturnal. Breeding season for foxes typically runs from January through March, with most litters of kits being born May through June. Unlike many mammals, male gray foxes tend to help with parenting duties, bringing food to the dened-up female and assisting in teaching their young (called pups or kits) to hunt.

Foxes are the only North American canid that readily climbs trees to avoid danger or seek prey.

# Arkansas Wildlife



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### Restoring historic habitat

Forest Service Zone Wildlife biologist Idun Guenther on the Sylamore and St. Francis Ranger Districts agreed. She explained that historical records indicate that there were as many as two-million acres of naturally open grassland habitat in Arkansas in the early 1800s. These open habitats have been generically referred to as "prairies" in the past. Many were true tallgrass prairies, but others are contemporarily classified as glades or barrens.

Glade restoration efforts on the district began around 2013.

"We are restoring glades on the Sylamore District where they historically existed to help the collared lizard. Glades are present across the district – among the many different types of glades, ours include limestone and sandstone glades," said Guenther.

"The process to restore the glades includes removing cedar trees that have encroached into the glades for many decades due to fire suppression. Once the trees are cut, we introduce prescribed fire on a rotational basis depending upon the site conditions. Follow-up mechanical or invasive plant treatments are often required as well."

### Partners make it happen

A large group of people standing on top of a solid rock mountain top.

The Nature Conservancy participated with forest personnel in providing an educational tour of the glade restoration project to Representative French Hill (R-2-AR) and his staff.

Guenther and other Forest Service employees are working in collaboration with The Nature Conservancy, Arkansas Game and Fish Commission and universities (such as University of Arkansas). The Nature Conservancy and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission have forest-wide agreements or grants that provide personnel and funding to assist with restoration efforts, including contract development for cedar removal, prescribed fire operations, outreach, field days and long-term effects monitoring. Research projects on different glade species are conducted by students at universities.

### Making more lizards

"Once we have a glade restored, we have to plan two to three years ahead on where am I going to get those stock animals from. We don't have a giant population in the state," said Brewster.

"The Little Rock Zoo partnered with us three to four years ago wanting to get involved with conservation," said Brewster. "Essentially, they are breeding Collared lizards that came from Arkansas. These are Arkansas Collared lizards – not that they are a different species, but they may be genetically different in small ways than other species."

The Little Rock Zoo's ability to breed and raise young collared lizards gives the reintroduction program a big boost. Partnering with the Little Rock Zoo provides a lot of yearlings that can be introduced back into restored glade ecosystems.

"A glade functioning like it's supposed to is one of the prettiest places to sit and view wildlife and take pictures," said Brewster.

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# Newton County 2024 Eclipse information for guests

Thursday, April 4 to Tuesday, April 9

## ECLIPSE INFORMATION:

- What:** Total solar eclipse
- Where:** Jasper, Arkansas
- Begins:** Monday, April 8, at 12:34 p.m.
- Maximum:** Monday, April 8, at 1:53 p.m.
- Ends:** Monday, April 8, at 3:11 p.m.
- Duration:** 2 hours, 37 minutes
- Totality:** 2 minutes, 9 seconds

## INFORMATION

Tips://www.facebook.com/groups/2024eclipse/newtoncounty/newtoncountyeclipse.com

## ECLIPSE EVENT SPECIFIC SERVICES

- Child reunification — Seventh Day Adventist Church - Jasper
- Traffic relief (if needed ) water/snacks
- Eclipse glasses - various locations

## NUMBERS TO KNOW

- Emergency:** (911, know your location)
- Hospital:** 870-414-4000
- Ambulance Dispatch:** 870-414-4646
- Fire Department:** 870-446-2633
- Sheriff:** 870-446-5124
- Police:** 870-446-2634
- Wrecker:** 870-577-4545, 870-420-3591

## Medical

- Jasper Pharmacy:** 870-446-5515
- Newton County Family Practice:** 870-446-2203

**Boston Mountain RHC Jasper:** 870-446-2225

**Boston Mountain RHC Deer:** 870-428-5391

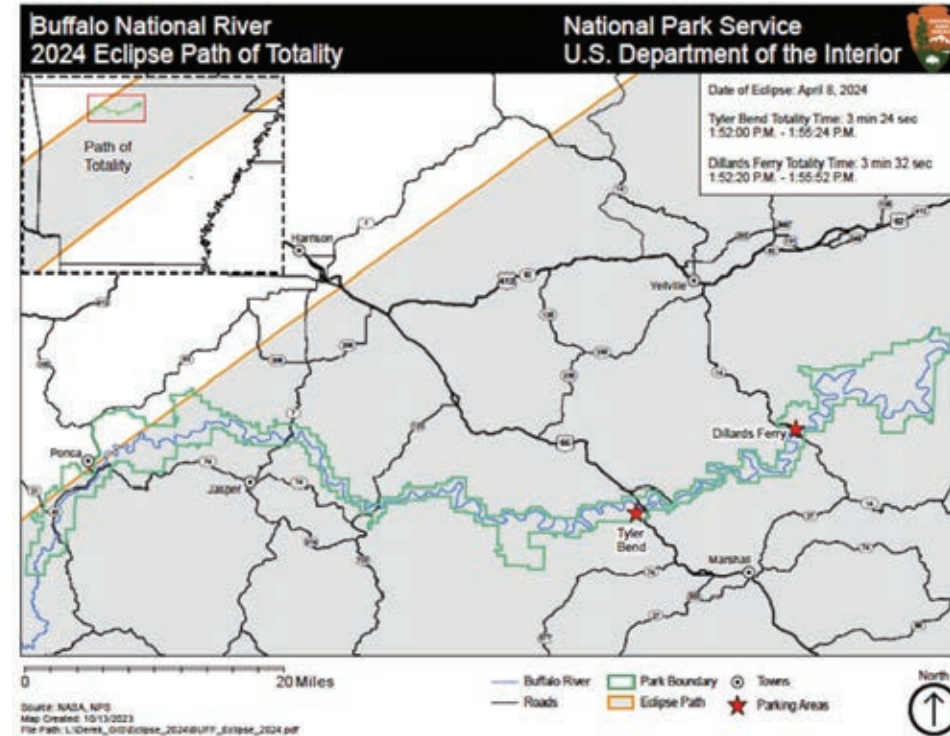
**Newton County Health Unit:** 870-446-2216

## PUBLIC RESTROOMS

- Bradley Park
- Jasper visitor Center
- First Baptist Church, Jasper
- Newton County Fairgrounds
- Portable toilets

## FOOD AND FUEL

- Who Da Thought it (gasoline) state Highway 7 south, Pelsor/Lurton area
- Dollar General stores in Jasper, Western Grove and near the junction of state Highway 7 south and Highway 16
- Cliff House Inn and Restaurant, state Highway 7 south
- Sharon K's Cafe, Jasper
- Road Oak Station (gasoline), Jasper
- Newton County Senior Activity and Wellness Center (lunch only), Jasper
- Jasper Pizza Co., Jasper
- Ozark Cafe, Jasper
- "Red Food Truck," Jasper
- Yeager's Junction Quick Stop (gasoline), Jasper
- Subway, Jasper
- Dollar Tree/Family Dollar, Jasper
- Low Gap Cafe, Jasper



- Harps Food Store (gasoline), Jasper
- Grice's Grocery and Deli (gasoline), Western Grove
- Norton's County Store (gasoline), Piercetown
- Kent General Store (gasoline), Mt. Judea
- Deer Country Store (gasoline), Deer
- Ray's Grocery and Service Station (gasoline), Nail
- Buffalo Outdoor Center (gasoline), Ponca
- Lost Valley Canoe and Lodging (gasoline), Ponca
- JB's Trading Post (gasoline), Compton

## Other:

- Concessions at the fairgrounds, Jasper
- Food trucks at the America Legion, Jasper

## CAMPING/BOONDOCKING/RVS/TENTS

- Boondocking and primitive camping is available at the Newton County Fairgrounds
- Purple Elk Farm
- Black Raspberry Campsites
- Boondocks sites
- Primitive campsites Marble Falls

## MAJOR CHURCHES IN JASPER

- The Church Of Christ** — Sun. Bible Study 10 a.m. • Worship 11 a.m. & 2 p.m. • Wed.

## ENTERTAINMENT/ACTIVITIES

- Fish Fry Friday - Newton county Senior Active and Wellness Center, Jasper
- Block Party Saturday - Paisley Sister - Jasper (children's games, corn hole, food trucks and music)
- Concerts Saturday evening - Bradley Park in Jasper (Whistling Dixie and Bad Mojo presented by Jasper Advertising and Promotions Commission)
- Frito chili pies, chili dogs Monday - Newton County Senior Activity and Wellness Center, Jasper

- Food trucks and vendors - Thursday to Tuesday at the American Legion in Jasper.
- Various concessions and activities - Newton County Fairgrounds in Jasper
- Water, eclipse button pins, portages potty Thursday to Monday - Mt. Judea Area Alliance, Mount Judea Mercantile

Bible Study 6 p.m. • Anthony McCutcheon, Preacher • 446-2978

**First Assembly Of God** — Sat. Prayer 7 p.m. • Sun. School 9:45 a.m. • Worship 10:45 a.m. • Sun. Worship 6 p.m. • Wed., Royal Rangers, Missionettes, Forgiveness Youth Group, Worship 7 p.m. • Brother Steve Holt, Appointed Pastor • 446-2921

**First Baptist** — Sun. School 9:45 a.m. • Worship 11 a.m. & 6 p.m. Wed. 6 p.m. • Jimmy Dale Huskey, Pastor • 446-5442.

**Methodist** — Sun. School 10 a.m. • Worship 11 a.m. • Thursdays after school "The Quarterdeck" for 7th - 12th grades. • Byron Mann, Pastor • 870-446-2089

**Newton Co. Cowboy Church** — Sunday 5 p.m. • Newton Co. Fair Grounds • 870-291-9417

**Troy Walker Grace for Life Ministry** — Sun. Worship 10 a.m. • American Legion Hall, Jasper

**Jasper Christian Church** — Sun. School 9:45-10:45 a.m. • Worship 10:45-11:15 a.m. • For information: 391-1595

**Low Gap Full Gospel Church** — Services: Sunday 10 a.m. and 6 p.m. • Wednesday 7 p.m. • Phone 870-861-5855 • Pastor Kelvin House

**Jasper Seventh Day Adventist Church** — Worship : 9:30 - 11 a.m. • Sabbath School 11 a.m. - 12 p.m. • Pastor Ross Harris • 446-2122

## SAFETY

Don't burn (due to possible delaying response if fire accidentally spreads, watch for burn bans)

## DESIGNATED VIEWING AREAS

- BRADLEY PARK
- FAIRGROUNDS
- NEWTON COUNTY LIBRARY PARKING LOT IN JASPER

## ECLIPSE GLASSES AVAILABLE:

- JASPER HIGH SCHOOL ROBOTICS TEAM MEMBERS
- NEWTON COUNTY LIBRARY
- CHRISTIAN BOOK STORE
- RED OAK STATION
- YEAGER'S JUNCTION QUICK STOP

## OTHER:

- Litter control - Please help keep Newton County beautiful
- Please park in public or designated parking areas only, not on private property unless with owner permission
- Please don't block intersections or the line of sign to intersections, the can cause safety issues.

- Wear special glasses to view eclipse (see Eclipse viewing safety)
- Bring a first aid kit, use sunscreen and insect repellent, wear a hat or visor, stay hydrated
- Bring comfortable folding chairs and clothing
- Have a map and directions in case of bad cell service
- Have cash on hand in case card systems go down

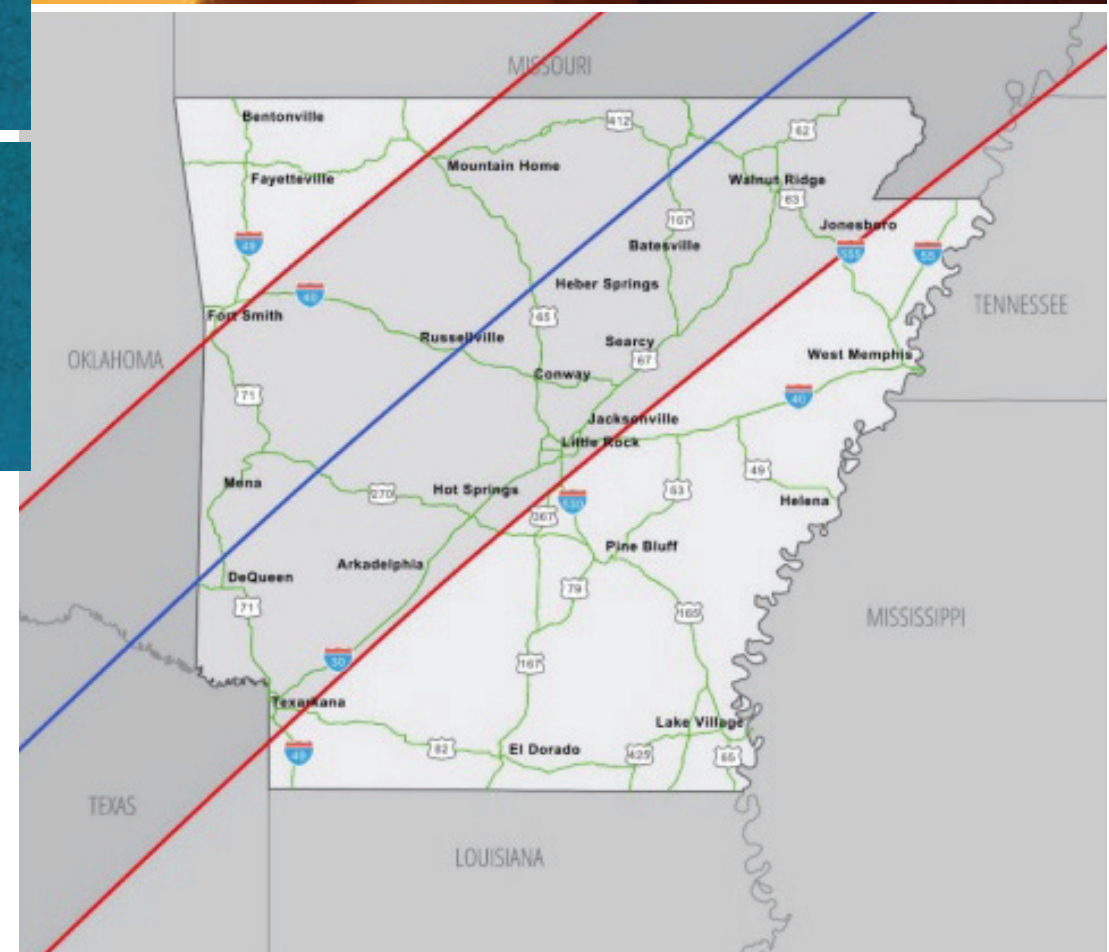
## ECLIPSE VIEWING SAFETY

- Teach children the importance of eye safety during the eclipse event
- It is not safe to look directly at the sun without eye protection.

Proper eye protection does not mean everyday sunglasses. Eclipse glasses are needed to safely view this eclipse.

Do not look at the sun through a camera lens, telescope, binoculars or any other optical device, even with eclipse glasses. Per NASA the concentrated solar rays will burn through the filter and cause eye injury.

Only welding masks with welding shade numbers 12 and higher provide sufficient eye protection for viewing an eclipse. Shade number rating scale goes as low as 4 and



anything under 12 does not protect eyes from solar rays.

Check eclipse glasses for the ISO logo. Make sure eclipse glasses meet the 12312-2 safety standard. It should be printed on the paper glasses or on the manufactures website.

Eclipse glasses should be much darker than your sunglasses and block out ALL regular light. The only thing you should be able to see with the glasses on is the sun (or maybe a bare lightbulb).

## LODGING LOCATION (write in information in case of an emergency)

- Name:
- Address:
- Phone:

## BE SAFE AND ENJOY YOUR STAY IN NEWTON COUNTY!

The above information is presented by participating organization and agencies of Community Matters in Newton County, Arkansas.

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 JASPER



# JAPC

JASPER ADVERTISING & PROMOTION COMMISSION

200 N. Spring Street Jasper Arkansas

## UPCOMING EVENTS:

Spring Dogwood Tours April-May 2024

Fall Color Tours Sept-November 2024

Chasing Waterfalls Jeep Tour October 5th, 2024

Jasper Jeep Jam and Overlanding Rally March 2025

JASPERJEEPJAM.COM

**Lisa Duet**  
Director of Jasper  
Advertising and  
Promotions

337-401-9155

## Embark on an Arkansas motorcycle road trip

The abundance of spectacular motorcycle rides in Arkansas has been a well-kept secret among those who escape here for a motorcycle road trip. From the wide-open Delta plains to the twisty mountain backroads, the riding here is phenomenal and the scenery is like nowhere else. With routes that compete with famous rides across the country, you'll need to add an Arkansas road trip to your bucket list.

Two mountainous and winding routes pass through Newton County.



### Twisted Lady

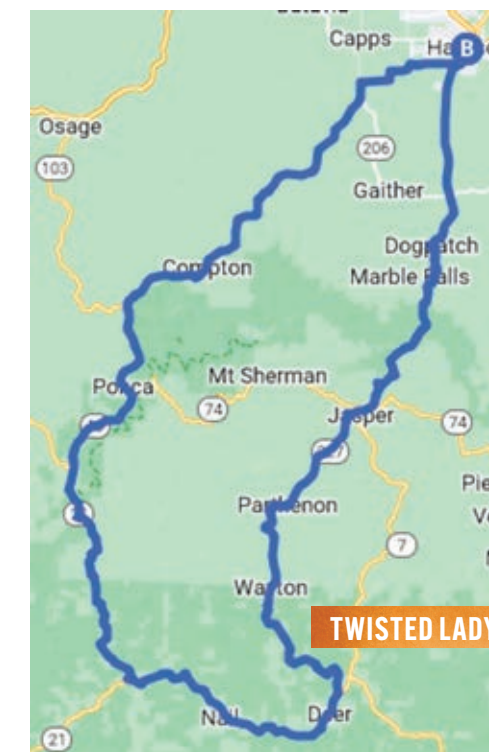
Leave Harrison on state Highway 7 south and pass through the community of Marble Falls on the way to Jasper. At Jasper turn west on to state Highway 74 and then south on 327 passing through the communities of Parthenon and Wayton. At the junction with state Highway 16, continue south through Deer and Nail. Then, at the junction of Highways 16 and 21, turn north on 21 to the junction of state Highway 43. Stay on 43 and travel through the historic Boxley Valley and Ponca. Continue north back to Harrison.

### Arkansas's Grand Canyon

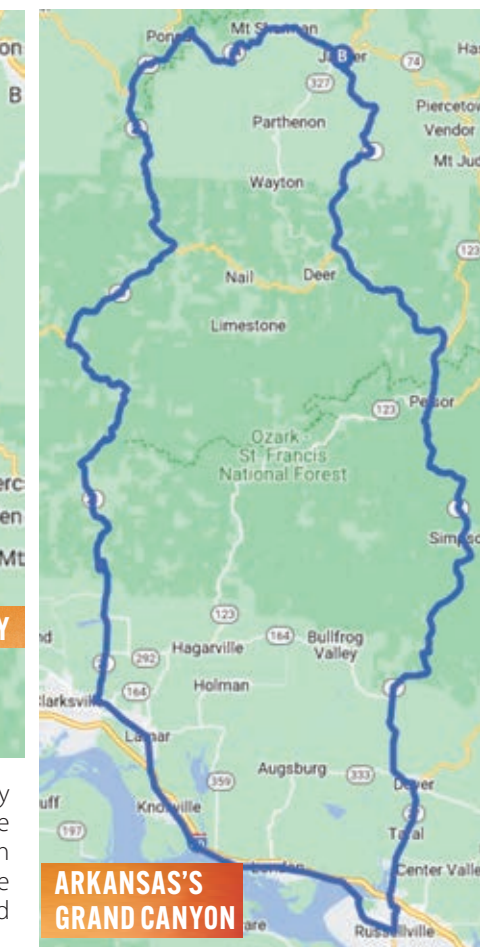
This trail begins at Jasper. Take state Highway 7 south seven miles and ride the rim of the Grand Canyon of Arkansas. There are several overlooks where you can pull off the road and take in the scenic view. Continue south to Pelsor.

Here you have a decision to make.

You can continue south to Russellville where you can take Interstate 40 to Clarksville and then take state Highway 21 north state highway 74 turning east and returning to Jasper.



TWISTED LADY



ARKANSAS'S GRAND CANYON

Or, you can turn west on to state Highway 123 to Hagarville, then, continuing on state Highway 292 to state Highway 21 just north of Clarksville, then continuing north on state Highway 21 to state Highway 74 at Ponca and then continuing back to Jasper.

# Jasper

ARKANSAS



**Now Open!!**  
Come See Us Soon.

## LITTLE BUFFALO RIVER CONVENTION & VISITOR CENTER

**Director:** Quinnell Land  
**Office:** 870-446-2592  
**Text:** 870-688-1389  
**City Hall:** 870-446-2633

Come visit us and pick up National Buffalo River maps, Arkansas information, and all the materials you need to make your visit to Jasper Arkansas one to remember!

### Convention center is ready to book!

Seats max of 50 people, Kitchenette, Projection Equipment and PA system, Tables with linens and Chairs and restrooms. Contact director: Quinnell Land for more information!

713828c



Relax in rustic log rockers or benches on a shady wraparound deck overlooking Ponca Creek while observing some of the area's flora and fauna. A lazy trail along the creek offers a closer look, while nearby picnic tables, covered pavilion and large grassy area provide room for fun and games.

For an educational and fun souvenir, shop our gift corner for books, videos, shirts and more. Hunting and fishing licenses also are available. The center is within easy access to some exceptional camping, canoeing, swimming and fishing on the Buffalo National River, along with some of the finest hiking trails in the state. Cabin and canoe rentals are available in the area through private sources.

## PONCA NATURE CENTER



VISIT US AT  
4642 AR 43 Highway, Ponca, AR

HOURS:  
TUESDAY - SATURDAY  
10 AM - 4:30 PM

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713828c

# Mountain Biking

## Rough and rowdy rides

Arkansas Department of Tourism

With its moderate four-season climate, a variety of terrain, number of trails and natural beauty at every turn, Arkansas has everything you could want in a mountain biking destination. People are not only noticing this, but officially recognizing it. Arkansas features five Epic Rides, as designated by the International Mountain Bicycling Association (IMBA). Arkansas also has three IMBA Ride Center Cities and the first ever Regional Ride Center.

### The Upper Buffalo Mountain Bike Trail:

**How to get here:** From intersection of state Highway 21 and Highway 16 at Fallsville, take Highway 16 west for approximately 10 miles, turn right on Cave Mountain Road (gravel), go 3.2 miles, turn right on Knuckles Creek Road/FS 1413 for 0.9 miles, then take left Y for 0.2 miles. Trailhead on left.

**Or:** From intersection of state Highway 21 and Highway 43 at Boxley, take Highway 21 south for approx. 1.0 mile, then right on Cave Mountain Road just before the Buffalo River.

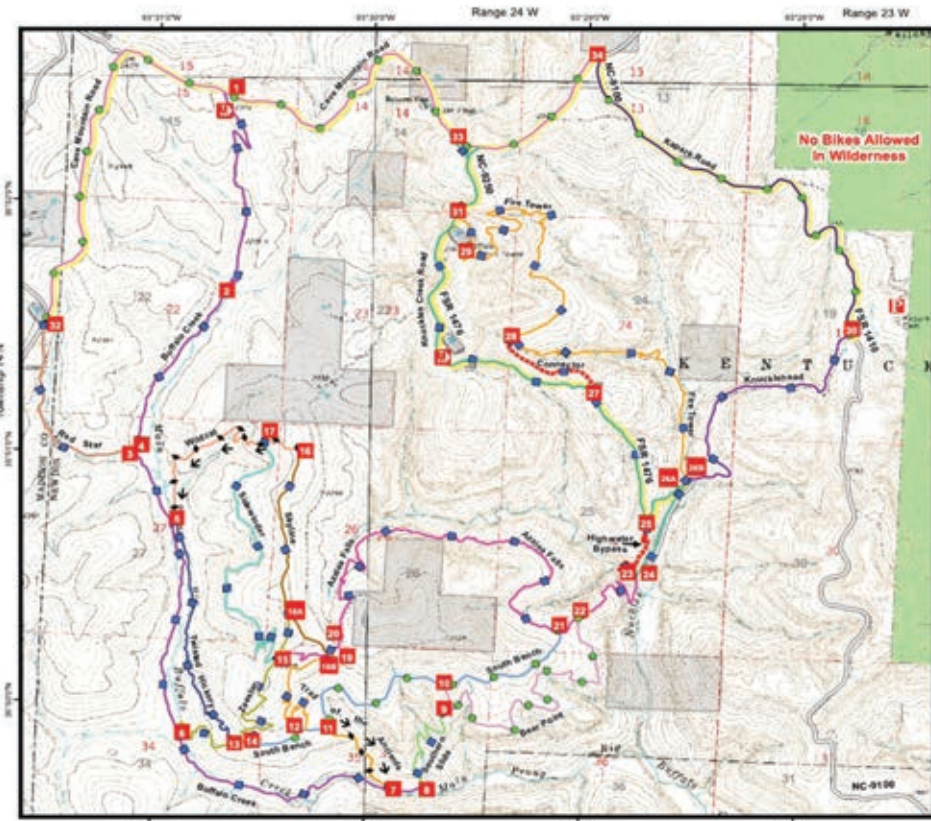
Go approx. 9.3 miles to Knuckles Creek Road/FS Road 1413. Turn left, go 0.9 miles then take left Y for 0.2 miles. Trailhead on left.

In this part of the state, look no further than this trail that offers about 40 miles of single track surrounding the highest point in the Ozark Mountains. This gem of a Midwest ride laces through the headwaters of the Buffalo National River on a mixture of narrow, hand-built single track and machine-cut flow trails.

The Epic ride features some of the best experiences available - stunning scenery past steep cliffs, turquoise waterfalls, abundant wildlife and old-growth hardwood forests.

The trails at Upper Buffalo are extremely remote. Come prepared with plenty of food and water as well as a big sense of adventure. Depending on your route, you may be required to carry your bike through multiple water crossings.

Start just below Fire Tower Loop Trail on Knuckles Creek Road Trail. Pedal up a short climb and then descend through big trees and berms on Fire Tower Loop Trail. The end of this trail transitions directly to Fire Tower Trail. From here continue through a few more banked turns and sections of slabby rocks to a wider trail and corridor. Enjoy a few big drops and berms at the bottom before reaching the intersection with Knucklehead Trail West.



### HISTORY & BACKGROUND

Almost 20 years ago, some families living in the headwaters area, where the trail now resides, decided to start building trails that would take them to the area's most beautiful spots, but unlike most trails built in Arkansas at the time, these would be ridden by mountain bikes. They built 3,040 miles of rough cut trails that were technical and tough. After years of working with the U.S. Forest Service and with considerable negotiation, a plan was put together to improve the trails and make them accessible to all mountain bikers. Working with the Ozark Off-Road Cyclists (OORC) and the Walton Family Foundation, funding was put in place to have the trails professionally built. Progressive Trail Design was hired to do their magic, and the rest is history.

The forest closes back in here as you climb slightly and then descend gradually into the main Knuckles Creek drainage. Be prepared for several minor water crossings throughout this section. And don't forget to have a soak in the waterfall when you get to the bottom!

From the waterfall keep pedaling through the bottom of the valley through a beautiful section of rocky cliffs, out to Knuckles Creek Road Trail. From here, continue on to Azalea Connect Trail.

Stay straight on Azalea Falls Trail at intersection 23 and 22 and settle in for one of the best trails in the system. The dense forest eventually gives way to big trees, boulders and cliffs as you climb both gradual and steep sections along the route. The last bit of the trail winds through some house-sized boulders directly above the creek and the falls.

Roll out to the end of Azalea Falls Trail and connect to Sidewinder Trail via Connector: Ancients, Skyline, Zeester. on easy terrain. Sidewinder Trail is a steady climb with a few rocky sections on overgrown trail.

Stay left at the top and get ready for a rowdy descent on Wildcat Trail - expect lots of rocks, roots and tight turns. At the bottom, transition onto Twisted Hickory Trail, a traversing trail that has plenty of tech sections and one difficult but short climb.

Stay left at the end of Twisted Hickory Trail and descend Zeester all the way down to Buffalo Creek Trail. This part of the ride is very adventurous with several water crossings, most of which require wading the creek and carrying your bike.

After the last crossing, pedal onto intersection 8 and connect with Southern Slide Trail. From here the route climbs up from the creek on a quick, grinding climb to the South Bench Loop Trail. Stay right on South Bench Loop Trail and follow the contour through the hardwood forest back to the Azalea Falls Trail and out to Knuckles Creek Road Trail.

Finish the route with an easy pedal back up the road to the beginning of the ride.

### CAMPING IN THE NATIONAL FOREST

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forests offer a variety of camping opportunities. You can pitch a tent, park the RV, pop-up trailer or pick-up truck, or roll out the sleeping bag. Whatever your method of camping, it will be a truly natural experience in the Ozark Mountains.

#### FEES

Fees are charged on a number of Ozark-St. Francis recreation sites; however, there are many recreation sites on the forests which do not charge a fee. Camping fees vary from \$4.00 - \$10.00 per night per site.

#### PRIMITIVE CAMPING

If you are one of those folks who prefers a different, more rugged camp experience, primitive camping is allowed almost anywhere in the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests unless there is a sign stating otherwise, or it is a wildlife food plot. [more](#)

#### DAY-USE / PICNIC

Several of the campgrounds have Day-Use Areas in or near them. Some day-use areas have swimming beaches, picnic tables, and pavilions. Boat Ramp facilities are also considered day-use and are subject to the same fees as the picnic/swimming areas. These fees are usually \$3.00 per day per car, truck, or passenger van. Fees are per person when entering by foot, bus, or other mode of transportation. Some concessionaires set the fees for camping and day-use areas.

#### USFS RECREATION AREAS IN NEWTON COUNTY

Primarily well known as a rock climbing site, Sam's Throne, near Mt. Judea, is also a popular hiking, camping and photography destination. Located up on Judea Mountain and overlooking the Big Creek valley below, the scenic views will show you why this is such a popular place.

#### NO FEE TO CAMP AT SAM'S THRONE

Operated By: Big Piney Ranger District (479)284-3150 or (870)446-5122.

#### FAIRVIEW CAMPGROUND

Fairview campground has been decommissioned and is currently only a trailhead for the Ozark Highlands Trail. This area is situated on state Highway 7 just north of Pelsor. Highway 7 is noted as one of the 10 most scenic highways in the United States. Dogwood and Redbud blossoms are abundant in early spring. Gorgeous fall colors can be seen in October and November.

Operated By: Big Piney Ranger District (479)284-3150 or (870)446-5122.



### Local campgrounds along the Buffalo National River

Buffalo National River maintains numerous campgrounds throughout the park. They range from primitive with just vault toilets, no water and no designated sites to developed with electric and water hook-ups for RV camping.

Payment for all first come, first served sites can be made at the self-pay stations, which accept cash or checks only. You'll need the correct fee as no change is available at campgrounds or ranger stations.

The upper or western end of the park includes 5 campgrounds. Fees for sites in four of these developed campgrounds are \$16 - \$20 per site per night with 6 people permitted on

each site. Camping fees are charged during the season (March 15 through November 14) when water is available. Camping fees are not charged November 15 through March 14 when flush restrooms and water systems are shutdown.

Steel Creek is about 3 miles east of Ponca, Arkansas, off of Highway 74. The tent campground has 26 campsites and the horse campground has 14 sites. All sites are \$20 per site, per night. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, and lantern hook provided. The campground is open year round on a first come, first served basis and reservations are available March 15 - November 14 for tent sites 1 - 13 and horse sites 27 - 32.

The flush restroom and water system in the tent campground and at the Steel Creek launch will be closed November 15 to March 14 and no fees are charged during this time. The vault toilet in the tent campground will be open but with very limited servicing during the winter.

Trash pick up provided. No RVs allowed.

Kyles Landing is about half way between Ponca and Jasper, Arkansas, off of Highway 74. The entrance road into Kyles is gravel and very rough, so a 4 wheel drive, high clearance vehicle is recommended. The campground has 33 sites and is open year round on a first come, first served basis. All sites are \$20 per night. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, and lantern hook provided.

Trash pick-up provided. The water system and flush restroom will be closed November 15 to March 14 and no fees are charged during this time. The vault toilet will be open with limited or no servicing during the winter. No RV/pull behind campers are allowed.

Erbie Campground is located 7 miles down a gravel road off of Hwy. 7 north of Jasper, AR. The campground has 14 drive-in campsites and 2 walk-in campsites, each with a picnic table, fire ring, and lantern hook. The drive-in sites are suitable for RV or tent camping but the campground has no hookups, no running water, and no dump station.

Erbie Horse Camp is located 7 miles east of Compton and is reached via gravel and dirt roads and is north of the Buffalo River. Open year-round, no water available, vault toilet with limited or no servicing. This is a pack in/pack out facility with no trash service provided.

Use is limited to those with horses only, on a first come, first served basis. Campsites allow a maximum of 6 persons and 6 horses per site. No fees charged.

### FIRST COME, FIRST SERVED BASIS

All sites are available on a first come, first served basis. There is a vault toilet at the boat launch. This is a pack in/pack out facility with no trash service provided. Five group sites are available. Group sites #1 and #5 are first-come, first served, while sites 2, 3, and 4 can be reserved by calling the Tyler Bend Visitor Center at (870) 439-2502 at least 5 days in advance. No fees are charged.

Ozark Campground and swimming hole is located 3 miles down a graded gravel road off of Highway 7 north of Jasper, Arkansas. The campground is open year round and has 31 campsites available on a first come, first served basis. All sites are \$20 per night. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, and lantern hook provided.

The flush restroom is closed November 15 to March 14 and no fees are charged during this time. A vault toilet will be available throughout the winter. Trash pick-up provided. RVs allowed, but the campground has no hookups and no dump station.

Carver Campground is located near the bridge crossing the Buffalo River along state Highway 123. The campground has 8 campsites and is open year round on a first come, first served basis. All sites are \$16 per night. Each site has a picnic table, fire ring, and lantern hook provided. Drinking water and a vault restroom is available. Fees are not charged November 15 to March 14. This is a pack in/pack out facility with no trash service provided.



# Safety First

**KNOW BEFORE YOU GO: READING THE RIVER**

**MODERATE**  
There are inherent risks involved in recreating on a wild river. Conditions are safest when the water is clear and slow-moving because it's easier to see and respond to river hazards.  
**Are you prepared?**

**HIGH & SWIFT**  
Recent rainfall washes sediment into the river, turning the water a murky green color. Storms can create swift currents and hazardous obstacles.  
**Do you have the skills and knowledge to self-rescue?**

**FLOOD STAGE**  
Flooding occurs when the river rises rapidly and flows outside of its banks because of extreme rain events. This causes churning, muddy water, floating debris, and life-threatening conditions.  
**Please wait to recreate.**

**YOUR SAFETY IS YOUR RESPONSIBILITY.**  
EMERGENCY PHONE NUMBER: 1-888-692-1162

## Safety on the river

Safe paddlers will scout out obstacles before paddling in the river.

On a wild stream like Buffalo National River, natural forces are constantly at work. Large trees can get swept into the river when streambanks erode away during high water events. These trees often get lodged in bends or narrow chutes where the river is fastest. They can cause a canoe or kayak to capsize and require extra care to avoid.

Experience is the best practice; avoidance is the best caution.

National Park rangers remove downed trees when they are judged to be a hazard, but it's crucial to know that not all trees are removed from the Buffalo. Some are considered nuisances, not hazards, and are part of the wild river experience.

**HEAT STROKE SYMPTOMS AND PREVENTION**

**SYMPTOMS OF HEAT STROKE**

- UNCOORDINATED
- CONFUSED
- DIZINESS AND HEADACHE
- NO TALKING
- TRENDINESS AND WEARINESS
- DECREASE IN BLOOD PRESSURE
- THROBING HEADACHE
- NAUSEA AND VOMITING

**PREVENTION**

- USE AN UMBRELLA
- WEAR LIGHTWEIGHT CLOTHING
- PROTECT AGAINST SUNBURN
- DRINK FLUORIDATED WATER
- NO ALCOHOL
- COOL, SHOWERING

**ATTENTION!**  
WHO IS AT RISK OF HEAT-RELATED ILLNESS?

- Age over 65
- Pre-existing medical conditions
- Dehydration
- Medication that interferes with the body's ability to regulate temperature

**USDA**

**Headed to the Forest? BE PREPARED**

- 1 appropriate footwear
- 2 map
- 3 extra water
- 4 extra food
- 5 extra clothing
- 6 emergency items
- 7 first aid kit
- 8 knife or multi-purpose tool
- 9 backpack
- 10 sun hat, sunglasses, sandals/shoes

## HEAT STROKE AND PREVENTION

The upcoming weather forecast promises to bring some extremely hot conditions, with heat advisories continuing for the next few days.

Extreme heat is a period of high heat and humidity with temperatures above 90 degrees for at least two to three days. In these conditions, your body works extra hard to maintain a normal temperature, which can lead to death. Extreme heat is responsible for the highest number of annual deaths among all weather-related hazards.

If you plan to be outside during this weather, be sure to take a few steps to protect yourself from heat illness, heat exhaustion, and heat strokes.

— From the US Forest Service

**Heading into the Forest? Pack the 10 Essentials!** The 10 Essentials are a collection of first aid and emergency items that can help you in the event of minor injuries, sudden weather changes, or unexpected delays. Research the area you're planning to go to, download or print any available maps, check the weather, and have a back up plan or two in case parking lots are full.

## NFPA OFFERS GRILLING SAFETY TIPS

With the warmer months upon us, the National Fire Protection Association® (NFPA®) is working to ensure that people understand where potential grilling risks exist and ways to minimize them.

"Because outdoor grilling involves the use of a fuel source to generate an open flame, it inherently presents potential fire risks that needs to be taken seriously," said Lorraine Carli, vice president of Outreach and Advocacy at NFPA.

NFPA data shows that between 2017 and 2021, U.S. fire departments responded to an annual average of 11,421 home fires involving grills, hibachis, or barbecues, including 5,763 structure fires and 5,659 outside or unclassified fires. These fires caused an annual average of two civilian deaths,

176 reported civilian injuries, and \$172 million in direct property damage. July was the leading month for grilling fires (16 percent), followed by June (14 percent), May (12 percent) and August (11 percent); grilling fires in November through February accounted for 4 percent or less each year.

According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC), for the same fire-year period, an annual average of 22,155 patients went to emergency rooms because of injuries involving grills. Nearly half (47 percent) of the injuries were thermal burns, including both burns from fire and from contact with hot objects. These burns

typically occurred when someone, often a child, bumped into, touched or fell on the grill, grill part or hot coals. In fact, children under five accounted for an average of 2,820 of the contact-type burns (46 percent) per year.

"These numbers reinforce that grilling fires can and do happen. However, there's no need to avoid grilling during Memorial Day or in the months ahead," said Carli. "Instead, by following simple safety precautions, people can greatly reduce the risk of experiencing a grilling fire."

NFPA offers a wealth of tips, recommendations, and resources for grilling safely, including these

key messages:

For propane grills, check the gas tank for leaks before use in the months ahead. (Watch NFPA's video on how to check for leaks.)

Keep your grill clean by removing grease or fat buildup from the grills and in trays below the grill.

Place the grill well away from the home, deck railings, and out from under eaves and overhanging branches.

Always make sure your gas grill lid is open before lighting it.

Keep children and pets at least three feet away from the grilling area.

If you use starter fluid when charcoal grilling, only use charcoal starter fluid. Never add charcoal fluid or any other flammable liquids to the fire. When you have or are finished grilling, let the coals cool completely before disposing in a metal container.

Never leave your grill unattended when in use.





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# Tourism

**WE GET IT! WE HAVE A SOLUTION!**

You came all the way to Buffalo National River, had a great time, but when you went to get your passport stamped, it was too late... the Visitor Center was closed for the day.

We can email you the dated cancellation stamp!

- 1) Go to <https://www.nps.gov/buff/contacts.htm>
- 2) Near the bottom of the web page, click on email inquiries.
- 3) Fill out the required form fields. Please include the date you want on your passport stamp and, whether you prefer your dated stamp sent to you by email or mail.
- 4) Click submit OR Give us a call at 870-439-2502. We will happily mail or email you a dated stamp.

## Visitors invited to stop at Jasper information center

The Little Buffalo River Convention & Visitors Center at 200 N. Spring Street in Jasper became operational last summer. The city received the building as a donation and used both grants and city funds to remodel what was the former Buffalo Theater and later a bakery. The building has public restrooms, a reception area and venue space large enough for small social gatherings, public meetings or training sessions as well as office space. It is also the home of the Jasper Advertising and Promotion Commission.

## NATIONAL TRAVEL AND TOURISM WEEK 2024 MARKS THE 41ST YEAR OF THE ANNUAL CELEBRATION

The first full week of May is annually recognized as National Travel and Tourism Week, a tradition first celebrated in 1984. Localized events are presented in cities, states, and travel businesses nationwide to champion the power of American tourism and travel. It was established as National Travel and Tourism Week when the U.S. Congress passed a joint resolution in 1983 designating the week to be celebrated in May. In a White House ceremony, President Ronald Reagan signed a Presidential Proclamation urging citizens to observe the week with "the appropriate ceremonies and activities."

Since its establishment, the American tourism community has collectively marked the event in a number of creative ways, from staging local rallies and conducting media outreach to securing proclamations and resolutions from local legislative bodies.

Tourism is one of Arkansas' largest industries. National Travel and Tourism Week provides the perfect opportunity for us to express our appreciation to the Arkansas travelers who have made this growth possible!

From historical exhibits to presentations by park interpreters to musical performances, Arkansas communities and Welcome Centers are hosting giveaways and small events to celebrate travel and its impact on the state's economy.



## Relax and learn at the Ponca Nature Center

Arkansas Game & Fish Commission

Elk are one of the largest members of the deer family in North America and many of us associate this animal with western states. However, the eastern elk was a native of the Natural State. Unfortunately, this subspecies disappeared from our state after 1840 and for almost one hundred years, a bugling elk could not be heard throughout the hills of Arkansas. Between 1981 and 1985, elk were re-introduced

to the Buffalo River area, and have become one of Arkansas's most successful re-establishment programs.

Don't miss the opportunity to see elk in their natural habitat along Arkansas Highways 43 and 21 in Boxley Valley. You'll have greater success at dawn and dusk when the elk frequent the grassy fields along the highways. Be alert! It is common for elk to cross highways.

Today, an elk herd of about 600 animals makes its home along the Buffalo National River. To learn more about this animals' recovery, biology and history, check out the Ponca Nature Center. You and your students will find exhibits and meeting space to assist you as you delve into the world

of Arkansas elk as well as the other flora and fauna of the Ozark Mountains. Stop by for the latest sightings and area information, or just to relax and enjoy the exhibits and activities for all ages.

Relax in rustic log rockers or benches on a shady wraparound deck overlooking Ponca Creek while observing some of the area's flora and fauna. A lazy trail along the creek offers a closer look, while nearby picnic tables, covered pavilion and large grassy area provide room for fun and games.

For an educational and fun souvenir, shop our gift corner for books, videos, shirts and more. Hunting and fishing licenses also are available. The center is within easy access to some exceptional camping, canoeing, swimming and fishing on the Buffalo National River, along with some of the finest hiking trails in the state. Cabin and canoe rentals are available in the area through private sources.

For more information regarding the Ponca Nature Center or to schedule a class or group field trip, please contact us at the phone number above, or send an email.

Admission to the nature center is free thanks to your support of the Amendment 75 Conservation Fund.

## Elk festival celebrating 25th year

Buffalo River Elk Festival 2024 will be held in downtown Jasper June 28 and 29.

The annual celebration highlights the thriving elk population in the region, a testament to successful wildlife conservation efforts around the Buffalo National River. This festival is a vibrant mix of nature, wildlife education, and community festivities.

Attendees are treated to a variety of activities including elk viewing tours, which offer the chance to see these majestic animals in their natural habitat. The festival also features an elk calling contest, drawing both seasoned callers and enthusiastic novices for a friendly competition. Artisans and craftspeople from the area display their work, providing a showcase of local talent and unique souvenirs. Live music, traditional dance performances, and a variety of food vendors add to the festive atmosphere, ensuring there's something for everyone to enjoy.

For those interested in more extensive explorations, the Ponca Wilderness Area presents challenging hikes and the chance to spot elk in their natural environment, especially in the Boxley Valley. The region's rich history is showcased at the Hilary Jones Wildlife Museum and Elk Information Center in Jasper, where visitors can learn more about local wildlife and conservation efforts.



**BUFFALO RIVER ELK FESTIVAL**

A member of the Buffalo River Elk Festival Pageant royalty is pictured drawing the name of an applicant registered to win one of a limited number of permits two participate in one of the annual elk hunts supervised by the Arkansas Game & Fish Commission.

## FACTS ABOUT NEWTON COUNTY MOST PEOPLE DON'T KNOW

- Newton County is the only county in Arkansas that doesn't have a railroad track running through it.
- Deer School is located at the highest elevation of any school in Arkansas.
- Buffalo National River is the first national river in the United States.
- In 1981, several volunteers re-introduced elk into Newton County. It became known as the Hilary Jones Elk Herd. In July 22, 1998

Newton county was officially designated the Elk Capital of Arkansas.

- Dogpatch USA, a former tourist attraction and theme park in Newton County, was the only place in America where Al Capp brought to life his comic strip characters: Li'l Abner, Daisy Mae and others.
- In April 2001, the largest search and rescue in the state of Arkansas took place looking for 6-year-old Haley Zega. Over 1,000 volunteers took part before she was found safe.

— Compiled by DRU JONES

## THE LITTLE BUFFALO RIVER CONVENTION & VISITORS CENTER



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# Information about paddling on the Buffalo National River

From the National Park Service  
Buffalo National River

The Buffalo River flows freely for 151 miles. Typically, the paddle season begins on the upper Buffalo in the spring. More water makes this section attractive for visitors seeking a higher level of challenge with whitewater kayaking. The season moves downstream with the months, varying from month to month with rainfall. Unlike rivers that are fed by perennial springs, the Buffalo is largely rainfall dependent. In dry years, the paddling season is short and quickly moves down into the Middle and Lower Districts. In wet years, use of the upper river is prolonged with paddling opportunities spread out through the park for the entire season.

Below you will find the river broken down by district.

For further information about floating the river call the Tyler Bend Visitor Center at 870-439-2502 or visit the park's River Rules page. Visit the park's Canoe Rental page for information on authorized concessioners and the River Accesses and Mileage page to plan a trip based on mileage.

Always check river levels before putting on the river. The river changes, sometimes daily, weekly, and certainly with the seasons. We may make generalizations about river conditions, but it's hard to detail every gravel bar, sweeper, or the speed of the river when you are planning a trip. The U.S. Geological Society (USGS) has several gauges along the river and provides real-time river levels and discharge, but it can't tell you that a tree fell down last night and is blocking the side channel a half mile below the gauging station. And typically, neither can the ranger on the phone or behind the desk. The river changes just that fast and it's really up to you to be responsible for your own safety.

River levels greater than the indicated levels are unsafe:

- Ponca gage:** 1300 cfs
- Pruitt/Hwy. 7 gage:** 2000 cfs
- Grinder's Ferry/Hwy. 65 gage:** 8000 cfs
- Dillard's Ferry/Hwy. 14 gage:** 9370 cfs

## RIVER TERMINOLOGY

### The Put-In

This is where you enter the river, either by using one of the park concessioners, or with your own canoe, kayak, john boat, or raft. Depending on the location and time of year, conditions may be very congested in the parking area and on the river bank. Tempers can run short as visitors are anxious to get on the river and cool off. Be patient, be considerate, be safe. Some put-ins have parking restriction to accommodate

commercial boat rentals and their trailers. Please be aware of these restrictions and keep these areas clear.

### The Reach

"Reach" is a term used to describe a section of the river. The reach you select will be defined by your put-in and take-out locations. Each reach has its own beauty and challenges. Some are longer than others, some have more or less remote highway access,

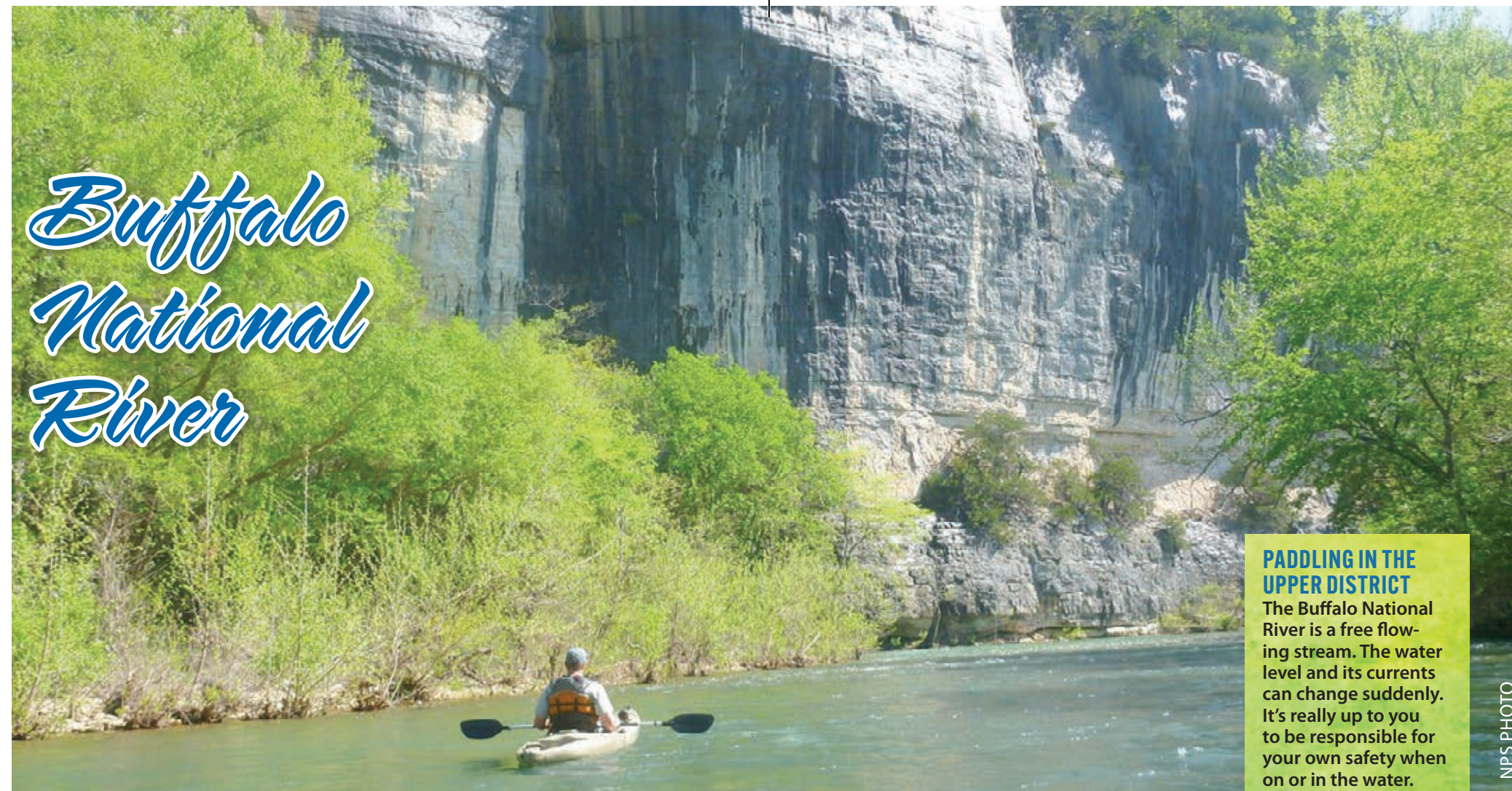
some are only navigable when water levels are adequate for floating. The park brochure shows river mileage between access points along the bottom margin. Remember that river travel is not strictly a miles-per-hour undertaking since different reaches have different flows and impediments.

### Gravel Bars

These guys are like living creatures and are generally taken for granted except when

they've swallowed alive your boat trailer or truck. You camp on them, build fires on them, drag your canoe across them. Fortunately, they are periodically renewed by flood events, keeping them fresh for the next season of visitors. The gravel in the river provide critical habitat for many living things, but when it comes to planning your trip the issue is usually whether or not the water depth is sufficient. At any time it is possible that the load your craft is carrying and

the depth of the river at certain points will require you to get out and haul over a gravel bar. Usually, this is a minor inconvenience and should be anticipated. "River shoes" or old sneakers are a big help at times like this. In cases where the river levels are seriously low, your trip plans should be altered to avoid getting into a potentially dangerous, not to mention unpleasant, situation of hauling for mile after mile to the next available take out. It does happen and it's not fun.



**PADDLING IN THE UPPER DISTRICT**  
The Buffalo National River is a free flowing stream. The water level and its currents can change suddenly. It's really up to you to be responsible for your own safety when on or in the water.

NPS PHOTO

Know your limits and prepare. Search and rescue missions often result from visitors who get in over their head and quickly become overwhelmed by trip duration, trip difficulty, or environmental conditions (air and water temperatures). Things you should ask yourself include, are you a strong swimmer? Do you possess basic survival skills, such as lighting a fire, and can you perform those skills while soaking wet and shivering? Are you healthy enough for strenuous activity? If river conditions change do you know when to pull off of the river and wait for better conditions?

Check the weather forecast and river gauges. Thunderstorm events can cause rapid short term changes that need to be taken seriously. Awareness of the likelihood of a storm will help you make a decision about whether to go or not to

go, or at least how far away from the river to set up camp and pull your boats. These storms are sudden and can happen far away from where their affects are eventually felt. It depends on the severity of the storm and the watershed into which it falls. A major storm in the Upper Buffalo can cause serious problems in the Middle and Lower Districts without you ever hearing a clap of thunder or even seeing a cloud!

Tube responsibly. While personal flotation devices (PFDs) are not required while recreating in an inner tube, we strongly recommend the use of one while floating or paddling the river, for both children and adults. Without a paddle you are at the river current's mercy and you cannot steer or make the tube go faster. For this reason the park recommends tube trips no longer than 1.5 miles. You are very

limited as to what you can take with you on a tube and there is often no room for water, snacks, or sunscreen. Please take all of this into consideration when planning a float on tubes.

Avoid sweepers and strainers. A sweeper or strainer is a tree or trees that have fallen across or along the edge of the river but may be above the river level, partially submerged, or may lie just under the surface of the water. Often these are found on the outer side of bends where the river is fastest, or in fast-moving and narrow chutes. Either way, they can cause a canoe or kayak to capsize and require extra care to avoid. Experience is the best practice, avoidance is the best caution. The park removes downed trees when they are judged to be a hazard. Operating a chainsaw in a boat on a river is a very dangerous undertaking. Not all trees are removed. Some are considered nuisances and not hazards, and are part of the river experience.

Secure your gear. Be sure to place all of your equipment in sturdy waterproof bags and tie everything down in your boat to prevent it from washing away if you capsize.

Bring sturdy footwear. Flip-flops or slip-on water shoes can get pulled off of your feet and swept downstream if you capsize. If your boat becomes pinned or washed away, you must be able to hike out - have sturdy footwear with you just in case.

Do not attempt to unpin a pinned boat. If your boat becomes lodged, DO NOT ATTEMPT

TO UNPIN IT! This is a very dangerous situation with extremely powerful forces being exerted on the boat. Leave it where it is and report its location to a park ranger as soon as possible.

Wear the right clothes. When paddling during the fall, winter, or spring wear wool or synthetic fibers such as polypropylene, or a wet suit. Avoid cotton because when cotton becomes wet, it loses the ability to insulate and quickly contributes to a hypothermic state. Hypothermia results when your body loses heat faster than it produces it and can be deadly. Waterproof outer garments are also highly recommended.

Be aware of other floaters. Chances are you won't be alone on your river trip. You may run into people with expectations of quiet and solitude. On the other hand, you may encounter groups who want to play loud music and drink alcohol. It's important to understand that the National Park Service manages for multiple interests, placing limitations or prohibitions only where absolutely necessary to preserve the resources and insure visitor safety and satisfaction. And speaking of safety, the operative phrase may actually be "run into" at certain times. If you are approaching a narrow chute or bend and see the potential for congestion, slow down to avoid a collision that could result in anything from inconvenience to injury. This includes other watercraft, swimmers, and horses!

# Floating with your dog

National Park Service  
Buffalo National River

The National Park Service enjoys visitors are welcome to float and enjoy the river with their dogs. Dogs make great boat buddies, but there are some things to take into consideration before you get on the water, park officials say.

\*Ticks, chiggers, and snakes live in the park. Keep the interaction between these park inhabitants and your pet to a minimum by keeping your dog out of any tall vegetation.

\*Know your dog and their abilities, temperament, and level of stamina. A hot summer day on the river can be draining on people and pets. Know your limits.

\*A life jacket for your dog is a great idea in case you capsize (do not tie your dog to your boat). Even though dogs

can swim a life jacket can make it much easier to retrieve your dog in the event of an accident. If you become separated from your dog on the river call the park's 24-hour dispatch at 1-888-692-1162 to make a report.

\*Respect wildlife and other visitors. Remember that when you get out on a gravel bar or access point your dog needs to be leashed in order to protect them, other visitors, and wildlife.

\*Please pick up after your pet. This limits the exposure and spread of potential diseases and keeps our river corridor clean.



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# Take a Hike

## Preparations needed prior for a hike

Let's talk about being a prepared hiker. Much like when preparing to go camping, it's important to research and gather some things beforehand:

- Be prepared. Wear proper clothing and shoes, and consider bringing the items listed in the picture. Download, print, or visit a ranger station for trail maps.
- Check the elements. Make sure to check the forecast for the area you'll be hiking in, and it never hurts to bring a rain jacket just in case.
- Be aware of your surroundings. Watch for other trail users, especially if you're on a multi-use trail. Listen and watch for changes in the weather.
- Leave No Trace. Carry out any trash you have, and remember to "take only pictures and leave only footprints".

### Hiking

Hiking is a wonderful way to see and experience the many wonders of our nation's forests. Visit your forest's ranger district office, our All Maps page, or National Forest Store to obtain a trail map to help you plan your route based on your ability, available time and interest. Please follow these safety tips to ensure a safe journey:

Responsible Recreation. Being

prepared includes knowing how to be a responsible hiker. Learn more on our Responsible Recreation page.

Stay on marked trails.

Don't hike alone. Let the slowest person in your party set the pace. This is especially important when children are a part of your group.

Leave your itinerary with a friend or family member and check in with them upon your return.

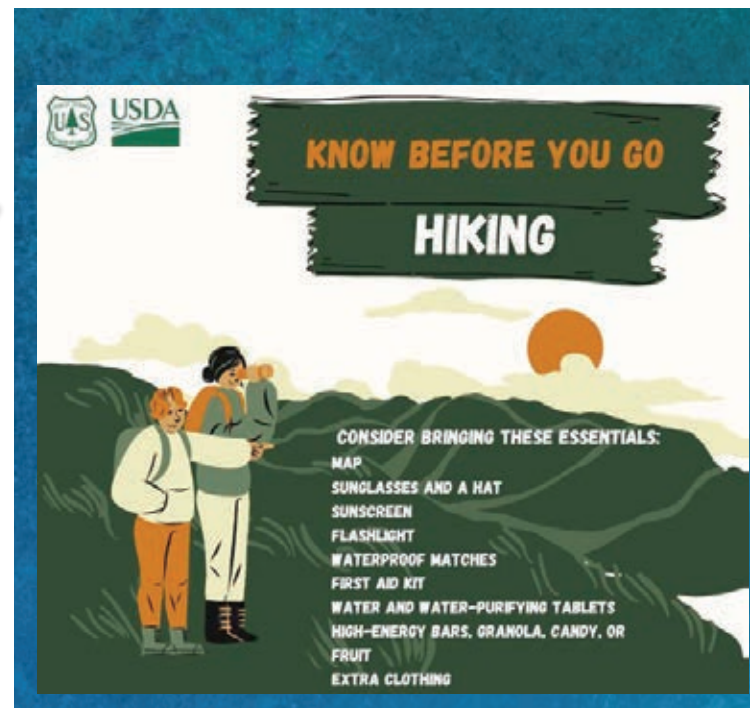
Develop an emergency plan before you start your trip. Make sure everyone knows what to do if they become lost or a medical emergency arises. Give children whistles with the instructions to "stop and blow" if they become lost.

Take frequent rests or vary your pace to maintain your energy level. Drink plenty of water, even on cool, wet days. Never drink your entire supply between refills.

Wear appropriate clothing, including sturdy boots that are broken in and are comfortable.

Consider using a hiking pole or walking stick to help maintain your balance in unlevel or hazardous areas.

Be aware of your surroundings, and pre-plan your approach before hiking through more hazardous areas. Wet surfaces can be a hazard and even more so if it's on a slope.



Consider what you'll do if you start to slide or fall so that you are prepared.

If falling, do not try to catch yourself; try to avoid landing on your hands, elbows or knees. Landing on the side of your body is much safer.

If the slope is such where you know you are going to slide, lowering your center of gravity, by sitting down and sliding on your feet or bottom, is safer.

If sliding while standing up, keep your weight over your feet and bend your knees—do not lean back or forward while sliding.

If on a day hike, extra weight wears you down and reduces your agility over uneven terrain. Pack as light as possible. Leave the extras behind, but consider bringing these essentials:

- Map
- Sunglasses and a hat
- Sunscreen
- Flashlight
- Waterproof matches

- First aid kit
- Water and water-purifying tablets
- High-energy bars, granola, candy, or fruit
- Extra clothing. Temperatures can change dramatically, particularly if there is an elevation change. For every 1,000 feet of elevation gain, the temperature often drops three to five degrees.



**LOST VALLEY TRAIL**  
A large group of students walk on the Lost Valley trail, surrounded by green trees on a sunny day.



### MUCH TO SEE ON AND FROM ROUND TOP MOUNTAIN

The town of Jasper in Newton County Seat. The small village with its courthouse square is overlooked by Round top Mountain to the south.

This county-owned property has a 3.5-mile loop trail generally considered moderately challenging. This is a popular area for hiking, but pay attention to the wide variety of plants, flowers and trees, as well as birds and wildlife. And don't overlook the bluffs that reveal fossils of flora and fauna when the mountain was at the bottom of a prehistoric sea. The trail is open year-round and is beautiful to visit anytime. Dogs are welcome, but

must be on a leash.

Round Top Mountain Trail loops around the base of the mountain top bluffs with scenic rock formations, minor remnants of a WWII era bomber plane that crashed in the 1940's, and then climbs to the top of the bluff to allow panoramic views of the area before returning to the trail head. The northern overlook gives a view of more than 20 miles into neighboring Boone County.

Stops on the trail include a bluff shelter and a marker where the airplane crashed.

The trail begins with a series of switch backs but quickly levels off with only a couple of climbs after that to reach the mountain top.

## Explore Tales of Trails program

Have you ever been curious about how the trails at Buffalo National River came to be? Read on to get a sneak peek into our new Tales of the Trail program, and learn a little more about the history of the Lost Valley Trail.

Long before it was the popular trail to Eden Falls that we know today, part of the trail at Lost Valley was an old logging road, and much of the surrounding land was privately owned by the Primrose family, who had homesteaded there since 1928. The secret of Lost Valley couldn't be contained for long. Between the 1930s and 1950s, attention from the University of Arkansas and the Arkansas Department of Tourism brought Lost Valley into the public eye.

With the public now knowing of the area's beauty and concerned about its future, they helped push for the area to become a state park in 1967. A few years later, the area was transferred from the State of Arkansas to the National Park Service to become part of Buffalo National River. Imagine how the landscape may have looked if history happened differently.

Keep an eye out for our Tales of the Trail virtual program debuting later this month to learn more about the origins of this trail and others! Until then, learn about your different trail options at the Buffalo here: <https://www.nps.gov/buff/planyourvisit/hiking-trails.htm>

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