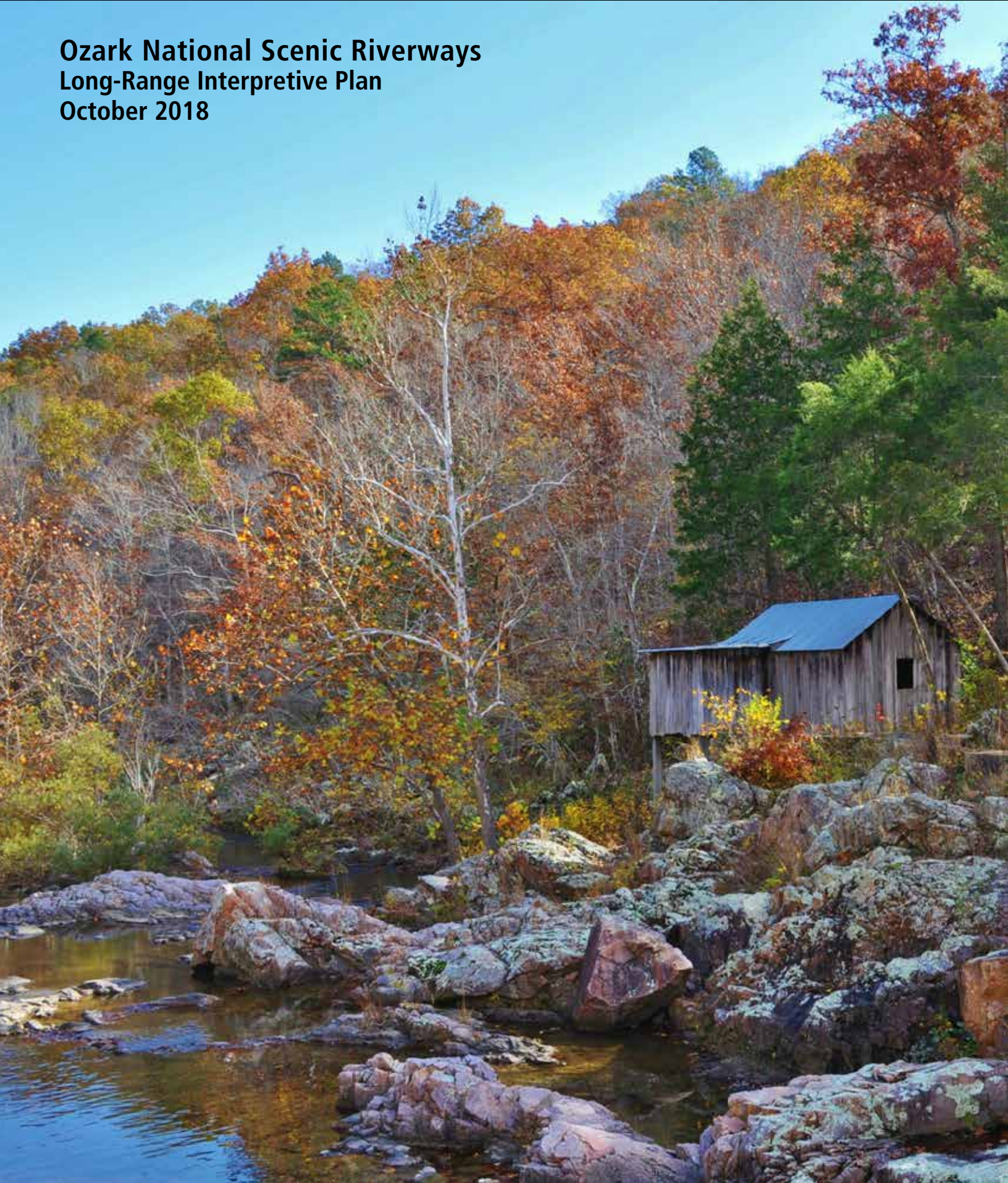




# Ozark National Scenic Riverways Long-Range Interpretive Plan October 2018





# **Ozark National Scenic Riverways Long-Range Interpretive Plan**

**October 2018**

**Prepared by**

**The Department of the Interior  
National Park Service**

**Ozark National Scenic Riverways,  
Harpers Ferry Center Interpretive Planning, and  
Goolrick Interpretive Group**



The cultural history of the Ozarks comes alive as visitors listen to a park ranger.

***On the cover: A view of historic Klepzig Mill. NPS photo by Patty Wheatley Bishop.  
All photos by NPS unless otherwise noted.***

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## The Heart of the Ozarks

Nestled in the heart of the Ozark Highlands of southeastern Missouri, Ozark National Scenic Riverways offers visitors more than 80,000 acres to explore: 134 miles of clear, free-flowing, spring-fed rivers; more than 350 springs, including one of the largest in the U.S.; and a cave system of at least 402 known caves, all protected within a largely undeveloped natural landscape of mixed hardwood forests, fields, and glades. The Riverways also preserves scores of ancient archeological sites as well as nearly 250 historic structures ranging from early 19th-century homesteads to a Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) dining lodge.

Visitors come to this wild, beautiful place to paddle or float down the river, view the awe-inspiring blue waters of the springs, or spend a day swimming or picnicking at a favorite spot. Depending on their interests and abilities, they may choose to hunt or fish, hike along the Ozark Trail, take a cave

tour, or explore the Riverways by bicycle or horseback. They also find their way to the Riverways' popular cultural sites: the historic Alley Mill, the small one-room Storys Creek Schoolhouse, and picturesque Klepzig Mill, as well as Big Spring Dining Lodge and other Civilian Conservation Corps-era buildings in the Big Spring Historic District.

Many Riverways visitors are nearby residents, but others come from afar to stay for a week or more at one of the Riverways' popular RV or tent campgrounds. A popular site for family reunions, community festivals, weddings, and other special events, the Riverways welcomes more than 1.2 million visitors a year.

In June 2017, Ozark National Scenic Riverways achieved special recognition as the 38th national park to be featured in the America the Beautiful Quarters<sup>®</sup> program. The newly minted 25-cent coin depicts the Riverways' iconic Alley Mill, a steel roller mill built in 1894.



The vivid blue spring waters of Ozark National Scenic Riverways are unforgettable.



## Developing a Long-Range Interpretive Plan

Unlike financial plans, management plans, or facilities plans, interpretive plans have an external, rather than an internal, focus. Interpretive plans focus on visitors. What do visitors do, see, explore, learn about, and enjoy as they engage with a site? What kind of programming or services can the park staff provide to enrich visitors' experiences? Should these programs and services be different for different kinds of visitors?

A long-range interpretive plan draws on the insights of park stakeholders and staff to recommend a cohesive, balanced approach for providing a menu of interpretive services to be developed over the next seven to ten years. This menu includes personal services (ranger- or volunteer-led tours, living history, artisans and crafters, reenactors, guest lecturers), as well as a range of interpretive media,

from printed brochures to on-demand digital programming, wayside panels and kiosks, and large-scale interactive and immersive exhibits.

The interpretive planning recommendations in this document grew out of a series of stakeholder workshops and open house events held in Van Buren and Eminence, Missouri, in fall 2017. Workshop participants reviewed the park's themes, brainstormed potential storylines and interpretive ideas, and worked together to craft the long-range interpretive plan. (A list of participants appears in Appendix C.)

The "Foundation for Planning" section of this Long-Range Interpretive Plan is expected to remain valid for the life of the plan. As budgets and circumstances change, the specific recommendations and implementation strategy should be adjusted as needed.

A ranger-led cave tour takes visitors deep underground to explore the geology of the Riverways.







# Foundation for Planning

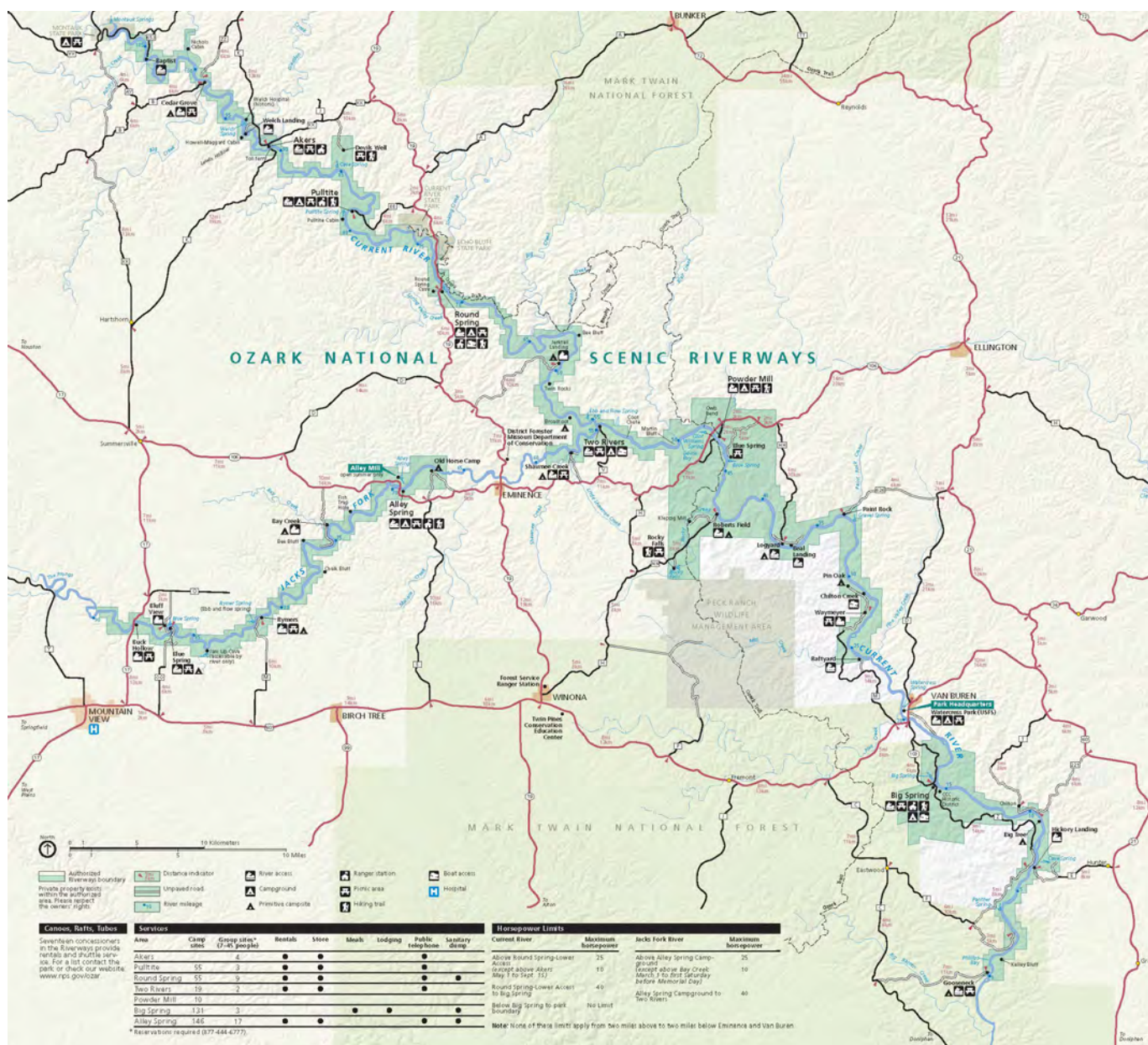


## Legislative Background

Public Law 88-492, passed by Congress in 1964, established Ozark National Scenic Riverways in portions of southeastern Missouri's Shannon, Carter, Dent, and Texas counties *"for the purpose of conserving and interpreting unique scenic and other natural values and objects of historic interest, including preservation of portions of the Current River and the Jacks Fork River in Missouri as free-flowing streams, preservation of springs and caves,*

*management of wildlife, and provisions for use and enjoyment of the outdoor recreation resources thereof...."*

The act authorized the Secretary of the Interior to negotiate with the state of Missouri for "donation and inclusion" of state park lands composing Big Spring, Alley Spring, and Round Spring State Parks to become part of the new Riverways designation.







## Purpose Statements

Park purpose statements summarize a park's mission and commitments as a unit of the National Park Service. The following purpose statements for Ozark National Scenic Riverways were developed as part of the General Management Plan in 2015.

- Preserve and protect in an unimpaired condition the unique scenic and natural values, processes, and unspoiled setting derived from the clean, free-flowing Current and Jacks Fork rivers, springs, caves, and their karst origins;
- Provide for and promote opportunities for the scientific and public understanding of the natural and cultural resources;
- Offer opportunities for understanding and appreciating the human experience associated with the Ozark Highlands landscape; and
- Provide for uses and enjoyment of the outdoor recreation opportunities consistent with the preservation of the park unit's resources.



## Significance Statements

Park significance statements capture the main elements of a site that make it nationally or internationally significant and worthy of being set aside and preserved in the National Park System. The following significance statements sum up the importance of Ozark National Scenic Riverways:

- The impressive hydrogeologic character of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways' karst landscape supports an amazing variety of natural features, including a spring system that is world-class and unparalleled in North America. The park unit features the largest spring in the national park system, six first-magnitude (discharge rate of 100 cubic feet of water per second) springs and spring complexes, and over 350 springs parkwide. The cave system is equally impressive, with 402 documented caves within the park unit boundary—one of the highest densities of any national park system unit.
- Ozark National Scenic Riverways contains 134 miles of clear, free-flowing, spring-fed rivers. These include the Jacks Fork and Current Rivers, which are two of only three Outstanding National Resource Waters in Missouri.
- The ancient Ozark Highlands is an important center of biodiversity in North America, including numerous endemic species that are found nowhere else in the world. The large variety of species found within Ozark National Scenic Riverways is due to the rich array of aquatic, terrestrial, and subterranean habitats concentrated within its river corridors.
- Ozark National Scenic Riverways features archeological sites, historic structures, objects, and landscapes that reflect more than 12,000 years of people living along, adapting to, and interacting with these Ozark Highland rivers.
- The complex and dynamic natural resources and systems of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways provide for outstanding, high-quality recreational experiences on and along free-flowing rivers.



## Interpretive Themes and Theme Matrix

Interpretive themes summarize the main messages or “big ideas” about a site. To park visitors, these themes are invisible, but for the interpretive staff, they form a framework for developing or expanding a park’s interpretive planning and programming.

Interpretive themes are derived from a park’s establishing legislation, purpose, significance, and fundamental resources and values. Ideally, themes help interpreters link universal concepts to the particulars of one unique place, resulting in programs that engage visitors and inspire a sense of personal connection to the site.

The following primary interpretive themes were developed for Ozark National Scenic Riverways as part of its General Management Plan and Environmental Assessment in 2015. During the 2017 interpretive planning process, stakeholders and park staff reviewed these themes and discussed ways interpretive programming could bring them to life for visitors.

These discussions form the basis for the Interpretive Themes Matrix on the following pages. This matrix should be viewed as a working document for capturing ideas and storylines and inspiring interpretive programming and media for all seven themes.



Visitors of all ages come to the Riverways to enjoy river recreation, historic sites, and special events.



## Theme Topic: Karst

**The Current and Jacks Fork rivers arise from an extensive karst geomorphology consisting of massive water conduits that remain tantalizingly hidden from view on the surface. Discovery, exploration, and scientific understanding of this complex natural system continue to take place.**

<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
How karst topography results in numerous sinkholes, caves, and springs in the Riverways; how unusual this is	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where springs come from</li> <li>• Why Ozark springs have very blue-colored water</li> <li>• Why Big Spring bubbles/boils up</li> <li>• Sinking creeks</li> </ul>
Riverways groundwater and aquifers as an underground/hidden part of the worldwide water cycle that sustains all life	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is an aquifer?</li> <li>• How does surface water become groundwater?</li> <li>• How does geology influence how water collects under the earth's surface?</li> </ul>
Scientific study and exploration of the cave system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cave diving expeditions</li> <li>• Size and extent of aquifer</li> <li>• Cave monitoring and mapping</li> </ul>
Continuity and connectedness of water system in Ozark Highlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karst water flows into springs which then flow in to rivers</li> </ul>



**Theme Topic: Natural Resource**

**Ozark National Scenic Riverways preserves ecological processes and systems that sustain a high-quality example of an Ozark riparian landscape and its natural communities. This oldest continuously exposed land mass in North America features a subtle, fragile collection of diverse and relict species and special environments that stimulate wonder, curiosity, and a zeal for discovery in all who experience its meaning.**

<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
The Riverways' distinctive ecosystems: riverine, riparian (riverside), forested, and glades (rocky clearings)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How these ecosystems differ</li> <li>• Different plant and animal communities in different ecosystems</li> </ul>
Plants, animals, and different habitats of the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common/characteristic or keystone plant and animal species</li> <li>• Indicator species</li> <li>• Rare, endangered, or threatened species</li> <li>• Stories of individual species, such as the hellbender</li> </ul>
Natural phenomena that makes the Riverways unique: blue-colored springs, exceptionally clear waters, free-flowing streams, etc.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dolomite dissolving in the water</li> <li>• Karst topography</li> <li>• No hydroelectric dams on the Current or Jacks Fork rivers</li> </ul>
Relatively unhindered landscape and geographical isolation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Endemic species exist in remote locations of the park</li> </ul>
Wildland fire as a natural process that has helped shape the ecosystems of the Ozarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wildland fire management is used actively in the Ozarks for the benefits of a variety of habitats and species</li> <li>• Species such as collared lizards and tall larkspur have benefitted from prescribed fire</li> </ul>

## Theme Topic: Water Quality

The relatively undeveloped nature of the watershed directly contributes to the outstanding water quality and clarity in the riverways. However, the rivers and springs remain highly susceptible to pollution far beyond the boundaries of the National Riverways because of the nature of the karst environment. Karst factors that influence water quality include high porosity of aquifers and rapid rates of groundwater movement and recharge. These features of a karst system can create direct pathways for surface contaminants to quickly enter the groundwater system where remediation is difficult. Since local communities depend on groundwater for their survival, scientists strive to expand their limited knowledge and understanding of the natural consequences of potential developments within the watershed.

<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
The Riverways watershed and its importance to water quality in the rivers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What is a watershed?</li> <li>• Human activities that affect watersheds (development along rivers, agricultural run-off, etc.)</li> </ul>
Why the Riverways waters need special protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Karst topography – porosity means pollution can reach groundwater and aquifer quickly</li> <li>• Nearby communities rely on Riverways water</li> </ul>
What individuals can do to help protect water quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Causes/sources of possible water pollution</li> <li>• Good habits to protect your watershed – at home, at school, in the workplace</li> </ul>
Water quality and its effects on plant and animal life in the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Indicator species in the Riverways</li> <li>• Fish populations</li> <li>• Invasive and/or opportunistic species</li> </ul>
Scientific exploration of watersheds and water quality in the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples of current research projects</li> </ul>



## Theme Topic: Archeology

**During the past 12,000 years, prehistoric peoples have benefited from the diverse natural resources available on the eastern slope of the Ozark Highland. The Ozark riverine environment offered abundant foodstuffs exploited by a subsistence strategy based on movement of prehistoric groups from place to place throughout the seasons. Locations of primary camps were along the major streams in the same locations where people like to camp today. Archeological materials from these prehistoric peoples are well represented in the NPS Riverways and provide significant insights into their adaptations to the Ozark environment. Historical archeological resources have also been identified and recorded associated primarily with 19th and early 20th century farmsteads, town and mill sites, extractive industries, and other settlement activities.**

<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
Overview of archeological records showing long human habitation here, from Paleo (pre-7000 BCE) to middle Mississippian period (1000-1350 CE)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artifacts from Paleo-Indian, Archaic, Woodland, and Mississippian periods; illustrations of lifeways</li> <li>• Brief descriptions of archeological research in the Riverways</li> </ul>
Archeology at Round Spring (without place/identifiers so as to protect sites)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artifacts and stories/illustrations of the Dalton (Archaic) culture from 7,000 BCE to 600 BCE</li> <li>• Round Spring Archeological District significance, protections</li> </ul>
Lifeways of earliest people here	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunting and gathering techniques, preferred game and fish, edible plants, etc.</li> </ul>
Woodland period (600 BCE to 900 CE) developments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Evolution of pottery among Woodland people</li> <li>• The first gardeners/farmers in the Ozarks</li> <li>• Artifacts and art/decorative objects</li> <li>• Ozarks as a place of overlapping groups at this time: ongoing research?</li> </ul>
Mississippian period settlements at Shawnee Creek, Round Spring, Isaac Kelley, Owls Bend, and Gooseneck	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Artifacts and stories/illustrations of Mississippian culture in the Ozarks</li> </ul>
Archeology of historic periods: 19 <sup>th</sup> and early 20 <sup>th</sup> -century farmsteads, mills and industrial sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Visible remains of homesteads, mills, industrial sites</li> <li>• Preserved/restored sites such as Alley Roller Mill and other National Register sites</li> <li>• Historic images and oral histories that support archeological finds</li> </ul>
Riverways contains some of oldest known archeological sites in Missouri	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Archeological investigations conducted throughout the Riverways</li> </ul>

Theme Topic: Ozark Culture	
<p>The Ozark region features a currently viable culture, making conscious choices in its way of life. This pragmatic lifestyle respects loyalty to clan and kin, values personal independence, and ensures survival through interaction with local resources. Local residents have traditionally been fiercely independent and self-sufficient. They continue to engage in traditional forms of practical recreation such as hunting, fishing, picnicking, and family reunions while seeking personal renewal and rejuvenation within the river corridor.</p>	
<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
Lifeways and culture of 19 <sup>th</sup> -century Ozark settlers; how these characteristics survive and/or adapt today	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Historical local figures (female and male) and their impact on Ozark culture</li> <li>• Literature and folk tales 19<sup>th</sup>-century Ozarkers</li> <li>• Practical/useful arts and skills in Ozark culture: wood carving, quilt making, etc.; how these skills survive (or disappear) today</li> <li>• Music and musical instruments; influence of these traditions on music today (bluegrass, old-time, ballads)</li> <li>• Importance of churches as community anchors; historic churches surviving today</li> <li>• Fierce independence and self-sufficiency</li> <li>• Similarities between Ozark and Appalachian culture and old-world culture (Ireland/Scotland/Wales)</li> </ul>
Comparison of Ozark settlers' lifeways with those of tribal people in the region through the millennia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Farming techniques in rugged terrain</li> <li>• Fishing and boat-making techniques</li> <li>• Hunting and trapping</li> <li>• "Living off the land"</li> </ul>
Importance of extended family (clan) in Ozark culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scottish provenance of clans</li> <li>• Land ownership through generations</li> <li>• The Ozark tradition of family reunions and social gatherings</li> </ul>
Origins, uses, and legends of specific historic structures in the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vernacular architecture of the Ozarks – making houses out of what was near at hand</li> <li>• Pulltite cabin</li> <li>• Susie Nichols homestead</li> <li>• Maggard cabin and Jesse James Gang</li> <li>• Mt. Zion Church</li> <li>• Welch Lodge and Welch Hospital</li> </ul>



**Theme Topic: History**

**An Ozark culture evolved from the early 19th century settlement of the Current and Jacks Fork rivers by European Americans, predominately Scots-Irish families from the highlands of Kentucky and Tennessee. The Ozarkers relied on close family ties along the streams and lived off small patches of corn, hogs raised on the open range, the abundant springs, and plants and animals found in the forest. They often gathered and hunted the latter for trade goods. The Civil War brought turmoil to the Ozark uplands, even though no major battles were waged in the area. Guerilla groups terrorized local residents and regular Union troops occupied the area at various times. Both factions engaged in skirmishes and pillaged homesteads, impoverishing and depopulating the area. Local feuds and divided loyalties fueled violent conflict in the Current River valley for years after the war and left scars in the homeland that showed for decades. After the Civil War, major corporations entered the region and engaged in the large-scale extraction of the timber. The highland culture experienced significant change but characteristically adapted and continued. This included the introduction of a recreational float-fishing and hunting industry on and along the rivers. State and federal governments addressed the damage to natural resources with the restoration of the forest and establishment of state parks and a national forest. Later, the rivers became an early example of a shift in public interest to protecting the value of free-flowing rivers, resulting in the first federally protected river system.**

<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
The historic background, origins, and spread of Scots-Irish settlers in the highland regions of 19 <sup>th</sup> -century America	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who are the Scots-Irish?</li> <li>• Scots-Irish highland lifeways in America</li> <li>• Scots-Irish family and cultural ties</li> </ul>
Subsistence farmstead lifestyles of European American Ozarkers before the U.S. Civil War	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Agricultural practices</li> <li>• Animal husbandry</li> <li>• Homesteading and self-sufficiency</li> </ul>
The rise of the timber industry and the subsequent changes to the highlands economy and culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Missouri Lumber and Mining Company; coming of Current River Railroad</li> <li>• Minor mining operations for copper</li> </ul>
Growth of recreation on and along the rivers: floating, fishing, hunting, trapping, automobile tourism; eventual acquisition and designation of Ozark lands for public use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• State of Missouri's creation of Big Spring, Alley Spring, and Round Spring State Parks (1924-25)</li> <li>• Ozark families sent thousands of pounds of wild game – as well as moonshine whiskey -- to market in the cities during the Great Depression</li> </ul>

Theme Topic: History (continued)	
<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting Details</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Re-establishment of turkey/deer following decline and near-eradication due to over-hunting and timbering</li> </ul>
The Civilian Conservation Corps legacy in the park	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Stories and artifacts from the CCC, the camp in the park, CCC workers and what they did here (and elsewhere)</li> <li>Big Spring Lodge, the CCC cabins, and other CCC structures</li> </ul>
River camp and river guide period	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Growing popularity of recreational guided river trips provided by private outfitters</li> <li>Private resorts and clubs on both rivers</li> </ul>
Creation of Ozark National Scenic Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Documents, images, news clips, etc., from the time</li> <li>Oral histories from residents who gave up lands to the Riverways</li> </ul>



A visitor talks with a ranger inside the historic Alley Spring Roller Mill.



Theme Topic: Recreation	
<p>The resources of the NPS Riverways provide a wide variety of appropriate and relatively safe recreational opportunities and experiences. The compelling sensory experience of traveling on clear, flowing water through a tree-covered valley, with the chance to observe native wildlife, explore a cave, or ponder the size of a spring flow, serves as the essence of a National Riverways experience. Personal rejuvenation may result from following a recreational ethic of respect for resources and visitors, engaging in sustainable practices of hunting and fishing, or fulfilling a desire to have fun.</p>	
<i>Storyline Examples</i>	<i>Supporting details</i>
Exploring river-based recreation in the Riverways.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guidance/safety about boating, swimming, floating/tubing</li> <li>• Paddle sport activities including canoeing, kayaking and paddle boarding</li> <li>• Fishing clinics</li> <li>• Giggling instruction</li> </ul>
Exploring land-based recreation in the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hiking trails; hiking skills and safety</li> <li>• Guided cave tours</li> <li>• Wildlife observation and photography</li> <li>• Native plant identification</li> <li>• Geology tours</li> <li>• Hunting/fishing/trapping</li> </ul>
Sustainable extractive uses allowed in the Riverways	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hunting events, safety, and sustainability regarding species</li> <li>• Ethnobotany: gathering botanicals and medicinals (as permitted)</li> <li>• Fishing</li> </ul>
The Riverways as a haven and respite from modern lifestyles: a place to “get away”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The long history of recreational use of the Riverways landscape</li> <li>• Leave No Trace ethics</li> <li>• The Ozarks in literature, art, and music</li> <li>• Survival/wilderness skills</li> </ul>
The relatively mild winter weather provides opportunities for outside activities year-round.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Physical, psychological, and emotional benefits of spending time in a natural environment</li> </ul>

## Management Goals for Interpretation

Ozark National Scenic Riverways has the unique designation within the park's enabling legislation to interpret "the unique scenic and natural values and objects of historic interest." With this mandate, interpretation and education are important functions. In recent years, however, the interpretive program at ONSR has experienced staff turnover and restructuring that negatively affected the operation. As the staff and organizational structure have been restored, interpretation in the Riverways is in a period of rebirth and rebuilding. Management would like to see interpretive and educational outreach continue to grow, expanding program opportunities for a wide range of audiences and with a variety of goals in mind, including:

- Presenting a balanced program of cultural and natural resource interpretive program opportunities
- Updating existing exhibits and developing new exhibits in visitor centers parkwide
- Developing a new park interpretive film and using it widely throughout the park and in the community for educators and other groups
- Improving accessibility of all interpretive programming and media offered throughout the Riverways
- Expanding the opportunities for programs that encourage safe recreational opportunities in the park (paddling skills, river safety, fishing, hiking, kids' recreational programs, etc.)
- Expanding park stewardship opportunities
- Expanding outreach to develop positive relationships with local communities and schools, through programs such as community reunions and events that include local residents to tell their stories and history
- Expanding communications efforts through a variety of media, to reach audiences near and far
- Developing new partnerships that will enhance staff ability to accomplish all of the above
- Aligning education programs offered, both on- and off-site, with state educational standards



## Park Visitation

Ozark National Scenic Riverways is a popular destination, both for local visitors and for people across the Midwest region. In 2016, the Riverways hosted an estimated 1.2 million recreational visits. The majority of these visits occur during the summer months, especially weekends, as both nearby residents and out-of-area visitors come to enjoy casual swimming and floating down the river. Shoulder seasons in fall and spring attract steady but smaller numbers of visitors, often with more focused interests such as challenging canoe and kayak paddling, birding, hiking, and horseback riding.

Determining precisely where these visitors come from is difficult, but anecdotal evidence, staff observations, and past surveys indicate that about 25% of the park's regular visitors live nearby, probably in one of the four counties encompassing the Riverways boundaries. According to the U.S. Census (QuickFacts, 2015), these counties – Shannon, Carter, Dent, and Texas – have a combined population of some 55,000 people, roughly 22% of them under the age of 18.

By comparison, the St. Louis metropolitan area, only two hours away by car, has a population of 2.8 million. Other midwestern population centers within a half-day's drive include Memphis (1.3 million), Nashville (1.8 million), and Kansas City (2.1 million). Although hard data is unavailable, it is reasonable to assume that many of the Riverways' visitors, especially on crowded summer weekends, drive in from these urban and suburban parts of the region.

Over its 50-year lifespan as a national park, visitation records in the Riverways show wide variation, for reasons ranging from counting methods to economic recessions to weather. For example, the park experienced its highest visitation count of some 3 million visits in 1972; a drop to 1 million in 1974-75; a rise to 2.3 million in 1991; and a relatively steady count of just under 1.3 million for the past four years (2013-16).

### Visitor Contacts

In Fiscal Year 2016, the Riverways interpretive staff had five permanent positions and 16 temporary (seasonal) positions for a combined FTE of 6.4 to provide interpretive services for the annual expectation of 1.3 million visits. Altogether, the 21 people in the interpretive division recorded a total of 186,042 visitor contacts – about 14% of the Riverways' total visitation – including formal and informal interpretation, visitor center and contact station interactions, special events, and community outreach. Of this total, the largest number of contacts was described as “informal interpretation” (75,279), as compared to 7,662 contacts through formal interpretive programs.

## Visitor Experience Goals

What do visitors expect when they arrive in Ozark National Scenic Riverways? Especially in the summer months, many come with few expectations, but one simple goal: floating down the river with friends. In a day filled with sunshine, clear flowing water, and camaraderie, they may give little thought to other park offerings such as interpretive programs, exhibits, cave tours, or historic sites.

Other visitors, however, arrive in the Riverways seeking different experiences. Some want to swim or hike; others come to view birds and other wildlife; still others come to explore Ozark culture or traditional lifeways. For the interpretive staff, the challenge is to offer a well-rounded menu of interpretive programming (delivered face-to-face or via various media) that can assist all visitors – young and old, local or non-local, recreationist or history buff – in having memorable, engaging, resource-friendly, and safe experiences in the Riverways.

Workshop participants and Riverways staff guided the interpretive planning team in identifying the following visitor experience goals for the park. To encourage development of multi-faceted, universally accessible programming, these visitor experience goals are presented in four ways:

- what visitors should have opportunities to do at the park (experiential goals);
- what visitors might learn (cognitive goals);
- what feelings might be evoked (emotional goals); and
- how visitors' behavior might change as a result of their Riverways connection (behavioral goals).



These young visitors enjoy discovering nature during a hands-on ranger program.



## Experiential Goals:

What should visitors have the opportunity to do at Ozark National Scenic Riverways? Riverways interpretive programming will help visitors to:

- Interact with the Riverways by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and traveling in or beside its waters.
- Experience the Riverways' distinctive karst/cave landscape by seeing, hearing, touching, smelling, and/or exploring caves and springs.
- Swim, paddle, wade, row, or boat in Riverways waters.
- Explore a trail in the Riverways.
- Enjoy native Ozark plants and animals in their natural (wild) habitats and protected Ozarks ecosystems.
- Enjoy public and private special events in the Riverways, from community festivals to family reunions.
- Explore the Riverways' historic and cultural sites such as Alley Mill, the Alley General Store, and Storys Creek Schoolhouse; the Big Spring Dining Lodge, cabins, and other Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) structures; the Welch site; and other protected locations in a safe and accessible manner.
- Engage in “consumptive” activities to the extent allowed on this land: hunting, fishing, collecting mushrooms or other wild edibles or medicinals, etc.

Living history program participants learn that washing clothes was not so easy for early settlers in the Ozarks! Who knows how to use a washboard?



## Cognitive Goals:

What should visitors have the opportunity to learn here? Riverways interpretive programming will help visitors to:

- Gain an understanding for the importance of river systems, the unique features of the Riverways, and why it is important to preserve and protect rivers.
- Learn and practice new recreational skills that can enrich the Riverways experience, such as paddling, hiking/backpacking, fly fishing, mountain biking, wildlife observation, and camping.
- Explore the distinctive ecosystems of this region and follow personal interests about specific plant and animal communities and individual species here: for example, wild flowers; songbirds, waterfowl, or raptors; trout, free-roaming horses, hellbender salamanders, or cave crayfish.
- Gain a basic understanding of the underlying karst geology that created the many springs in the region; appreciate how unusual this area is and why it holds national and international significance.
- Learn about the history, culture, settings, and lifeways of earlier residents of the area, including tribal people, the Scots-Irish, and other immigrants.
- Examine the history, impact, and legacy of the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in state and national parks, its role in depression-era Missouri, and its pivotal role in making Ozark National Scenic Riverways the place it is today.
- Find out more about how and why this region became part of the National Park System.



## Emotional Goals:

What universal feelings might a visit to Ozark National Scenic Riverways evoke? Riverways interpretive programming will help visitors to:

- Relax and recharge in beautiful natural surroundings.
- Escape day-to-day routines and have fun on the river!
- Enjoy and share time and experiences with friends and family.
- Challenge oneself against the elemental forces of nature: rushing water, wind and water, and the great outdoors.
- Feel a sense of accomplishment, satisfaction, and self-sufficiency in being able to “paddle your own canoe” and handle other outdoor tasks such as setting up a campsite, lighting a fire, orienteering, etc.
- Appreciate the strength, perseverance, and cultures of earlier people and present-day residents, including tribal members and European Americans.
- Appreciate the special natural resources that are preserved within the Riverways.

## Behavioral Goals:

How might visitors’ behavior change by visiting Ozark National Scenic Riverways? Riverways interpretive programming will help visitors to:

- Understand and practice good “river etiquette” with consideration for other visitors enjoying the river.
- Learn and practice established safety habits on the river, on the trails, and in the caves. Among these are wearing appropriate safety gear, observing weather advisories, and notifying others of your plans.
- Practice “Leave No Trace” ethics in the Riverways and other public lands.
- Participate and support nature and public lands through stewardship and good citizenship by volunteering, voting, and other civic engagement.
- Share Riverways experiences with friends and family; come back again and again.
- Appreciate the natural, cultural history, and recreational opportunities in their own communities.
- Develop healthy exercise habits and routines that lead to an increased level of physical fitness and improved health.
- Continue stewardship practices and resource conservation at home.



## Existing Interpretive Programming, Facility, and Media Conditions

In a park that spans more than 80,000 acres and 134 miles of river-based recreation as well as spectacular springs, caves, and historic sites, providing comprehensive interpretive services is a major challenge. Logistically, park operations (including interpretive services) are divided into three districts: the Upper Current River District, the Lower Current River District, and the Jacks Fork River District, with each district having one or more visitor contact/ranger stations. By assigning experienced District Interpreters to manage interpretive services in each of the three districts, the interpretive division leverages its small staff efficiently to provide a wide range of programming, special events, and interpretive facilities. The Lower Current District Interpreter is based at park headquarters in Van Buren, the Upper Current District Interpreter at the ranger station at Round Spring, and the Jacks Fork District Interpreter at the ranger station at Alley Spring.

### Personal Interpretation

Ozark National Scenic Riverways strives to provide visitors with opportunities for personal contact with rangers and other park staff across the waterways, especially during times of peak visitation. Among these opportunities are:

- Guided tours of Round Spring Cave from Memorial Day to Labor Day
- Evening campfire programs on summer weekends at Big Spring, Pulltite, Round Spring, and Alley Spring campgrounds
- Children's nature activities on Sunday mornings in summer at the Big Spring, Alley Spring, Pulltite, and Round Spring amphitheaters
- Daily interpretive talks at Alley Mill during the summer
- Hikes, concerts, and cultural demonstrations on an occasional basis during the summer
- Specially scheduled activities such as guided photography hikes, interpretive hikes, paddle clinics and interpretive floats (with Missouri State Parks and instructors certified by the American Canoe Association), fishing clinics, a fish gigging excursion, folk dancing/clogging classes, and Civil War living history reenactments
- Cultural skills workshops such as wood carving, lye soap making, and chair caning led by living history volunteers and members of the Ozark Heritage Workshop
- Junior Ranger Day Camp and Junior Ranger activities throughout the year

The Riverways interpretive staff also offers free loans of river exploration kits, birding kits, fishing poles and tackle boxes, and life jackets.

An impressive calendar of large-scale special events attracts locals and regional visitors year-round. These include community gatherings with music and picnicking, story-telling, reunions of



historic school houses (such as Storys Creek and Button Rock) and reunions at other historic structures in the Riverways, (including the Chilton House and Mt Zion Church). The park is also known for a popular series of annual events, including:

- Heritage Day: Big Spring Classic Auto and Bluegrass Music Festival
- The Alley Independence Day Celebration (complete with homemade ice cream)
- The annual Haunting in the Hills festival
- Ozark Christmas Celebrations
- Winter Paddle Clinic and First Day Float
- Trail Celebration and Hiking Season Kickoff

Trying on a Junior Ranger hat may be the first step in becoming a lifelong steward of Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

## Exterior Exhibits and Interpretive Spaces

### *Amphitheaters*

Four campgrounds (Alley Spring, Big Spring, Pulltite, and Round Spring) have small, rustic amphitheaters used by rangers for evening programs.

Each of these four amphitheaters was originally equipped with audio-visual support equipment, but these elements need updating to be compatible with contemporary equipment.

### *Wayside Exhibits*

Wayside exhibits throughout the Ozark NSR vary considerably in age, condition, and style. Most of these existing wayside exhibits are installed at key points outside visitor contact stations, at discrete places of interest such as individual springs and historic sites and, to a limited extent, along some of the hiking trails. Many of these panels appear to have remained on the landscape since the last Long-Range Interpretive Plan nearly 20 years ago.

The park also uses a number of shingle-roofed kiosks with large display areas on both sides. Materials displayed in the kiosks are mainly temporary bulletin-board entries (upcoming events and the like) or paper maps. In general, the display space on these units seems to be under-utilized.

At present none of the Riverways' outdoor exhibits have audio description capability. At least one wayside at the entrance to the Big Spring Lodge and CCC cabins was originally equipped with an audio post, but it is no longer operational.

## Interior Exhibits and Interpretive Spaces

The Ozark National Scenic Riverways Contact Station in park headquarters in Van Buren contains a small reception desk and Eastern National store (staffed fulltime by park staff and volunteers), along with a non-permanent installation in the building lobby. This space provides opportunities for rotating long-term temporary exhibits and currently holds a room-sized Ozark homestead facade and assorted tools and reproduction artifacts, all placed in front of (and hiding) a large brick fireplace. The park would like to replace this display with more permanent exhibits. Major renovations in support of a larger exhibit space are unlikely, given that the NPS leases the space from the GSA, which leases the building from a private owner. However, the park is seeking to have the construction of a theater incorporated into the next GSA lease agreement, which is being negotiated in 2019.

### *Alley Spring*

The Alley Spring area includes the historic Alley Spring Roller Mill, a tall, striking barn-red structure beside the river; the restored Storys Creek Schoolhouse, a small one-room community school; the Alley General Store, an older park building refurbished as a "general store" visitor contact station and Eastern National retail outlet; and a wide expanse of greenspace that is ideal for festivals and community gatherings.



The main floor of Alley Mill has been restored to retain much of the authentic mill machinery and the rough exposed beams, walls, and floors of the original mill. The space also contains a staffed reception desk, a small Eastern National bookstore, small hands-on exhibits and reproduction artifacts.

The second floor of the mill contains exhibits that display dozens of historic photos of local residents and activities. This exhibit installation, while well-designed and in relatively good condition, is perhaps 30 years old and does not meet present-day accessibility or NPS identity standards; in addition, the upstairs space itself – accessible only via the mill’s original steep wooden stairs – does not meet current NPS or ADA accessibility requirements and cannot be readily adapted to do so.

The Storys Creek Schoolhouse is furnished with historic student and teacher desks, a wood stove, and reproduction school books and supplies representative of the school’s period of operation. It is “gated” open during most hours of operation and is staffed during periods of peak visitation to allow visitors to experience the one-room schoolhouse and participate in interpretive activities such as spelling and ciphering matches.

The Alley General Store, a short walk uphill from the mill and schoolhouse, offers a wide, welcoming front porch with rocking chairs and an appealing interior that evokes a traditional Ozark country store. Authentic artifacts are mixed in with hand-crafted items and Eastern National merchandise, with a visitor information and sales desk staffed by a uniformed NPS employee or volunteer.

### **Akers Campground**

The Akers Campground visitor contact station presents something of a dilemma: This small structure contains an attractive, colorful landscape mural with a 3-D crawl-through cave scene – but first of all, there are no caves visitors can access from this part of the park, and second, half of the mural is blocked off from visitor use because it now holds exercise equipment (treadmills, weight machines) for the park’s law enforcement staff. This area could be used to help the visitors learn about several attractions within just few minutes of Akers, such as Devils Well, Welch Spring and Hospital, Mt. Zion Church, the old Welch Lodge, and Susie Nichols Farm. The upper Current River above Cedar Grove is also a Blue Ribbon Trout Stream and staff have started conducting fly fishing and fly tying classes at the Akers visitor contact station during the summer months.

## Big Spring Historic District

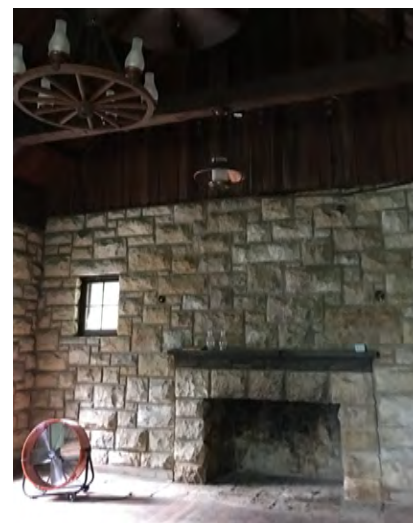
In addition to its main attraction (one of the biggest springs in the nation), the Big Spring area includes historic structures built by the Civilian Conservation Corps: **Big Spring Dining Lodge**, rustic **CCC Cabins**, and a small building referred to as the **CCC Museum**. All these structures were closed in late 2014 for renovation and restoration. Unfortunately, the lodge was severely flooded in April 2017, which has complicated this already complex restoration project.

While most of the space in the lodge and the cabins will be dedicated to historic uses (i.e., dining and lodging), the museum structure offers significant interpretive opportunities.

The Big Spring area lost a major interpretive structure in the recent floods – a historic recreation of a pioneer building, where the staff frequently conducted educational and interpretive programs.

## Powder Mill Visitor Center

The Powder Mill Visitor Center was severely damaged by the April 2017 flooding. After the flood, the building was condemned as unsafe for occupancy; the park has decided to tear it down, as it sustained significant structural damage. This building had been highlighted in the 2015 General Management Plan for a \$480,000 adaptive reuse as an interpretive learning center with exhibits and a classroom.



The historic CCC buildings in Big Spring Historic District, shown here in summer of 2017, are scheduled for a major restoration.

## **Pulltite Campground**

The Pulltite Campground Visitor Center also suffered extensive damage in the April 2017 flood. The pavilion and contact station were inundated with water; by mid-August 2017, the structure was cleared and repaired with new drywall and awaited finishing out for future use. The park views this space as a “clean slate” for future interpretive use, perhaps incorporating movable displays, audience-centered opportunities such as a bulletin board (already in use), and other interpretive tools. Outside the Pulltite Visitor Center is a wayside exhibit about the Pulltite cabin, which lies across the river and is most readily accessed by boat. The newly renovated visitor center will act as a center for outdoor and environmental education programs, children’s programs, evening programs and other park-hosted activities.

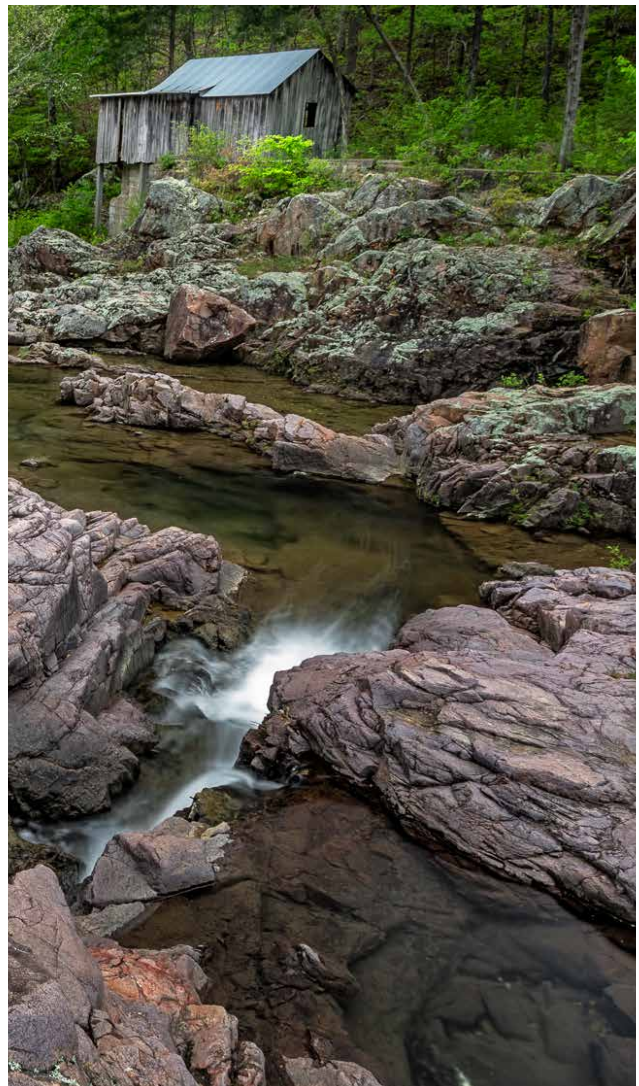
## **Round Spring Historic District**

The starting point for cave tours, the Round Spring Ranger Station is a small space packed with a variety of interpretive displays, printed materials, caving equipment (lights, etc.), and staff space. Individually, many of these elements have significant interpretive value; collectively, they may overwhelm visitors unless a ranger offers assistance. Located on State Highway 19, Round Spring Ranger Station is one mile from a new state park that includes a lodge, campground, and day use area. The new state park is a launching point for visitors to the Riverways.

Round Spring is the first stopping point for these visitors, but at present, the roughly 100-square-foot ranger station does not provide little opportunity to create a lasting favorable impression of the NPS. Additionally, State Highway 19 is the gateway for visitors from the St. Louis metropolitan area, which is one of the largest markets for visitors to the park.

## **Other Historic Sites**

At least 19 historic sites listed on the National Register of Historic Places are located within the Riverways. The most accessible and most thoroughly interpreted of these are Alley Spring Roller Mill and the Big Spring Historic District CCC landscape (currently closed for renovations). Other sites, such as Button Rock School or Mt. Zion Church, are used to host occasional events. Many sites, however, remain relatively inaccessible and under-represented in the park’s interpretive programming.





## Interpretive Publications

Site bulletins:

- Big Spring
- Round Spring
- Alley: A Spring, A Mill, A Story
- Karst in the Ozarks

Small pocket guide series:

- Hiking in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways: Upper Current
- Hiking in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways: Big Spring
- Hiking the Current River Section of the Ozark Trail

Events brochure: produced quarterly

Rack cards:

- Horseback riding
- Floating the Ozark Riverways

Youth and Educational Interpretive Materials:

- Junior Ranger Activities Booklet, Ozark National Scenic Riverways
- Junior Cave Scientist Activity Book from the Geologic Resources Division/Cave and Karst Program
- Teachers Guide to Ozark National Scenic Riverways (available for download as a pdf, a 77-page curriculum guide with classroom and on-site activities that meet Common Core and/or Next Generation Science Standards)
- Teachers Guide to Caves and Groundwater: More than Skin Deep (a comprehensive curriculum on caves, designed to prepare students for cave tours in the park)
- Hiking through History on the Ozark Trail: A Study of Natural and Cultural History along the Ozark Trail (a new curriculum guide developed by one of the park's district interpreters in 2017)

## Social and Digital Media

**NPS website:** Working within the confines of the NPS web template, the Riverways staff has provided visitors with a wealth of helpful information, interpretation, and education about many aspects of the park. For example, visitors can find detailed material on Ozark plants and animals, caves and karst topography, raft and canoe rentals, float times between destinations, and even mile-by-mile river charts on NPS-generated webpages or linked websites produced by partners.

**Facebook:** The official park Facebook page had 41,000 “likes” in late 2017 and numerous visitor posts, as well as park photos and information about up-to-date events and activities in the Riverways. This page can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/Ozarkriverways>, with a mobile version at <https://mobile.facebook.com/Ozarkriverways>. Somewhat confusingly, however, another Riverways Facebook page is found at <https://www.facebook.com/Ozark-National-Scenic-Riverways-127446180634441/> and also appears to be a current NPS site, though with a more national focus; at present the Riverways staff is unable to track, edit, or delete this site.

**Instagram and Twitter:** Riverways staff uses these tools sporadically for some messages and posts.

## Partners and Other Plans

Ozark National Scenic Riverways is fortunate to have productive partnerships with many public and private organizations in the region.

The **Ozark Riverways Foundation**, organized in 2014, has a cooperative agreement as the park's official Friends group, but has yet to obtain the 501(c)3 tax-exempt status that would enable it to accept tax-deductible donations. The "Support Your Park" page on the NPS Riverways website has a link for the Friends group ([www.ozarkriverways.org](http://www.ozarkriverways.org)) and its Facebook page, but neither link is functional; the foundation currently appears to have no web presence. Lack of a strong web presence means the foundation has no ready avenue for acquiring new members or support.

Because the Ozark Riverways Foundation does not yet have tax-exempt status, the Community Foundation of the Ozarks, the region's established philanthropic organization, is currently serving as the conduit for donations.

Both the **Missouri Department of Conservation** and the **Missouri Department of Natural Resources** (the parent agency of Missouri State Parks) work closely with the Riverways on a number of visitor and resource concerns. Three state parks, Montauk State Park, Echo Bluff State Park, and Current River State Park, lie in close proximity to the Riverways, and NPS staff and state park staff collaborate on paddling workshops and other events.

The **American Canoe Association** works with the Riverways to offer a regular schedule of paddling workshops year-round.

The **Ozark Trail Association** works with the NPS to construct, maintain and promote the section of the Ozark Trail that runs through the Riverways.

The **Back Country Horsemen of Missouri** works with the Riverways regarding equestrian use of Riverways trails.

The **Cave Research Foundation** works closely with park resource managers and interpreters for the monitoring and protection of caves and bats throughout the riverways. These activities include assisting with management activities in Round Spring Cave and contributing to educational and interpretive materials and exhibits for visitors.

The **Salem Natural and Cultural Resource Center** manages a community visitor center in the city of Salem, north of the Riverways. This location is a gateway to the park on Highway 19. The facility includes an exhibit area with exhibits and publications about the Riverways.

The **Friends of the Ozark Riverways** is a citizen watchdog and advocacy group not formally associated with NPS, but active in monitoring and caring for the Riverways.

The Riverways also works with a number of county and municipal organizations in the area on relevant projects and events. For example, the NPS and the **Shannon County Museum Association** co-host the annual Round Spring Community reunion in the park, in addition to several other community reunions. The **Ozark Heritage Project** works with the NPS on annual river cleanup events and interpretive events and programs.

## Other Plans

*A Roads and Trails Management Plan* for the Riverways was begun in fall 2015. This planning process continued through 2016 with public comment sessions and reports. However, the process was put on hold after the extreme flooding and damage in the park in April 2017, while park staff focuses on flood recovery. This planning effort is now slated for completion in 2019.





## Issues and Influences

### A Very Large, Very Linear Park

Ozark National Scenic Riverways extends 134 miles along the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers – and visitors can cross the boundaries almost anywhere along the way. These two facts affect interpretive programming in the Riverways in multiple ways.

First, unless visitors stop in at the Van Buren headquarters visitor contact station or one of the other visitor contact stations along the Riverways, they may spend considerable time in the Riverways without encountering park staff or informational or interpretive materials. As a result, many visitors probably miss the opportunity to explore aspects of the park (historic sites, springs) beyond their immediate interests.

Second, both visitors and interpretive staff must plan their days according to the limits of distances and driving (or boating time) between sites. For visitors, these distances mean that unless they are staying several days, visiting more than one site or doing more than one activity on a single trip can be difficult. Therefore, many river users are unable or unlikely to visit Round Spring Cave, the springs, or historic sites such as Alley Mill or the CCC buildings on a single day trip.

To accommodate these distance-related concerns, the Riverways interpretive staff has worked to maintain a number of outdoor bulletin boards at high-use locations, as well as to staff visitor contact stations during peak seasons. Nonetheless, providing engaging interpretation and inspiring stewardship among an elusive audience remains a challenge.



## Accessing Collections

Although Ozark National Scenic Riverways has extensive collections, few of these items are available for visitors or interpreters to see, hear, or access via a digital database. Collections include ancient projectile points and pottery, historic artifacts such as wooden and iron implements, textiles, historic photographs, and oral histories, to name a few. The lack of access to these items has a profound impact on interpretive programming and visitor experience.

- One problem is that the park currently has no museum-quality protective environments for the display of fragile artifacts. Several cases presumed to be museum quality now appear to be inadequate for current standards. Other spaces are not controlled environments regarding access, temperature and humidity, and sunlight. To date, the park has few replica items available for visitor display.
- Similarly, the park has no venue where visitors can listen to dozens of oral history recordings, collected some years ago and now stored on archival-quality CDs.
- Another concern is the inability of interpretive staff to access the park's collections database, which is housed on a proprietary ICMS software database that can only be searched through the ICMS installation on the cultural resources professional's computer. Interpretive staff cannot conduct their own searches of the park's collections, but must ask the lone cultural resources professional to do it for them.
- The park's cultural resources branch currently suffers from a staffing shortage and a heavy workload. A vacant Museum Specialist position is expected to be filled in FY2019, which will help. Nonetheless, these circumstances make it difficult for the cultural resources branch to assist the interpretive team in a timely manner as needed.



Older exhibits on the second floor of Alley Mill display a limited number of artifacts.

## Summer Crowding and Winter Closings

Like many parks, Ozark National Scenic Riverways experiences peak periods of very high visitation on summer weekends, offset by low attendance at other times of the year. In general, the summer weekend crowds come to float down the river, often in a party mood of good times, relaxed behavior, and a casual disregard for personal safety. Consistent NPS enforcement of desirable “river etiquette” works to control most behavior problems, although family groups and visitors seeking solitude may still encounter (or seek to escape) a party atmosphere on the river. Safety considerations remain a serious concern, especially among inexperienced and intoxicated weekend visitors.

During the shoulder (spring and fall) and winter seasons, however, lower visitation makes it impractical for park interpreters to provide the full range of services they provide in the summer. Some campgrounds and visitor contact stations are closed, and activities such as guided hikes and campfire programs are curtailed. Under these circumstances, shoulder-season and winter visitors – many of whom chose the off-season to avoid the summer crowds – have fewer opportunities to engage in staff interaction or interpretive programming. Serious paddlers from northern states such as Wisconsin, Iowa, and northern Illinois come to the upper Current River in September and October to enjoy the fall weather and to paddle when it is less crowded. The Pulltite campground is often filled to capacity during a paddling rendezvous the second week of October, with paddlers from as far away as Alaska.

## Wi-Fi and Cell Service: Hard to Find

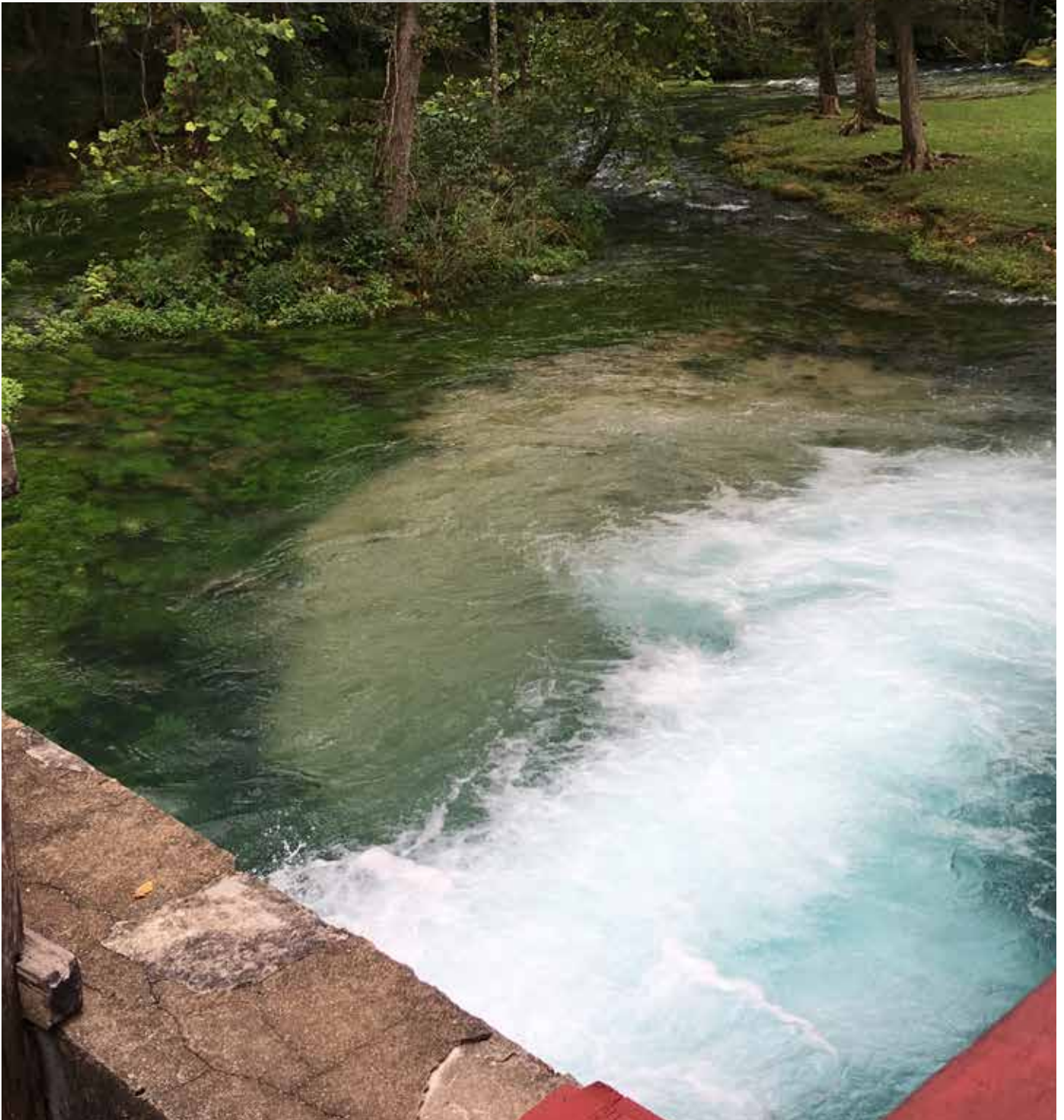
Given the hilly terrain in such a rural area, many locations in the Riverways have spotty or non-existent Wi-Fi or cell phone service. For visitors and interpreters alike, this situation has both positive and negative impacts. While the opportunity to “unplug” may be a welcome part of the Riverways experience, park visitors (except for those seeking a backcountry experience) tend to expect at least a minimal level of cell phone service for personal contacts and safety. For interpreters, the lack of Wi-Fi or reliable cell phone service means no cloud-based digital media (an increasingly important part of the 21st-century interpretive toolkit), as well as inability to get regular office communications such as email.

## Community Relations

The communities surrounding Ozark National Scenic Riverways are a vital constituency for the park. In the 53 years since its establishment (partly by eminent domain), NPS/community relations remain a concern. In recent years the park has employed a number of local community members as both temporary and permanent interpreters, including three experienced district interpreters with longstanding regional and community ties. These connections have enabled the Riverways to anticipate and respond to community needs in a number of positive ways. Among the more visible examples of improved NPS/community relationships are the annual reunions at historic schoolhouses, popular community events at Alley Mill, recently introduced events on the Upper Current River, new trail-building activities creating connections to state parks and the Ozark Trail, and local residents’ participation as demonstrators, storytellers, and collaborators in various park programs and special events.



# Recommendations



In the aftermath of major flooding that severely damaged several key visitor structures in spring 2017, Ozark National Scenic Riverways faces significant challenges – but also a rare opportunity to reexamine interpretive needs across the park. The necessity of replacing or rehabilitating older interpretive structures offered the team a chance to focus on next-generation interpretive approaches and improved visitor experience as intentional outcomes as the damaged sites are repaired.

## Interpretive Sites and Facilities

Using the flood damage as a springboard for innovative review, the planning team identified the following broad interpretive goals focusing on the park’s physical appearance, sites, and facilities.

### (1) **Improve the Welcome/Arrival Experience at All Entry Points.**

Visitors arriving within Ozark National Scenic Riverways should immediately recognize and feel like they are arriving at a very special place: a national park.

- Review and implement consistent upgrades to all park entrance signs on all public highways leading into the riverways; add signs where needed. Visitors should have no doubt about when they have entered Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and they should immediately understand that this impressive landscape (regardless of its state park history or origins) is a unit of the National Park Service.
- Perform periodic reviews of common online public and commercial mapping and tourism resources (Google Maps, GIS indicators, state park map systems, TripAdvisor, etc.) and correct nomenclature as needed to make sure former state parks (Big Spring State Park, Alley Spring State Park) are accurately and completely identified as part of the National Park Service’s Ozark National Scenic Riverways.
- Work with concessionaires to be sure their physical and web-based informational sites reflect the correct nomenclature and the aesthetic and interpretive standards expected for visitor-facing installations within the National Park Service. If necessary, create a check-list to provide guidance on these expectations; when contracts renew, incorporate these standards into contracts.
- Reach out to the travel/tourism industry and local, regional, and national travel media, perhaps through an occasional “media day” at the park, to help explain and encourage accurate branding of the Riverways as a unit of the National Park Service.

**(2) Improve Accessibility for All Visitors.**

Develop Riverways interpretive facilities, materials, and activities that strive for wider accessibility for people with differing abilities and diverse interests and approaches to using the park.

- In remodeling or reconfiguring each of the visitor contact centers, incorporate traffic pathways, turnaround circumferences, and exhibit installations that accommodate people who use wheelchairs.
- Explore ways to make riverside interpretive and recreational activities more accessible for visitors with physical or mobility concerns, including the region's high proportion of older residents as well as young families with strollers and small children.
  - A short, hard-surface interpretive trail along the water – accessed from a paved parking lot with handicap parking spaces -- could provide a broad range of potential visitors with a safe, engaging, accessible outdoor experience that is currently unavailable in the Riverways.
- At a minimum, all future wayside exhibits and interior exhibits should be accompanied by audio descriptions (perhaps in Spanish as well as English) for visitors who are visually impaired. Tactile elements should be integrated where feasible and appropriate.

**(3) Position the Park For Major New Construction For Visitor Services.**

The loss of interpretive structures during the 2017 flood exacerbated a long-standing concern within the Riverways: the lack of physical spaces designed and equipped for 21st-century interpretive needs. Ideally, over the long term the Riverways should seek ways to fund and develop wholly new, fully accessible facilities designed for and dedicated to interpretive services, with adequate space and infrastructure for successive generations of visitors in the years to come.

- Demographic and visitation trends, as well as existing legislation, speak very clearly to the need for improved accessibility, in multiple ways, throughout the park. Larger, more functional spaces and new technology infrastructure are sorely needed to meet accessibility standards, enhance interpretive capabilities, and streamline day-to-day operations.
- While some accessibility and infrastructure needs can be met by retrofitting (as detailed in Recommendation 4 below), such an approach often has limitations that new construction does not. At best, retrofitting should be viewed as a stop-gap or long-term temporary solution that rarely eliminates the eventual need for new construction.
- This plan lays the groundwork for major overhauls and/or new construction of interpretive facilities over the long term, even though the timeframes for such projects will likely fall beyond the ten-year life cycle of the plan.
- For potential collaboration with partner sites, see Partnering for Success (p. 61).



**(4) Retrofit, Improve, and Expand Existing Interpretive Spaces.**

Unlike many older parks, Ozark National Scenic Riverways was developed without a large centralized visitor center. However, with creative and forward-thinking refurbishment, each existing visitor contact facility could become a unique hub in a “distributed” visitor network, with the potential to develop its own identity and provide visitors with a distinctive, memorable piece of the of the total Riverways experience.

The following paragraphs offer broad overview recommendations, including a primary interpretive focus, for each location. For more detailed conceptual interpretive planning for each site, see the Media Report (Appendix A).

**Round Spring Visitor Center**

Upgrade and expand Round Spring visitor station to transform this site – the first stop in the Riverways for many visitors – into an attractive, engaging interpretive and visitor services center that truly welcomes visitors to a national park.

- As the starting point for cave tours, this site’s main interpretive emphasis should be on cave and karst topography, a fundamental feature of the Riverways landscape.
  - Reconfigure the landscaping and parking for a more welcoming arrival experience – for example, incorporating a small interpretive playground with cave-like features to intrigue young visitors with an immediate “virtual” experience of caves.
- Install an effective, consistent visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the building so it is available 24 hours a day.
- Remove all interior activities (such as storage and office space for other divisions) that are not directly related to interpretation and visitor interactions.
  - If more storage is needed, consider portable, free-standing outside storage bins.
  - Freed-up interior space could be used for interpretive exhibits on caves and karst, as well as visitor seating and a video viewing station.

- Since this site is where visitors come to get tickets for cave tours, the spatial layout should allow people to accomplish this function without impeding on others' experience in the space.
- Analyze the options and streamline the sign-up process as much as possible, so it is easier for visitors and more staff-efficient for the park.
- Consider a separate door or service counter, possibly on an exterior wall, for cave tickets.
- Explore options for switching the cave tour tickets to online booking in the future, as the technology allows. Ideally, this sign-up process could occur in several ways without conflict: (1) online in advance before visitors arrive at the park; (2) online at any visitor contact center within the park; and (3) online or offline – i.e., manually by signing up in person – at the Round Spring visitor contact station.



### Pulltite Visitor Contact Center

As repairs are completed, reimagine this visitor space, beginning with the 2018 season, as a vibrant, interactive visitor center and outdoor programming/activity space for a wide range of Riverways visitors.

- Given its location and popularity among paddlers, the primary interpretive focus for this site is water-based recreation and safety.
- Work with construction team during the repair process to “future-proof” this structure by building in flexibility for accommodating conduit and electrical capacity for computers, Internet connection, and public-access Wi-Fi capability. Although these amenities may seem a long way off at present, repairing buildings without attention to future technology needs is tantamount to creating an anachronistic 21st-century “historic structure” – with all the attendant problems of retrofitting when the time comes.
- Install an effective, consistent visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the structure so it is available 24 hours a day.

### Akers Visitor Contact Center

Reclaim 100% of the visitor-oriented mural space in the Akers visitor contact station for visitor and interpretive use, with the primary interpretive focus on the Ozarks' natural environment/ecology (past and present) and the historic settlement of the region.

- Currently about half the room is closed to visitors to house exercise equipment for park law enforcement, even though the walls of the closed-off space contain the continuation of an attractive cave-and-river mural and cave crawl-through exhibit. The room was repurposed for law enforcement use several years ago due to lack of interpretive staffing and low visitation.
- A reliable volunteer presence and other staffing and programming changes can make this visitor contact center a vital part of the interpretive program in this part of the park once again. Potential volunteer groups assigned to staff this facility might include the Coast Guard Auxiliary, Shannon County Museum, or Dent County Historical Society. It could also be the HQ for a newly established Friends group.
- Work with the concessionaire to encourage visitors waiting for shuttle service to explore the visitor contact station while they wait – without fear of missing the bus.
- Consider adding a wayside about the river ferry and floating the Upper Current.
- Install an effective, consistent visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the structure so it is available 24 hours a day.

### Alley Spring Mill and General Store

The historic Alley Spring Mill and the nearby schoolhouse and general store are ideal locations for interpreting the historical, cultural, and archeological themes of the Riverways, and the current interpretive focus at these sites follows suit with these themes. However, since Alley Spring receives high visitation from visitors who might not go on to visit other contact stations in the park, other park themes should not be neglected; for many visitors, the Alley Spring area is their primary (or only) orientation stop for the Riverways as a whole. With that caveat in mind, the following recommendations have been developed for this district.

- Update and revise the interpretive exhibits in Alley Mill. Current interpretive exhibits have not been updated, revised, or altered in decades; this high-traffic visitor space is in critical need of new interpretive exhibits that are interactive, engaging, and in line with 21st-century interpretive design, accessibility, and appeal to diverse audiences. (A request for updating is currently in the FMSS). The new exhibits must be incorporated into the historical fabric of the mill setting to enhance, rather than detract from, the historical significance of this iconic Riverways site.



- Update and revise the interpretive exhibits in Alley Mill. Current interpretive exhibits have not been updated, revised, or altered in decades; this high-traffic visitor space is in critical need of new interpretive exhibits that are interactive, engaging, and in line with 21st-century interpretive design, accessibility, and appeal to diverse audiences. (A request for updating is currently in the FMSS). The new exhibits must be incorporated into the historical fabric of the mill setting to enhance, rather than detract from, the historical significance of this iconic Riverways site. Combine and condense the current footprint of the two sales outlets run by Eastern National cooperating association at Alley Spring. These sales outlets, one in the Alley Mill and the other at the General Store/Visitor Center, should be consolidated into one outlet at the General Store, with only a limited selection of items and minimal sales – if any – within the historic Alley Mill, so as not to detract from its interpretive focus and historical ambiance. Overall, the footprint of sales merchandise in both locations should be reduced to allow the interpretive focus to expand at each location.
- Reorganize the spatial allocations for interpretation in Alley General Store. The only visitor contact station in the Alley Spring district, this building also houses the district interpretive ranger's office, as well as offices for seasonal rangers and Eastern National. In the current layout, visitor contact space is limited, with the floor space devoted to retail sales roughly equal to the space devoted to interpretation. A ratio of 80% interpretive space and 20% sales space would be more appropriate for the mission of the park.
- The building's screened porch currently serves as an off-season area for visitors to get a passport stamp and park literature. The porch could be better utilized for the interpretive mission of the park by expanding and incorporating it into the main building structure to provide a common area for visitors to engage with interactive exhibits.
- Upgrade the IT infrastructure throughout this building.
  - Upgrade the IT infrastructure in the district interpreter's office to make it more effective for developing and managing interpretive media.
    - The District Interpreter based here is responsible for the park website, its Facebook page, park alert duties, and wayside media design.
  - Upgrade other office and potential office space in the building as well to prepare for current and future needs.
  - Install a public Wi-Fi connection for visitors in Alley General Store, the only visitor contact station in the district. This Wi-Fi connection would enable visitors to download park apps, allow for digital stamping of park passports, make online reservations for campsites, and other time- and staff-saving activities.
- Construct a separate exterior storage area near the store to provide adequate storage for parkwide interpretive materials and props, as well as other items (some too large for indoor storage) used in the district's many special events.

## Van Buren Headquarters and Visitor Contact Station

The primary interpretive focus of the lobby space/visitor contact station in the Riverways headquarters building should be park orientation and park history. Visitors typically come into this space to pick up brochures and maps, use the restroom, and talk to a staff member about places to go and things to do.

- Produce an Ozark Riverways park movie or video. (See Interpretive Media, p. 52.) This is a frequent and consistent request from visitors.
- A large video-assisted topographical map installation in the space opposite the desk (where the EN merchandise is now) would provide diverse visitors with an absorbing, family-friendly interactive experience showing the entire scope and scale of the Riverways.
  - o With video mounted in the ceiling and directed at the topo, this kind of installation would have the appearance of permanence but would be entirely removable with no effect on the building interior.
- Comfortable seating and other furnishings around the fireplace would give other visitors a restful place to wait on family members.
- Scrapbooks tethered to a coffee/sofa tables could show historic images that help tell the story of the park.

- Enlarged historic photographs, some with simple interactive reader rails, could offer additional interpretation of the heritage and lifeways of Ozark residents, replacing our outdated photographs.
- Explore future options for a major upgrade of the visitor contact space in the Van Buren headquarters, such as relocating current offices, pursuing the construction of a theater facility, and converting the south wing of the building into a visitor center and interpretive exhibit space.



The park mounts seasonal displays in the lobby of the Van Buren headquarters building. A long-range recommendation in this plan suggests reconfiguring space in the headquarters building for a dedicated interpretive exhibit gallery.

### Amphitheaters in Campgrounds

Upgrade the campground amphitheaters to accommodate a flexible range of interpretive programming and activities, day or night.

- Replace the Big Spring amphitheater destroyed in the 2017 floods.
- Install best-available outdoor theater systems in all four sites.
- Upgrade electrical systems to accommodate or surpass new technology needs.
- Assess staging, seating and tables/work surfaces and refurbish as needed.
  - Movable seating can allow greater flexibility in programming, such as cultural demonstrations.
  - Portable staging elements, including lighting, can provide temporary platforms or stages for music, drama, dance, or storytelling performances.
- Retrofit each site for greater accessibility for entry/exit, seating, and audio/visual needs.

### Retail Outlets in Visitor Spaces

With interpretive spaces severely challenged by flood damage, reevaluate the spatial footprints and placement of the four retail installations (currently operated by the Eastern National cooperating association) in the Riverways.

- The Alley Mill Historic District has two retail outlets in close proximity, and both shops display merchandise throughout these unique historic settings (the roller mill and the general store). Retail use of these valuable interpretive settings competes with existing and potential ranger programming, hands-on activities, storytelling, live banjo and fiddle-playing, and other interpretive offerings.
  - If merchandising were scaled back in the general store, visitors could enjoy the “immersive” experience of rocking in a handmade chair beside local knitters, quilters, or whittlers around the pot-bellied stove.
  - Scaling back the retail element of Alley roller mill would allow on-duty personnel greater flexibility to interpret the mill’s historic equipment, stories, and role in the community. Reducing the merchandise selection in the mill (while promoting the larger sales area a short distance away at the general store) would also free up space for interpretive exhibits and hands-on activities.



- In the Big Spring Historic District, it is important to note that in planning for the future use of the restored CCC structures (especially the museum building), retail use should be minimal and clearly secondary to these structures' primary purpose and "highest and best use" as immersive interpretive structures. In short, the buildings are being restored for their historic and interpretive value, not as retail outlets.
- In the Van Buren headquarters, the merchandising footprint occupies approximately one-quarter of the very limited public space, leaving very little room for interpretive needs such as exhibits or artifact displays, visitor gatherings, or visitor/ranger interactions.
- In addition to spatial concerns, the scope of sales agreement governing the park's retail operation is more than a decade old. A new scope of sales agreement is in draft and can offer guidance for merchandise that best supports the park's interpretive themes and storylines and engages next-generation audiences. Continuing to seek sales items that are more specific to the Ozark culture should be a priority in the new scope of sales, in order to enhance visitor experience and better interpret the heritage of the Ozarks.



Alley Mill General Store doubles as a retail sales outlet and a visitor contact station.

### A New Space for River Ecology: Two Rivers Visitor Contact Center

The Riverways' General Management Plan of 2015 proposed a \$480,000 investment to remodel the Powder Mill visitor facility as an interpretive center – an opportunity that was lost when the 2017 flooding destroyed the building.

But the need for additional interpretive/visitor space in the Riverways remains. This plan proposes that a new visitor/interpretive facility – with indoor/outdoor capacity similar to the Pulltite facility – be constructed at Two Rivers, a popular camping, picnicking, and river input location at the confluence of the Current and the Jacks Fork Rivers (i.e., the two rivers) that form the Riverways.

A new Two Rivers Visitor Contact Center would be the ideal location for a strong contemporary interpretive focus on river ecology. The desire for more in-depth interpretation of the rivers themselves (compared to recreation, cultural history, or geology) surfaced in numerous ways during the planning process, as stakeholders and staff alike observed that “It all starts with the water.” At present, however, visitors have little opportunity to explore the multitude of river stories awaiting discovery.

The restored one-room schoolhouse in Alley Mill Historic District offers 21st-century children an immersive experience in an authentic historic setting.

### A New (Old) Space for Artifacts: The Big Spring Visitor Center and Museum

A small historic structure awaiting restoration in the Big Spring Historic District, this stone CCC building will not be ready for occupancy until at least 2022 (and thus is outside the scope of this plan). Nonetheless, its potential for interpretive use, most likely as a small museum, influences the projected use of other spaces that are or could be adapted for interpretive needs. At present, the Riverways has little space and no museum-quality casework to display artifacts. If the CCC Museum can be earmarked for that purpose, other interpretive spaces (such as Van Buren) can be spared that expense.



## Park Identity and Cohesiveness

- (1) Seek consistent, long-term ways to promote the concept of the Riverways as one cohesive entity, both within the Riverways and in the surrounding communities and gateways to the park.
  - Develop a large (5'x4' or larger) wall-sized Riverways overview graphic panel (with duplicates as needed) for placement in gateway settings outside the park: city and county welcome centers and tourism information sites, chambers of commerce, highway rest stops, state park lodges, hotels/lodges, concessionaire sites, and other locations where Riverways visitors will see them – and make the panel available at no cost to host sites (perhaps through funding by the Friends). This large panel should have a full Riverways map as the background and photo inserts (maybe dimensional or layered over the background image) to show well-known sites and activities (Round Spring, the CCC sites, boating, campgrounds, etc.) and present them together as all a part of the Riverways. In essence, this large wall installation should have the same goal as the park unigrid brochure – to present a one-stop interpretive overview of the park – but in a larger, simplified format.
    - o Depending on park and local printing capabilities, this large wall panel can be designed locally, perhaps inhouse, and printed on an inexpensive rigid printable product like Sintra or even a heavily laminated paper.
  - Using a similar template and design approach, improve the appearance of the existing exterior informational kiosks throughout the park so these important visitor stopping points have a consistent and well-cared for look. Each kiosk should provide a consistent level of park orientation, year-round parkwide interpretation, professional-looking site-specific interpretation, and a durable and attractive change-out section for posting weekly/daily news and events.
    - o A permanent kiosk-sized map could serve as a backdrop for the front side of each kiosk (marked with a stick-on YOU ARE HERE), paired with a large colorful image of a specific site for the back side of each kiosk. For selected kiosks, the park could incorporate opportunities for audience responses or observations by directing visitors to a tethered notebook or write-on board.
  - Adapt this same template for use as a consistent, eye-catching orientation center in a consistent location inside each visitor contact facility.



- (2) Use parkwide safety messaging as a unifying element that visitors find throughout the Riverways and the communities surrounding the park.
- Seek ways to reach out to the growing numbers of do-it-yourself floaters who bypass the concessionaire system and often enter the river with little or no training.
    - Work to make safety training available to all Riverways staff, so that all staff members will maintain a focus on safety, be aware of best practices, and will be able to communicate consistent, park-approved safety messaging to visitors when/as required.
    - Prepare and install inexpensive but powerful safety messaging in the key locations almost every Riverways visitors will eventually visit: the restrooms.
  - Integrate NPS-approved safety messaging as a required element for all new and renewing concessionaire contracts throughout the Riverways, including retail sales/campground stores as well as boating concessionaires. With consistent symbols and reminders supplemented by video and hands-on programming, staying safe in the Riverways will become a pervasive top-of-mind attitude among a wide swath of visitors.
    - For retail outlets, this messaging can be imprinted on receipts and shopping bags, water bottles, drink cozies and the like.
    - An additional option is to install a small-footprint “safety stands” in each visitor center with tethered adult and children’s life jackets to try on, a wall-mounted tablet running an attention-getting video loop, and other pertinent information such as the number of boat capsizes or park rescues so far this season.
    - For boating concessionaires, the safety requirement should be that every customer be given a short interpretive video and/or a hands-on safety presentation that provides consistent, accurate information on river safety through the seasons. The park has a few American Canoe Association (ACA) certified instructors who could be available in key locations on Saturday mornings during the busy season. ACA certified instructors could give “Quickstart” briefings, about 15 minutes of instruction, to floaters. The park is currently offering ACA skill classes in the Upper Current River District; these could be duplicated in all districts.

- (3) Stage occasional “community listening events” in different regions of the Riverways, such as the northern end (Tan Vat) area, to invite the public to come and share their memories, stories, and concerns about the Riverways and its identity in their lives.
  - These events could feature a StoryCorps-style session with schoolchildren interviewing grandparents or a family photographs session (where park personnel make digital copies of family images).
  - As workshop stakeholders made clear, many middle-aged residents continue to harbor strong feelings and memories about the local impact of the Riverways – even though they may have been children or young adults at the time local landowners (their parents or grandparents) experienced the creation of the park.



Boating safety is a vital message for regular visitors and newcomers alike. Kayaking classes and other programs help visitors learn and practice safety on the water.

## Personal Interpretation

Based on attendance at special events and summer weekends, demand for interpretive programming in the Riverways is high and growing. With the addition of three new permanent interpretive staff in FY2016, the interpretive division now has a strong, experienced interpretive staff, as well as more than a dozen seasonal employees to help during the high summer season.

- Continue to recruit and develop reliable seasonal interpreters, preferably people who come back year after year.
- Recruitment of seasonals with special skills such as playing traditional music, kayaking or canoeing, or practicing traditional lifeways skills or crafts can add new dimensions to interpretive programming, especially as the Riverways adds new spaces for interpretation to occur.
- Seek a balance of programming to reach both the physically challenged/limited and the physically active recreationists of all ages.
- Explore options for regularly scheduled guided tours on the rivers, either by park staff or by a contracted entity.
- Begin requiring guest researchers or park partners conducting projects in the Riverways to provide some level of public interpretation of their work – a presentation, a news article, a brief video – as an in-kind contribution to the park and its interpretive programming.
- Seek ways to improve inter-departmental interactions (i.e., between resource management and interpretive personnel) to ensure timely sharing of materials and information as needed for interpretation, to provide timely public information about resource issues such as real-time water quality data, and to avoid duplication of effort in interpretive outreach about artifact-based topics such as archeology.
- By its very nature, personal interpretation and its interwoven institutional knowledge can be hard to capture, preserve, and pass forward for programming continuity. To the extent possible, the current senior interpretive staff should take steps to document their considerable knowledge across a range of Riverways topics.
  - Using popular personal devices, video recording of interpreters' live programming can produce results of near-professional quality; these presentations can be used not only on the web or Facebook for visitor enjoyment, but also as training tools for new or seasonal staff. (Some parks are seeing a trend of visitors themselves recording and streaming ranger programs on Facebook Live, Snapchat, or other media.)
  - A collective "Riverways 101" loose-leaf notebook can be a simple but invaluable method to track and preserve great Riverways programming for future generations of interpreters.

## Interpretive Media

### Digital Media

Use of digital media within the Riverways is problematic, due to spotty Wi-Fi service and lack of internet/broadband infrastructure in the region. Yet with a small staff and a large park, self-accessed digital media can be an engaging, inexpensive, and long-lasting interpretive tool. In evaluating the need for digital media in interpretation, it must be acknowledged that the demand for digital materials already exists; smartphone users worldwide are accustomed to being able to download internet materials (print, audio, and video) for free at public Wi-Fi hotspots anywhere.

### WiFi Hotspots

- Consider establishing free Wi-Fi hotspots at key locations within the Riverways, and publicize these places as resources where visitors can download free interpretive materials on topics of interest, primarily from the park website. Once materials are downloaded, visitors can access them on their own devices without internet or Wi-Fi.
- As the various visitor contact centers are refurbished, consider installing a reader station with several securely mounted tablets pre-downloaded with park interpretive materials, so visitors can access these materials at will when they are in a contact center.

### NPS Riverways Website

Use of the Riverways website increases year by year, with just under 180,000 online sessions recorded in 2016.

- Review the website regularly and identify needed improvements such as faulty links, out-of-date information, and other issues. When possible, seek assistance from other NPS units/personnel (some available on a consulting basis) to address website problems.
- To the extent possible, review individual pages and add imagery; many pages contain interesting material but are all Add close-up maps for hiking trails to the website under Maps and Things to Do.
- Review user metrics to determine which pages are getting the most views. Why?
- If and when the Riverways offers more access to cloud-based media, park interpreters will be challenged to create more extensive and visually dynamic website entries for download.
  - Virtual tours and podcasts lend themselves to inhouse production as simple ranger-guided and voiced tours, rather than professionally developed programs, and can bring a welcome “personal touch” to online interpretation.



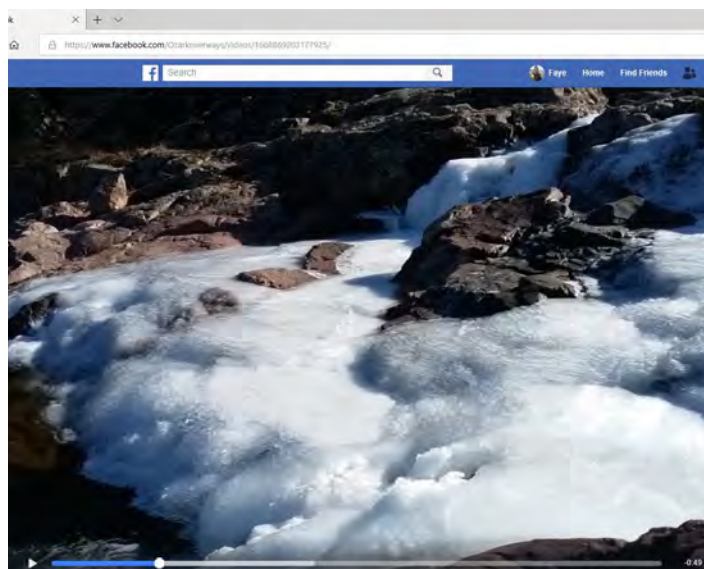
- Explore options for creating a downloadable Park Mobile or similar smartphone app for Riverways that could be downloaded prior to arrival and would work with or without a cell service connection. For examples, see the selection of official NPS apps in the App Store, including apps for large and small parks ranging from Grand Canyon National Park to Wright Brothers National Memorial on North Carolina's Outer Banks, as well as the app for the nearby Mark Twain National Forest recently developed by oncell.com. (All these apps are available from smartphone app stores for iPhone or Android.)

### Videos

A January 2018 video (a frozen Rocky Falls) posted to the Riverways' Facebook page received 57,000 views within a few weeks! At present, however, there is no sit-down location where visitors can view videos in the park.

- Commission a 10- to 20-minute park film that presents an appealing, theme-driven overview of the Riverways. As facilities are upgraded at the Van Buren location and other sites, this major new film can be made available throughout the park.
  - Have copies of the film available on DVD to send to educators to promote use of the Riverways as a classroom and on-site resource.
  - Distribute/lend copies of the DVD to school groups and other organized groups as a pre-visit tool, viewable in the classroom or on the tour bus prior to arrival at the park.

- Ideally, the film can be creatively structured so it can be viewed in several shorter segments or as a whole, giving the park and its visitors more flexibility in how the film can be used. Shorter segments can be made available in sequence via online media for online viewing or download, as well as in the visitor contact stations, where visitors may watch them on mounted iPads while standing up (no seating and large monitors required).
- Tethered tablets in visitor contact centers can provide opportunities for visitors to view short videos such as those presented on the Riverways Facebook page.
- Safety videos for water sports (delivered on tethered tablets) should be considered for any suitable locations, such as restrooms.
  - Safety videos should be contractually required to be shown to all renters at all concessionaire outlets.



A video of a frozen creek on the Riverways Facebook page drew 57,000 views in only two or three weeks. At present, the park does not have a space where visitors can view a park film or other videos.

## Social Media

The Riverways “legitimate” Facebook page is quite successful, with relevant information updated regularly and more than 45,000 “likes.”

- Develop regular features, such as exemplified by the national trend #TBT (Throwback Thursdays) shows, that encourage park Facebook visitors to contribute their own images as well.
  - Other simple weekly visitor engagement strategies such as “Wednesday/What Is It?” are an enjoyable way for visitors to see and learn about varying aspects of the park and interact with each other and a ranger.
- Develop “events” on Facebook that would better advertise our interpretive programming. When a person is “interested” or responds as “going” to an event, their friends see it, thus spreading the word.
- Although earlier efforts have been unsuccessful, the Riverways must find a way to eliminate an additional Riverways Facebook page, complete with NPS arrowhead, found at <https://www.facebook.com/Ozark-National-Scenic-Riverways-127446180634441>. Inexplicably, this Facebook page is still “live” and gets visitor comments.
- Seek ways to engage with interest groups that use social media to organize or promote activities in the Riverways, such as online communities or MeetUp groups for kayaking, canoeing, dog-walking, or other activities.
  - The park has noticed increased popularity of different sites in the park, apparently due to social media communication among various interest groups highlighting these sites.
- Explore ways to engage millennials and other younger audience cohorts through Twitter and Instagram.
- Consider expanding a park Twitter presence, especially for use as an up-to-the-minute notification tool for park events, weather and road conditions, and other timely information.
  - At present the Riverways uses Twitter primary for prescribed fire notifications.
- Continue to use park Instagram account (which has been only minimally utilized) to share images and information about the park.



Many Riverways enthusiasts post their own images and descriptions on the park's Facebook page.

## Printed Publications

- Update the unigrid brochure to reflect the 2017 flood damage and repairs.
- Create inexpensive tear-off pads with maps of the three sets of hiking trails within the Riverways and make them available at campground stores and all visitor contact centers. (These maps are currently available only in the small fold-out brochures and not on the park website.)
- Develop a driving tour site bulletin to illustrate the diverse nature of the park and provide a guide to anyone seeking out specific features. This site bulletin would be very useful to many visitors, especially those who want to experience the park from a vehicle; park staff could also use the driving tour publication to explain routes.
  - This driving tour site bulletin could identify routes showcasing the Riverway's top 10 most visited sites, the mill tour, the spring tour, the scenic overlook tour, or whatever other collection of stops the park interpretive team decides to highlight.
    - Because of the park's linear nature and the driving time between points of interest, the site bulletin would include recommended time requirements to fully enjoy the route and the destination(s). With careful thought and development, park visitors could use the bulletin to plan a trip for a few hours or a few days.
  - Later the driving tour could become an audio or video tour as needed.
- Create additional site bulletins that tell more of the Riverways' stories, pulling together concise, engaging material from the wealth of existing material. Once completed, these site bulletins can be used in multiple ways – as printed handouts, as uploads to the park webpage, and as documented resources for other interpretive programs and media (podcasts, waysides, or interior exhibits).
  - Set a goal of creating one additional site bulletin per ranger district each year, for the next three years – for a total of nine new site bulletins.
  - Topically, the first set of new site bulletins should focus on the natural world of the Riverways – an area that currently lacks coverage except for individual ranger talks. Specific topics might include:
    - the rivers and their watersheds; river ecology
    - distinctive Ozark ecosystems
    - Ozark wildlife: What to look/ listen for and where
  - Another set of site bulletins could focus on the Riverways' less well-known historic structures/National Register sites, such as Klepzig mill, the Welch hospital, the Nichols cabin, and the Maggard site.

## Interior Exhibits

The immersive environments of Alley Mill, the Story Creek Schoolhouse, and the Alley General Store offer the highest level of interpretive exhibits: authentic historic settings where visitors can step into the scene and become a part of the story. A similar opportunity to “step back in time” will become a reality when the historic CCC Big Spring Dining Lodge reopens in the early 2020s. Immersive environments such as these showcase the park’s 19th-century cultural history and set a high standard for other exhibitry throughout the Riverways.

As the park’s visitor contact centers are repaired and remodeled in the coming years, opportunities will be available for a range of additional permanent exhibits on a smaller scale, as well as temporary and/or portable installations. Using contemporary best practices and interactive elements, these new exhibits can introduce visitors with diverse learning styles to new aspects of the Riverways and enrich their experiences on the site.



Children enjoy crawling through the miniature cave exhibit in the Akers Visitor Contact Station.

As outlined in the Facilities and Sites section, this plan recommends that each visitor contact center have a primary interpretive focus. These differing emphases should be determined strategically so as to provide distinctive visitor experiences at each site while emphasizing each stop as part of the totality of the Riverways experience. In brief, these emphases could be:

### **Round Spring:**

Caves and karst

### **Pulltite:**

Water recreation and water safety

### **Akers:**

Natural environment/Ozark ecology; historic settlement

### **Van Buren:**

Park orientation and park history

### **Two Rivers:**

River ecology

### **Big Springs:**

CCC-era Museum with artifacts; archeology

For interpretive exhibit concepts for some of these spaces, see the Media Report (Appendix A).

In addition to permanent exhibits, Riverways should develop two to four traveling exhibits for use at community events, conferences, school fairs, and other outreach activities.



## Exterior Exhibits

As noted earlier, this plan calls for a revamp of existing exterior kiosks to create a more cohesive, consistent branding and identity throughout the Riverways, and to provide a level of site-specific orientation and interpretation. These kiosks can probably be revamped using inhouse resources.

However, another layer of exterior exhibits – interpretive waysides – is needed. Specifically, this plan recommends that the Riverways seek funding for a comprehensive wayside exhibit plan. New panels are critically needed to replace the park’s current assortment of 20- to 30-year-old, highly variable wayside exhibits, none of which have audio or tactile components representing best practices in wayside interpretation.

- Attractive, consistently designed waysides across the length and breadth of the park will greatly improve the Riverways’ image and identity, both among visitors and locals, as a unit of the National Park Service.
- A comprehensive wayside plan will address concerns about interpretive gaps in covering certain themes and locations.
- A comprehensive wayside plan will address concerns about interpretive gaps in contemporary knowledge, perspectives, and research.
- New waysides with audio descriptions, tactile and other interactive elements will be better equipped to engage more diverse audiences, including people with disabilities, young visitors, or visitors for whom English is a second language.
- One repeating element of this wayside plan should be effective, consistent 24-hour visitor orientation stations positioned outside the front exteriors of all visitor contact facilities.



## Youth and Educational Programming

### Curriculum-based Programming

In spring 2016, the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education adopted new Missouri Learning Standards to be phased in by discipline through 2020: English language arts and mathematics in 2017-2018, science in 2018-2019, and social studies in 2019-2020. Until 2017, the state education standards were Grade-Level Expectations (GLE) developed in “strands.” The Riverways interpretive staff currently offers curriculum-based programming based on multiple GLE strands in science and social studies. In academic year 2017-18, however, MDESE declared the GLE standards “archived” and obsolete: “These archived standards are no longer being used for assessment purposes and should not be used for instructional purposes. They are for informational and historical purposes only.”

These changes will impact the Riverways curriculum-based educational programming significantly in the coming years. Providing educational program opportunities that are aligned to current curriculum standards is a crucial aspect of any park’s interpretive and educational programming. Schools and educators have limited funding for field trips and are tasked with a myriad of educational objectives they must meet during the school year, culminating in standardized testing outcomes. Teachers rarely have the luxury of scheduling field trips or classroom programs that don’t meet a required state curriculum objective. It is essential for park curriculum-based education offerings to be aligned with current state standards in order to continue to be relevant to local schools.

- To meet this challenge, the Riverways staff must establish a procedure – perhaps assisted by an educator committee or education graduate student (with a stipend) -- to recast existing Riverways curriculum-based programming to meet newly introduced Missouri state education standards.
  - Part of this reorganization should identify new avenues of inquiry for curriculum materials as needed – for example, a fresh look at the science and technology aspects of Alley Mill.
- Track metrics for existing educational/curricular downloads from the NPS Riverways website to assess the likely use of these materials and use this data to help the committee prioritize revamping the curricular materials.
- Start a regular schedule, perhaps quarterly, for the interpretive division to do a strategic assessment of the park’s outreach and success rate at various grade levels in the four county school systems around the park.
  - This effort should help the park be intentional and pro-active in targeting which curriculum areas, school systems, and grade levels need more outreach; which relationships are working well; and where the park could improve or adjust its offerings to better meet school needs.
- Continue to pursue institutional as well as individual teacher buy-in among school systems in the service area for curriculum-based park/school relationships.
- Offer a menu of relevant educational activities in each district and enable each district supervisor to be cross-trained, equipped, and ready to deliver programs offered in any district.

### *Junior Ranger Programming*

- As the visitor contact centers are remodeled, distribute and promote the existing Junior Ranger booklets widely throughout the park.
- Consider updating the current Junior Ranger booklet to make it more engaging, thought-provoking, and eye-catching.
- Consider expanding the one-week Junior Ranger Day Camp offered at Round Spring in July 2017 to other districts of the Riverways. This program, offered to both campers and children in our community, provides the park an opportunity to introduce outdoor skills and resource-related studies to a specific age group of young visitors.
- Take advantage of all topical NPS Junior Ranger booklets applicable to the Riverways. Among these are the Junior Cave Scientist (on hand), as well as Junior Ranger booklets on bats, archeology, night skies, what's underwater (which features OZAR), historic preservation, and a CD called Songs for Junior Rangers.
- Consider creating a downloadable Junior Ranger app for Riverways, similar to the Junior Ranger app for Independence National Historical Park in Philadelphia.



Fourth-graders from nearby Eminence are all smiles as they visit the park.



## Staffing and Volunteers

- Add three subject-to-furlough (STF) Park Guide positions – one for each district – to be available during the park’s busiest months from late spring through early fall.
  - These positions are urgently needed due to high (and increasing) visitation during the summer months and the shoulder season, as well as a steady increase in educational field trips. (The park currently handles this demand by hiring 7 to 15 seasonal interpretive park guides or park rangers, depending on annual budget constraints.)
  - Creating STF positions will enable the park to retain skilled, experienced interpretive employees and minimize staff and training time for new hires.
- Add a GS-3 Visitor Service Assistant to help staff the front desk/visitor contact station in the Van Buren headquarters building year-round.
- Hire a dedicated volunteer coordinator to work with the park’s volunteers and integrate more volunteers into interpretive activities, especially for high-use areas in summer. (The current volunteer coordinator position is a collateral duty that is mainly focused on supporting the administrative aspects of volunteer program management.)
- Encourage/require all volunteers working in interpretation to participate in the free online Eppley Institute courses for volunteer interpreters.
- Explore options for reinvigorating a volunteer horse patrol, in collaboration with local equestrian groups who ride in the park.
- Continue to recruit and add seasonal employees, with specific strategic goals such as keeping Akers and Pulltite open all summer and on shoulder-season weekends.
- Explore ways to obtain help from off-site NPS visual information or media specialists as needed.
- Create a dedicated OZAR Interpretive Media Specialist position and hire a media specialist who could undertake all aspects of park website management, social media, print media, exhibit development and videography. A dedicated media specialist with a variety of media skills could take over all aspects of media management and development, thereby increasing the efficiency of these functions and freeing other interpretive staff for other core functions. For example, the media specialist could:
  - Handle new exhibit development in the park’s multiple visitor centers, as well as new and updated wayside exhibits throughout the park.
  - Oversee park bulletin boards and kiosks scattered along 134 miles of the Riverways, in campgrounds, and at river access points, where engaging visitor information updates are needed regularly.
  - Handle the park website and social media, both of which are increasingly becoming a primary contact and information resource for Riverways visitors.
- Even though Riverways’ permanent interpretive staff is highly experienced, continue to offer opportunities for additional training and professional development through regional workshops, special interest conferences, and other professional outreach in individuals’ special fields of interest.



## Partnering for Success

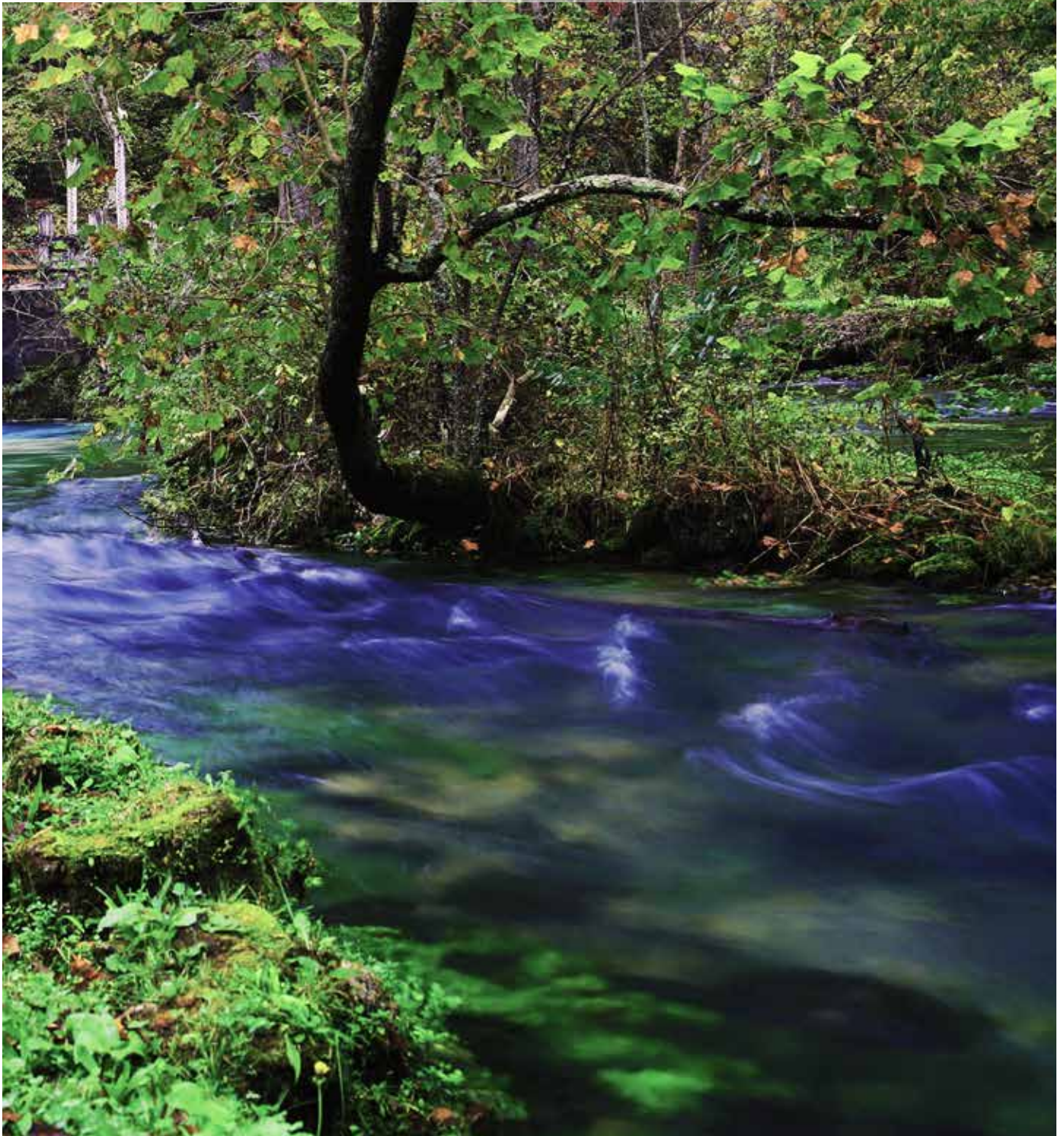
- Continue to encourage next steps for the Riverways' Friends group, the Ozark Riverways Foundation.
  - Working with the park superintendent, local volunteers, and perhaps a local attorney who can volunteer some time and expertise, encourage the embryonic Friends group to move forward and file the necessary paperwork for incorporation as a 501(c)3 corporation – and set a deadline, preferably one associated with a much-needed, well-publicized park project.
  - Friends committee with a list of interpretive needs for the Riverways; show them how they can “make things happen” for the park.
  - Try jumpstarting the group by asking for specific help on a specific, time-sensitive/urgent project. For example:
    - The Friends could help fund a seasonal intern in interpretation and education every summer.
    - The Friends could take the lead in a high-profile safety initiative.
- Explore options for collaboration with other federal agencies with public lands in the area, including Mark Twain National Forest (USFS), Mingo National Wildlife Refuge (FWS), and Wappapello and Clearwater lakes (Army Corps of Engineers) to create an interagency visitor center in the Poplar Bluff area.



- Examples of joint visitor centers include the Northern Great Lakes Interpretive Center (NPS, USFS, and FWS) in Wisconsin and the Interagency Information Center (NPS, BLM, FS) in Utah.
- Explore options to retrofit and use the USFS Ranger Station at Winona as an NPS visitor contact center, possibly through the recently established Service First agreement between the Riverways and the Mark Twain National Forest.
- Explore options for collaboration and partnership with Missouri Department of Conservation at Twin Pines Conservation Education Center (on Highway 60 near Winona), which interprets many of the same natural and cultural themes of Ozark National Scenic Riverways.
  - A possible NPS/MDC partnership sharing staff and/or space at Twin Pines CEC could be mutually beneficial to both agencies and to visitors seeking a seamless experience in the region.
- Continue to expand the relationship with the Ozark Trail Association to support and promote hiking the Ozark Trail through the park and beyond.
  - Explore specific ways to partner on a regular basis, preferably on events that invite the public and cultivate young audiences (a backpacking or camping how-to, a short Saturday hike).
  - To the extent possible, work to “institutionalize” this partner relationship so that it endures even as key people (both in the NPS and in the OTA) change.
- Continue to broaden our relationships with local Chambers of Commerce, Betterment Groups, etc. Seek partnerships and interpretive opportunities, such as events that improve visitor connections to the park and local area.
- Continue and seek to broaden the relationship with the American Canoe Association, including regular events that reach out to young local visitors and help build stewardship for the future.
  - To the extent possible, work to “institutionalize” this partner relationship so that it endures even as key people (both in the NPS and in the OTA) change.
- Continue to explore and expand the developing collaboration and partnerships with a variety of local agencies with an interest in interpretation and education, including the Missouri Department of Conservation, Missouri State Parks, the USDA Forest Service, the Ozark Trail Association, the L-A-D Foundation, and others.



# Implementation





This implementation chart is designed to help Ozark National Scenic Riverways make measurable progress on the recommendations in this plan over the next five to seven years. Given the difficulties of predicting funding resources, it is understood that implementing these recommendations will be a gradual process, and that park decision makers will need to reevaluate and make adjustments in the plan periodically as circumstances change. This is as it should be: At its best, a long-range interpretive plan is a flexible, living document that inspires, rather than locks in, a park's continuing step-by-step progress toward realizing its interpretive goals.

The following chart summarizes the recommendations and places them in three categories:

- ① Short-term recommendations are proposed for action within the next three years.
- ② Mid-term recommendations are proposed for action within the next four to six years.
- ③ Long-term recommendations are proposed for action within seven to ten years or more.

Recommendations with checks in all three categories should be viewed as ongoing, continuous activities.

The cost projection column provides a rough estimate of the relative costs of each recommendation. The – symbol denotes activities that can be completed without outside expenditures. The symbol \$ estimates a moderate cost (under \$50,000) per year or per project; the \$\$ indicates expenditures of \$50,000 to \$100,000; and the \$\$\$ indicates major expenditures, usually capital projects such as facilities construction or remodeling, exhibit installations, visitor transportation vehicles, or other big-ticket items or projects.



An engraved image of historic Alley Mill appears on the 2017 "America the Beautiful" quarter series.



Recommendations	Support Needed	Costs	Short-term (1-2 years)	Mid-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 + years)
<b>Interpretive Sites and Facilities</b>					
<b>Improve the Welcome/ Arrival Experience at All Entry Points.</b>					
Review and implement consistent upgrades to all park entrance signs.	Park Management Team	\$		X	
Review online public and commercial mapping and tourism resources and correct as needed.	Interpretive Team	—	X	X	X
Work with concessionaires to be sure their sites reflect aesthetic and interpretive standards expected within the National Park Service.	Concessions Specialist	—	X	X	X
Reach out to the travel/tourism industry and travel media to encourage accurate branding of the Riverways as a unit of the National Park Service.	Interpretive Team	—	X	X	X
<b>Improve Accessibility for All Riverways Visitors.</b>					
Incorporate accessibility elements such as audio descriptions and tactiles, and consider Spanish and English texts, for all future wayside and interior exhibits.	Interpretive Team	\$\$			X
In remodeling visitor contact centers, incorporate traffic pathways, turnaround circumferences, and exhibit installations for wheelchairs.	Park Accessibility Coordinator, Chief of Interpretation			X	X
Explore ways to make riverside activities more accessible for visitors with physical or mobility concerns, including older visitors and children.					
Provide aids for accommodating paddlers.	Round Spring District Interpreters and volunteer groups	\$	X		
Provide a mobility apparatus for transporting visitors to river.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
<b>Position the Park For Major New Construction For Visitor Services.</b>	Superintendent, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$\$	X	X	X
<b>Retrofit, Improve, and Expand Interpretive Spaces throughout the Riverways.</b>					
<i>Round Spring Visitor Contact Center</i>					
Upgrade and expand Round Spring visitor station with a main interpretive emphasis on cave and karst topography.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter, Park Maintenance	\$\$\$		X	X
Install a visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the building so it is available 24 hours a day.	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
Remove all interior activities (such as storage and office space for other divisions) that are not directly related to interpretation and visitor interactions.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$\$		X	
Reconfigure the spatial layout for more efficient cave ticketing.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$		X	
Analyze the options and streamline the cave tour sign-up process.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	—		X	
Explore options for switching the cave tour tickets to online booking.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
<i>Pulltite Visitor Contact Center</i>					
Make the primary interpretive focus for this site water-based recreation and safety.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
"Future-proof" this structure by building in flexibility for conduit and electrical capacity for computers, Internet connection, and public-access Wi-Fi capability.	Chief of Interpretation, Park Management Team	\$\$\$			X

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
Install a visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the structure so it is available 24 hours a day.	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
Install interpretive exhibits and displays	Chief of Interpretation, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$		X	
<i>Akers Visitor Contact Center</i>					
Reclaim 100% of the mural space and make primary interpretive focus on the natural environment/ ecology and historic settlement.	Chief of Interpretation, Management Team, Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
Develop a reliable volunteer presence and other staffing and programming changes to reinvigorate this visitor contact center.	Round Spring District Interpreter	—	X	X	X
Encourage visitors waiting for shuttle service to explore the visitor contact station while they wait.	Round Spring District Interpreter	—	X	X	X
Consider adding a wayside about the river ferry and floating the Upper Current.	Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
Install a visitor orientation station on the front exterior of the structure so it is available 24 hours a day.	Round Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
<i>Alley Spring Mill and General Store</i>					
Update/replace Alley Mill interpretive exhibits.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation, HFC, outside contractors	\$\$\$			X
Reconfigure space in Alley General Store by enclosing/expanding the porch for visitor use and interpretive exhibits.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation, HFC, outside contractors	\$\$	X	X	
Improve IT infrastructure at Alley General Store/District Interpreter's Office.	IT personnel	\$\$		X	
Add visitor Wi-Fi connection at Alley General Store.	IT personnel	\$\$		X	



<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
Add outside storage area for interpretive materials at Alley Spring.	Chief of Interpretation, Park Maintenance	\$\$	X		
<i>Van Buren Headquarters and Visitor Contact Station</i>					
Make primary interpretive focus park orientation and park history.	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
Produce a large static map highlighting sites within the park.	Big Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
Produce an Ozark Riverways park movie or video.	All Interpreters	\$\$			X
Install a large video-assisted topographical map.	All Interpreters	\$\$			X
Add comfortable seating and other furnishings around the fireplace.	Big Spring District Interpreter	—	X		
Create tethered scrapbooks for the coffee/sofa tables to show historic images that help tell the story of the park.	Big Spring District Interpreter	\$		X	
Install enlarged historic photographs, some with simple interactive reader rails, to replace existing photos and provide additional interpretation.	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Explore options for a major upgrade of visitor contact space, relocating current offices and converting the south wing into a visitor center and interpretive exhibit space.	Superintendent, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$\$			X
<i>Amphitheaters in Campgrounds</i>					
Replace the Big Spring amphitheater destroyed in the 2017 floods.	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Install best-available outdoor theater systems in all four sites.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X
Assess staging, seating and tables/work surfaces and refurbish as needed.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X
Retrofit each site for greater accessibility for entry/exit, seating, and audio/visual needs.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X

Recommendations	Support Needed	Costs	Short-term (1-2 years)	Mid-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 + years)
<i>Retail Outlets in Visitor Spaces</i>					
Incorporate 4 Eastern National products that uniquely interpret ONSR, including handmade items, historical books, and popular souvenirs.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X		
Reevaluate the spatial footprints and placement of the four retail (Eastern National) installations in the Riverways.	Chief of Interpretation, District Interpreters, Eastern National staff	—	X		
• The Alley Mill Historic District Roller Mill EN retail space	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X		
• Alley Mill Historic District General Store EN retail space	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X		
• Big Spring Historic District future use of the restored CCC structures	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$			X
• Van Buren headquarters EN retail space	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X		
• Eastern National retail scope of sales agreement	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X		
<i>A New Space for River Ecology: Two Rivers Visitor Contact Center</i>	Chief of Interpretation, Park Management, Alley Spring District Interpreter	\$\$\$			X
<i>A New (Old) Space for Artifacts: The Big Spring Visitor Center and Museum</i>	Park Management, Chief of Interpretation, Big Spring District Interpreter	\$\$\$			X
<b>Park Identity and Cohesiveness</b>					
Promote Riverways as a cohesive entity, both within the park and in gateway communities.	All Interpreters	—	X	X	X
• Improve the existing exterior informational kiosks throughout the park.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Adapt the same template for orientation inside each visitor contact facility.</li> </ul>	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
Use parkwide safety messaging as a unifying element.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Educate private floaters who often enter the river with little training.</li> </ul>	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrate NPS-approved safety messaging as a required element for concessionaire contracts.</li> </ul>	Concessions Specialist, All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Hold “community listening events” in different regions of the Riverways.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
<b>Personal Interpretation</b>					
Continue to recruit and develop skilled seasonal interpreters, preferably people who come back year after year.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Recruit seasonals with special skills to add new dimensions to interpretive programming.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Seek a balance of programming between physically active and physically challenged/limited of all ages.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Offer regular guided tours on the rivers by park staff or by contract.	All District Interpreters	\$	X	X	X
Require guest researchers to contribute to public interpretation of their work in the Riverways.	Chief of Interpretation, Chief of Resource Management	—		X	
Improve inter-divisional interactions to ensure timely sharing of materials as needed for interpretation and to avoid duplication of effort in interpretive outreach.	Management Team, All District Interpreters	—	X	X	X
Document current senior interpretive staff knowledge and “institutional memory” across a range of Riverways topics.	Chief of Interpretation, All District Interpreters	—	X	X	

Recommendations	Support Needed	Costs	Short-term (1-2 years)	Mid-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 + years)
<b>Interpretive Media</b>					
<b>Digital Media</b>					
<i>Wi-Fi HotSpots</i>					
Establishing free Wi-Fi hotspots at key locations.	IT Staff, Management Team	\$		X	
Install reader stations with mounted tablets pre-downloaded with park interpretive materials.	Chief of Interpretation, District Interpreters, Media Specialist	\$		X	
<i>NPS Riverways Website</i>					
Review the website regularly and identify needed improvements	Alley Spring District Interpreter	—	X	X	X
• Review individual pages and add imagery.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
• Add close-up maps for hiking trails to the website under Maps and Things to Do.	Alley Spring District Interpreter	\$	X		
• Review user metrics to determine which pages are getting the most views, and why.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
• Add downloadable, printable materials	Alley Spring District Interpreter	—	X	X	X
• Create more extensive and visually dynamic website entries such as podcasts and virtual tours	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Explore creation of a downloadable Park Mobile application for Riverways.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
<i>Videos</i>					
Commission a 10- to 20-minute, theme-driven park overview film.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Install tethered tablets in visitor contact centers for short videos.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
Add safety videos for water sports (delivered on tethered tablets) at suitable locations, such as restrooms.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Require showing of safety videos at concessionaire outlets.	Concessions Specialist	—	X		



<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
<b><i>Social Media</i></b>					
Develop regular Facebook features to encourage visitors to contribute their own input and images.	Round Spring District Interpreter, Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Develop “events” on Facebook that would better advertise Riverways interpretive programming.	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Eliminate the additional Riverways Facebook page.	Round Spring District Interpreter	—	X		
Engage with interest groups using social media to publicize activities in the Riverways, such as MeetUp groups for kayaking, canoeing, dog-walking, or other activities.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Use social media to engage millennials and other younger audiences.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Expand the park Twitter presence.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Continue to expand the park’s Instagram account.	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
<b><i>Printed Publications</i></b>					
Update the unigrid brochure to reflect the 2017 flood damage and repairs.	Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
Create tear-off map pads showing the three sets of hiking trails and distribute at campgrounds and visitor contact centers.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Develop a driving tour site bulletin.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
Create additional site bulletins that tell more of the Riverways’ stories.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
<b><i>Interior Exhibits</i></b>					
Develop interpretive exhibit content for refurbished visitor contact centers. supporting thematic exhibits.					

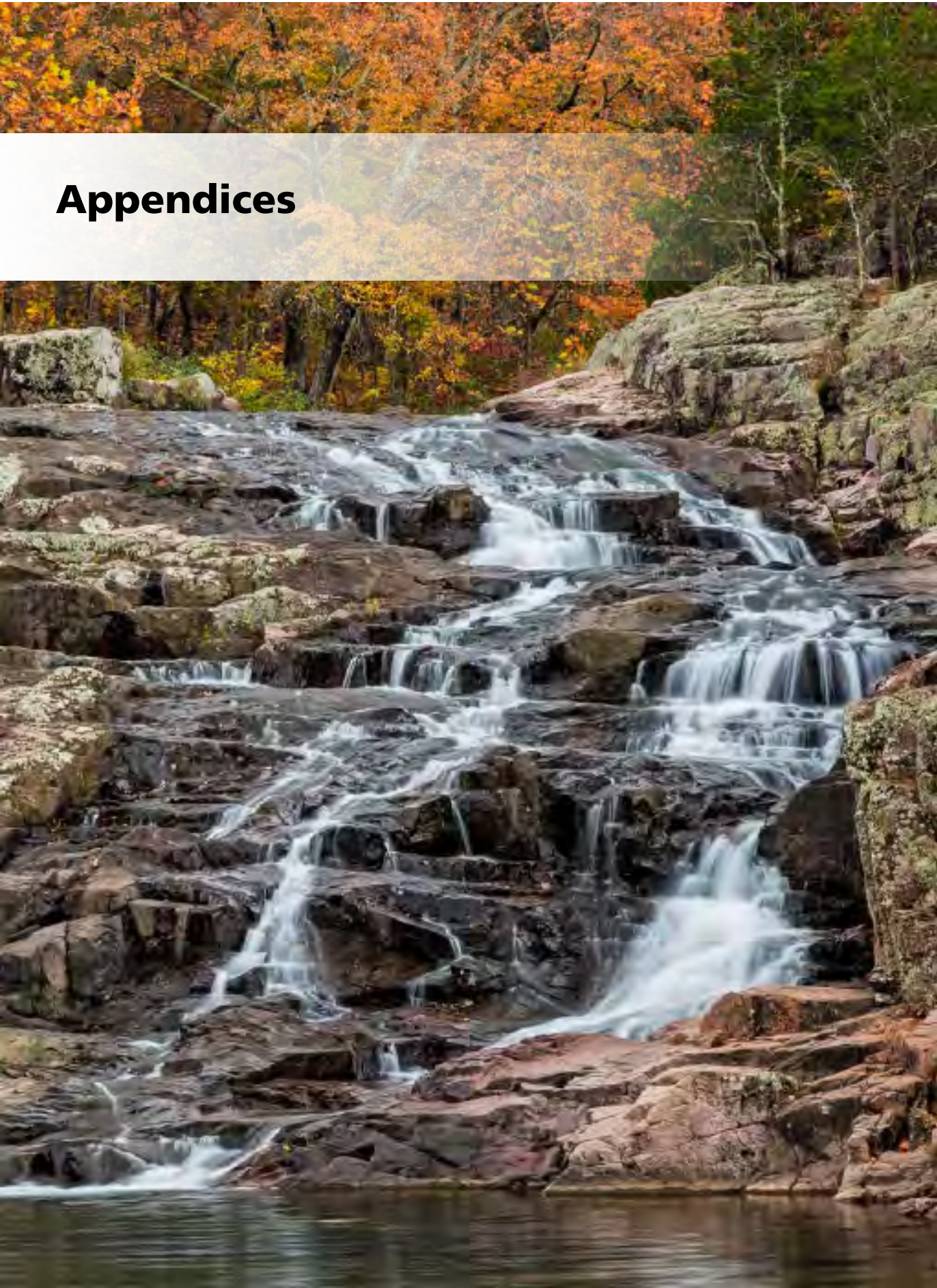
<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
• Round Spring: cave and karst topography	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
• Pulltite: water-based recreation and safety	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
• Akers: natural environment and historic settlement	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
• Van Buren: park orientation and history	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		
• Alley Mill: cultural history (update/renovate)	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	X
• Alley General Store: cultural history (expand space)	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
• Two Rivers: river ecology	Alley Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X
• Big Spring (CCC): artifacts, archeology	Big Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Develop two to four traveling exhibits for outreach activities.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	
<b>Exterior Exhibits</b>					
Seek funding for a comprehensive wayside exhibit plan.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Integrate audio descriptions, tactile and other interactive elements, and Spanish language into waysides.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X
Add 24-hour visitor orientation stations outside the front exteriors of all visitor contact facilities.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X		

Recommendations	Support Needed	Costs	Short-term (1-2 years)	Mid-term (3-5 years)	Long-term (5 + years)
<b>Youth and Educational Programming</b>					
<b><i>Curriculum-based programming</i></b>					
Recast existing Riverways curriculum-based programming to meet new Missouri state education standards.	District Interpreters	\$	X	X	
Identify new avenues of inquiry for curriculum materials as needed – for example, a fresh look at the science and technology aspects of Alley Mill.	District Interpreters	\$	X	X	
Track metrics for existing educational/curricular downloads from the NPS Riverways website to assess and prioritize educational materials.	Alley Spring District Interpreter	—	X		
Start a regular schedule for the interpretive division to assess the park's outreach and success rate in educational programming.	Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Continue to pursue institutional and teacher buy-in for curriculum-based park/school relationships.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Offer a menu of relevant educational activities in each district and enable each district supervisor to be cross-trained, equipped, and ready to deliver programs offered in any district.	District Interpreters	\$	X		
<b><i>Junior Ranger Programming</i></b>					
As the visitor contact centers are remodeled, distribute and promote the existing Junior Ranger booklets widely throughout the park.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Update the Junior Ranger booklet to make it more engaging, thought-provoking, and eye-catching.	Alley Spring District Interpreter (lead), All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$		X	

<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
Expand the 2017 Round Spring Junior Ranger Day Camp to other districts.	District Interpreters	\$	X		
Take advantage of all topical NPS Junior Ranger booklets applicable to the Riverways.	District Interpreters	—	X		
Consider creating a downloadable Junior Ranger app.	District Interpreters	\$		X	
<b>Staffing and Volunteers</b>					
Add a GS-3 Visitor Service Assistant for the front desk/visitor contact station at Van Buren headquarters.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Hire a dedicated volunteer coordinator to integrate more volunteers into interpretive activities.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	
Encourage/require all volunteers in interpretation to take the free online Eppley training.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Reinvigorate the volunteer horse patrol.	Chief of Interpretation, VIP Coordinator	\$		X	
Recruit and add seasonal employees to meet specific strategic goals such as keeping Akers and Pulltite staffed.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Explore ways to obtain help from off-site NPS visual information or media specialists as needed.	Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Continue to support training and professional development through regional workshops & special interest conferences.	Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Add a subject-to-furlough (STF) park guide in each district.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$			X
Add a full-time media specialist	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$		X	



<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Support Needed</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Short-term (1-2 years)</b>	<b>Mid-term (3-5 years)</b>	<b>Long-term (5 + years)</b>
<b>Partnering for Success</b>					
Encourage next steps for the Riverways' Friends group, the Ozark Riverways Foundation.	Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X
Explore collaboration with other federal agencies [Mark Twain National Forest (USFS), Mingo National Wildlife Refuge (FWS), Wappapello and Clearwater lakes (Army Corps of Engineers)] for interagency visitor center at Poplar Bluff.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$\$			X
Explore options for using the USFS Ranger Station at Winona as a visitor contact center.	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$\$			X
Explore collaboration with Missouri Department of Conservation at Twin Pines Conservation Education Center	Chief of Interpretation	\$\$\$			X
Expand the relationship with the Ozark Trail Association.	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Broaden our relationships with local Chambers of Commerce, Betterment Groups, etc.	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Broaden the relationship with the American Canoe Association.	Round Spring District Interpreter, Chief of Interpretation	—	X	X	X
Expand local agency partnerships	All District Interpreters, Chief of Interpretation	\$	X	X	X



## Appendices

## APPENDIX A: Media Report

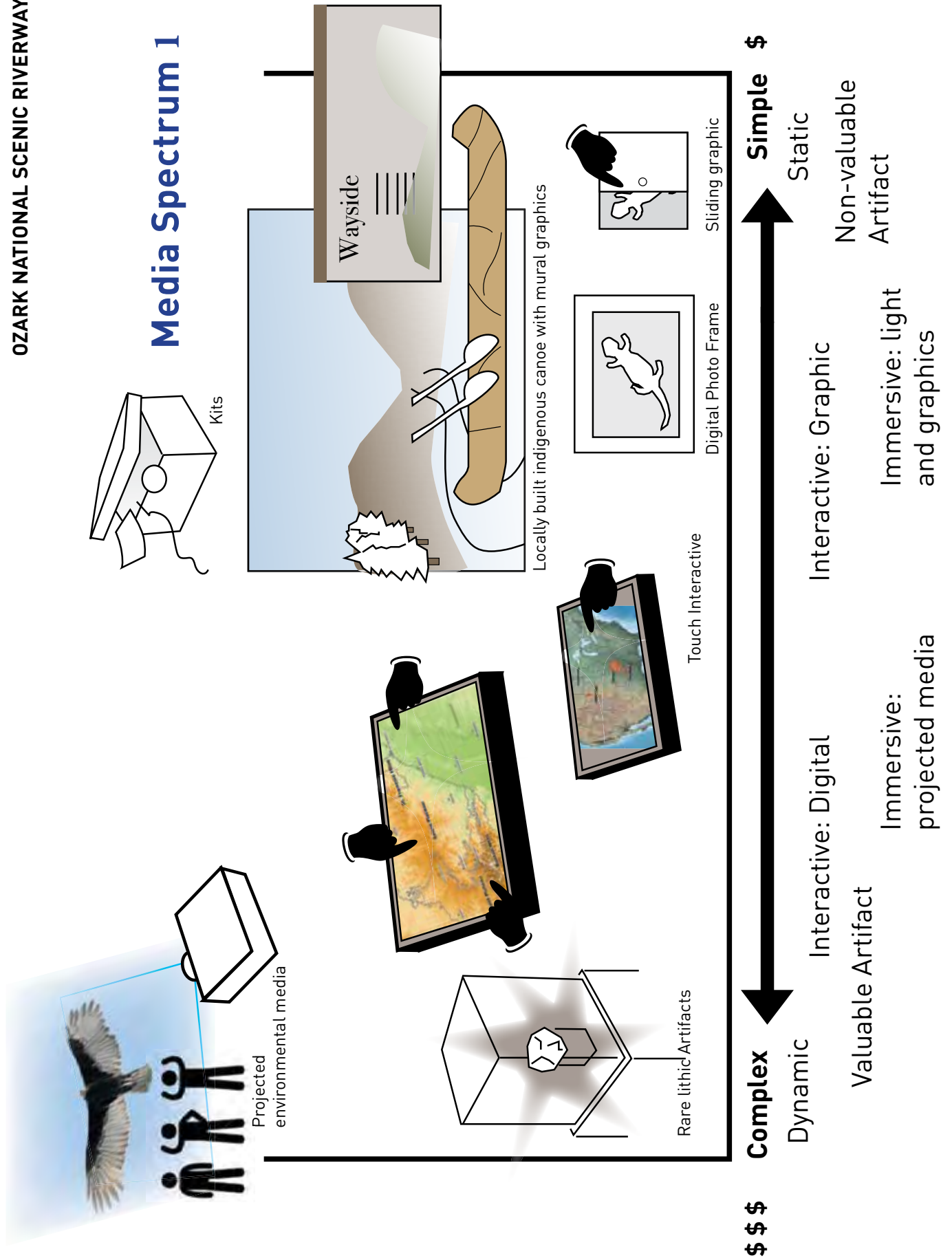
A significant part of the 2017-18 long-range interpretive planning process for Ozarks National Scenic Riverways focused on the need to improve and expand interpretive spaces throughout the Riverways. The loss of interpretive structures during a devastating 2017 flood highlighted and exacerbated a concern the interpretive staff had long recognized: They had a number of spaces and aging structures in the park where they met visitors and provided information and interpretive services – but each of these small visitor spaces presented serious limitations in meeting 21st-century interpretive needs.

To address these concerns, stakeholders in the planning process reviewed locations and floorplans of each visitor contact facility in the park and discussed ways to update and refurbish these sites to help provide future visitors with a more comprehensive, cohesive visitor experience. Working with each other and the planning team – which included an experienced professional museum/visitor center exhibit designer – the group developed creative, forward-thinking approaches for revamping each of the existing visitor contact facilities to serve as a unique hub within a well-planned, parkwide visitor services network. While the planning team recognizes that most visitors see only one or two parts of the park at a time, the revitalized visitor contact stations can help provide every visitor, from day-trip floaters to week-long campers, with a distinctive, memorable piece of the total Riverways experience.

The following report offers a primary interpretive focus and conceptual interpretive planning for each location. In developing these plans, the team analyzed each setting with an eye toward matching the site and its content focus with an array of engaging, interactive exhibit elements chosen on a continuum – a media spectrum ranging from simple, inexpensive, and low-maintenance or easily replaced (for lower-use or lower-staffed locations) to more complex, expensive, often high-tech installations (best reserved for high-traffic, high-staffing locations).

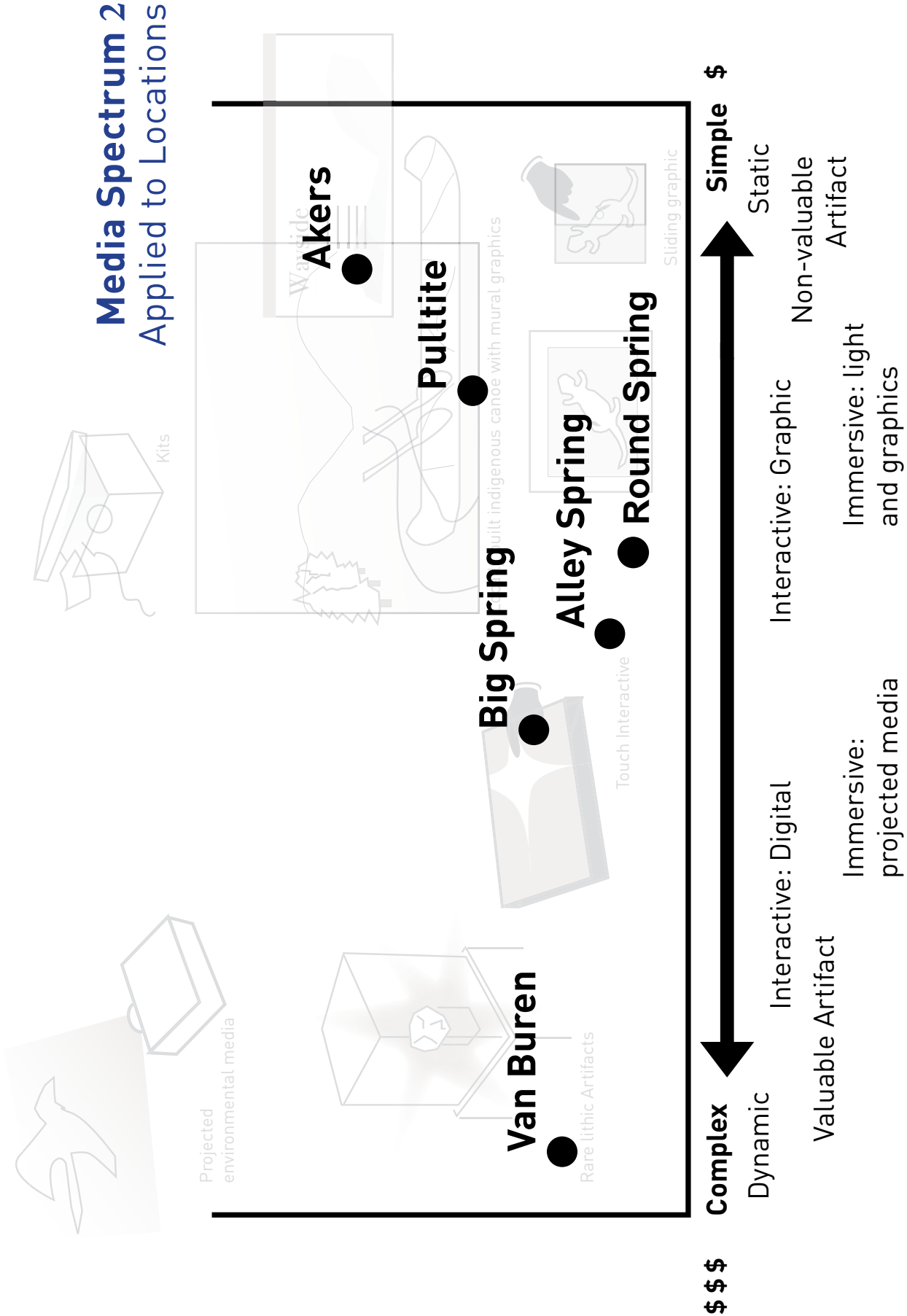
As shown in the following diagram (Media Spectrum 1), both simple and complex interpretive media can offer excellent interactivity and engagement when applied with creativity and a clear focus. When applied to specific locations in the Riverways (Media Spectrum 2), judicious choices of interpretive elements can help interpretive staff provide appealing, accessible interpretation to diverse audiences of all ages and abilities – a fundamental requirement of all new installations throughout the Riverways.







OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS



The most common types of interpretive media, including innovative 21st-century and traditional uses, can be summarized in three broad categories:

- **Graphics** are the most versatile and cost-effective method of communication and orientation. Common graphic types recommended in this report include
  - Site orientation wall murals -- people-scaled, floor-to-ceiling maps or images that enable visitors to easily orient themselves to a complex site
  - Medium to large wall panels can cover specific topics in an interior exhibit or be mounted outside the contact station to provide orientation when the building is closed.
  - Interactive graphics include rotating panels (mounted either vertically or horizontally), lift-and-drop, and slider panels with questions on one side/top and answers on the flip side. When done well, these simple devices can engage visitors of all ages and abilities.
- **Objects** are a 3-D option that can create a human connection and bring a concept or experience to life: a young woman used this spinning wheel; an old man wore these spectacles, a child played with this toy. Most of the objects recommended for Riverways will not require specialized environments or can be easily replaced, such as stones, historic tools commonly available at antique markets, or taxidermy that is not exposed to touching.

Some examples of objects that might be part of a small contact station or visitor center exhibit in the Riverways include:

- Rock samples from a subterranean cave
  - Tools used in early exploration of the river or for a mineral extraction industry that formerly took place on the site
  - A full-size, accurate, contemporary construction of a historic Jon boat, space permitting
  - Items of early residents' domestic life, such as pottery and reproduction textiles (samplers, quilts)
- **Scenic Exhibits** are sculptural installations that can convey the topography of the Riverways, such as a section of the complex caverns making up the karst landscape of Round Spring, or a crawl-through cave, as in the existing installation at Akers. Where space allows, such as at the Van Buren visitor center, the Riverways site might be modeled topographically to provide a true 3-D orientation device to the Park. Even when space is limited, scenic modeling can often be integrated into a space.
  - **Digital Media** refers to any content displayed electronically via a screen. In the Riverways, at least three types of digital media could be employed very effectively in a variety of settings.

- A **digital interactive table** can provide visitors both orientation and interpretation for a minimal cost – roughly twice the costs of a conventionally produced digitally printed terrain model, but with infinitely more interpretive possibilities and permutations.
- Robust **touch screen systems** can provide selections of audio/video oral histories, such as at Alley Mill and other visitor contact stations.
- Real-time digital data can be used in several settings to provide visitors with real-time data of thermodynamic conditions in the park, such as the air temperature in the caves at Round Spring, or the rate of flow of the Current River at Akers. (Sensor-driven interactives require staff attention, as the input devices often need repair.)

### Comparison of Digital and Sculpted Terrain Orientation Maps

- A **table-sized terrain model** of the Riverways in a size approximately five times as large as the map in the NPS unigrid brochure (i.e., about 86' x 68') would be 39 square feet. At a fabrication cost of \$500/square foot, the cost would be approximately \$9,500, plus development costs and a base table/structure.
- An **interactive touch table** has a base price of \$17,000, plus the software development, which can range from \$25,000 to \$50,000. The table requires no additional support structure. Furthermore, the systems are proven and visitor- hardened, as these kinds of tables are widely used and have generally been found to be durable and reliable. Such as system would require a flush-mount power and data source in the floor, which can sometimes prohibit its use in a historic or stone structure.



Scenic media: A topographic raised relief map



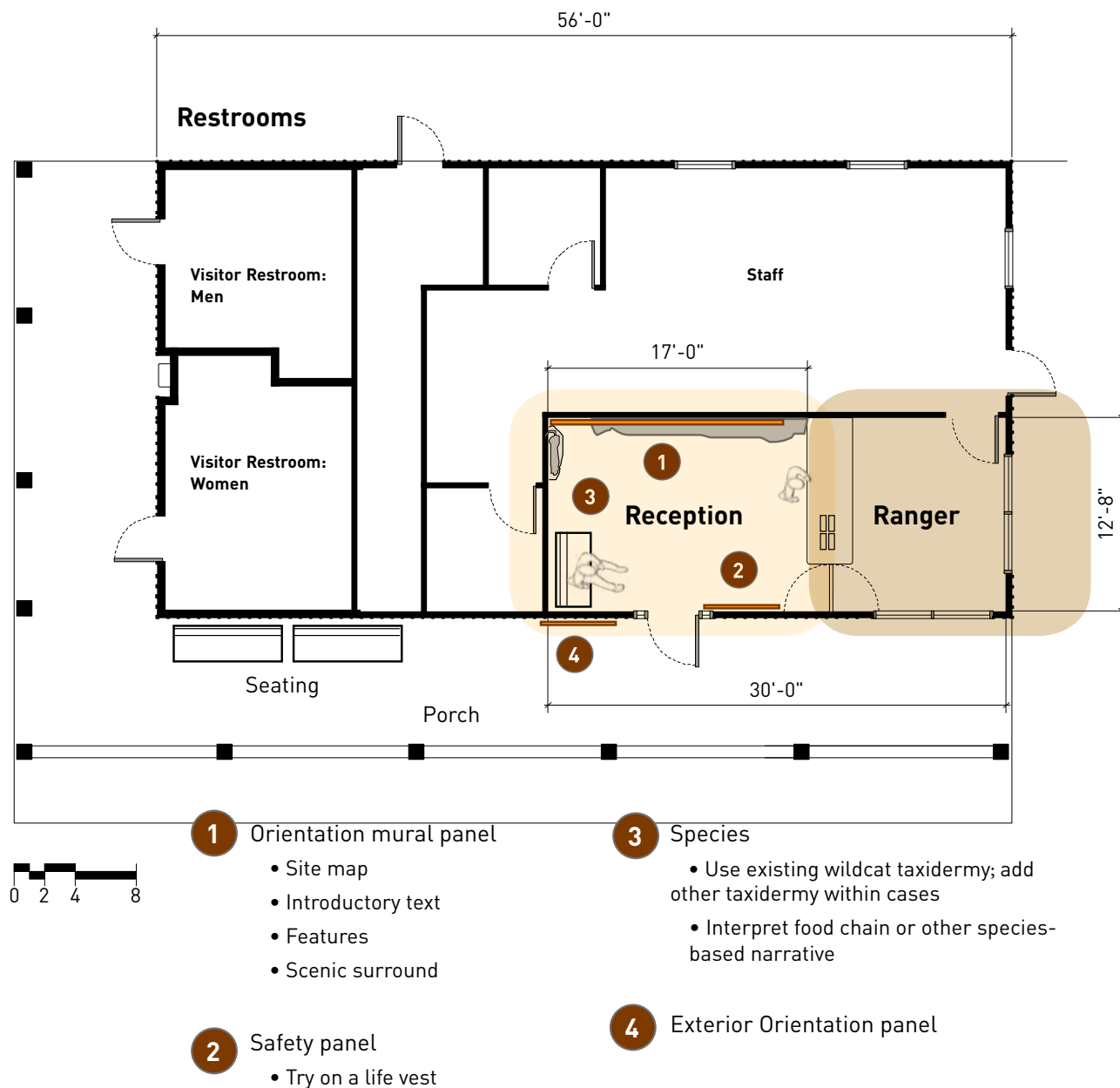
Digital Media: Interactive gestural touch table  
<https://archive.ideum.com/creative-services/hamline-university-mississippi-multimedia-table/>

## Akers Visitor Contact Station: 200 square feet

**Primary Topic:** The Ozarks' natural environment/ecology (past and present) and the historic settlement of the region.

**Secondary Topic:** Water safety

**Visitor Experience Goals:** Orientation to site; engagement with the park's natural environment and unique ecological features and historic structures in the area; water safety. This is a primary put-in location for paddlers and floaters, especially for floating the whole river. If possible, the existing scenic cave and mural should be preserved.



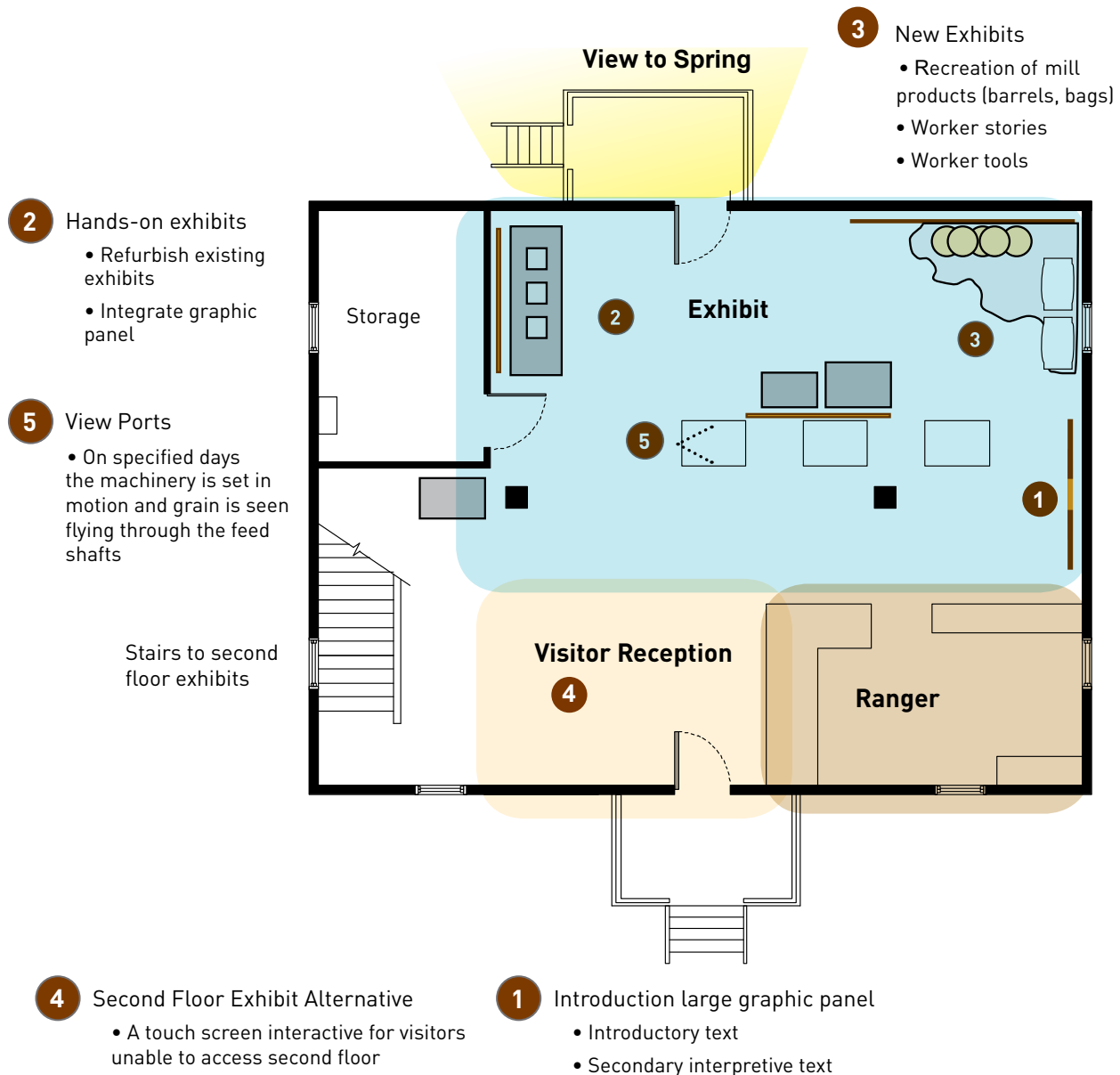


## Alley Spring Mill: *First Floor*, 1145 square feet

**Primary Topic:** Historical, cultural, and archeological themes of the Riverways.

**Secondary Topic:** Orientation to the mill and water; what the mill produced

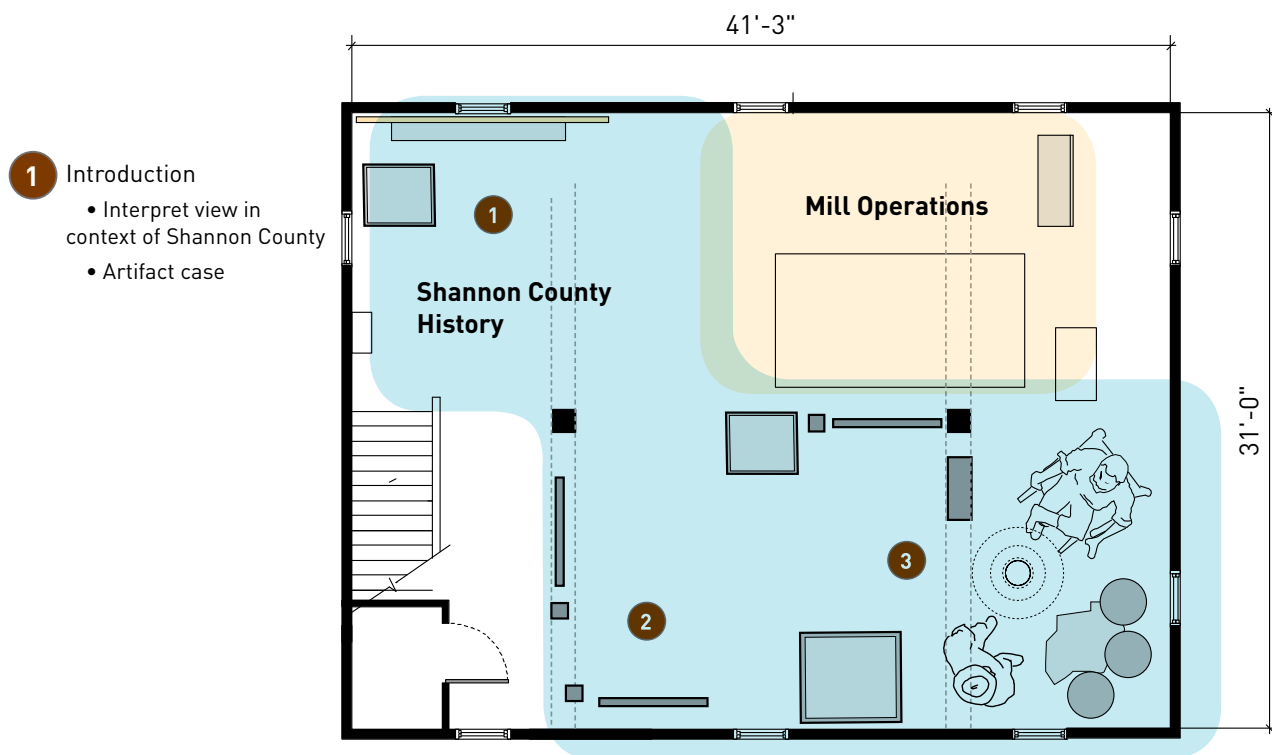
**Visitor Experience Goals:** To provide visitors with an immediate, immersive experience of the Riverways, as the dark wood interior reveals spot-lit, hands-on exhibits and portals into the grain feed system, and views of the springs and exterior orientation panels encourage further exploration of the park.



## Alley Spring Mill: *Second Floor*, 1145 square feet

**Primary Topic :** Cultural history of area, with engaging immersive exhibits about how people lived and what they did; lifecast figures and audio elements

**Secondary Topic:** Mill operations/function



- 2** Integrated Interpretation
- Supports for graphic panels use existing beam, plank and post
  - Artifact case base uses ledger board



Example: Fenno House, Old Sturbridge Village

- 3** Audio Environment
- Life cast figures represent workers
  - Menu selection of audio tracks
  - Scenic elements, barrels, grain bags



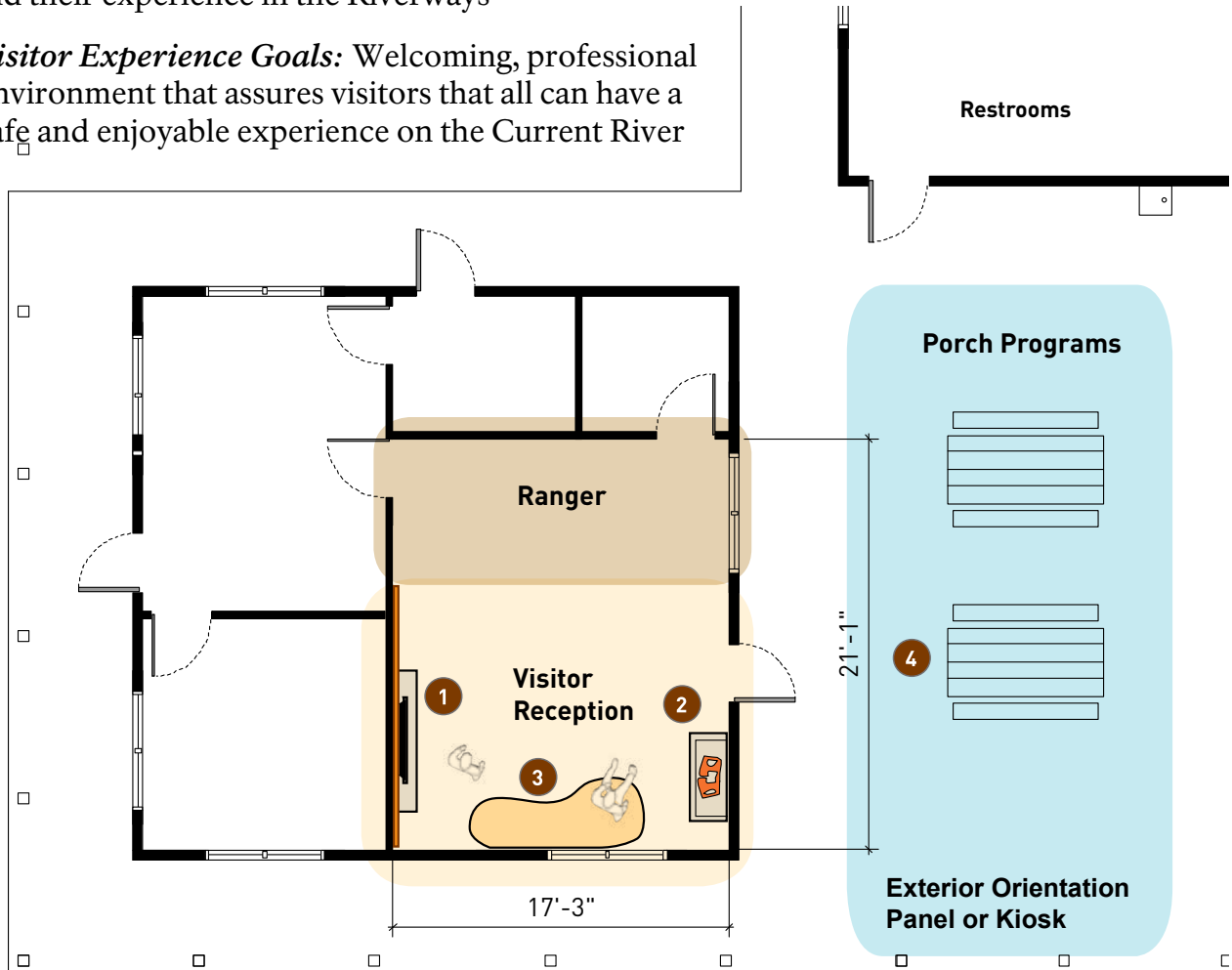
Example: Studio EIS, Yale University Museum

**Pulltite Visitor Contact Station:** 250 square feet indoors; attached 1500 square feet (roofed pavilion with some wall space) outdoors

**Primary Topic:** Water-based recreation and safety

**Secondary Topic:** Visitor participation/input station for sharing thoughts about the park and their experience in the Riverways

**Visitor Experience Goals:** Welcoming, professional environment that assures visitors that all can have a safe and enjoyable experience on the Current River



Example: Silver Lake Nature Center wall map

- 1 **Orientation Map**
  - Video taking you down entire Current River, safety oriented
  - Graphic site map, large scale
- 2 **Life vest display**
  - Quiz cards test visitor's knowledge of river safety

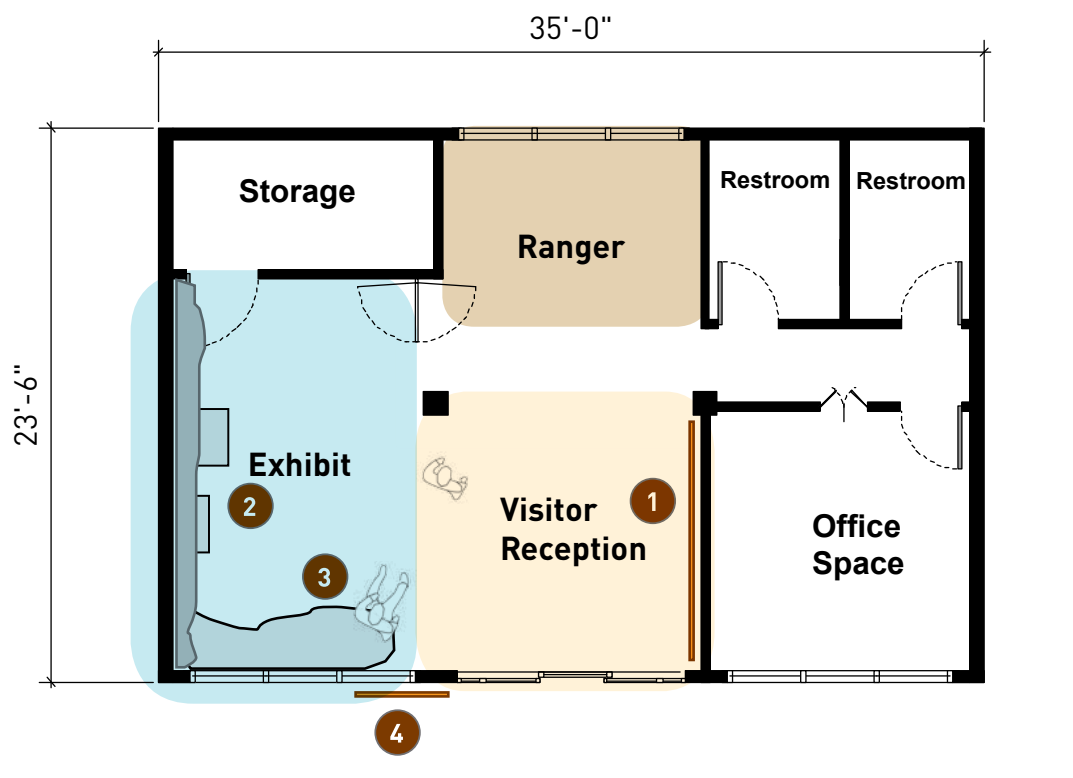
- 3 **Slice of tree seating**
  - Encourages several people to site together and lay out orientation and safety materials
- 4 **Safety props**
  - Life vests and other demonstrable props
  - Other "box" programs; orienteering, life on the river

**Round Spring Visitor Contact Station:** 435 square feet

**Primary Topic:** Cave and karst topography in the Riverways; pre-trip information for cave tours

**Secondary Topic:** Park orientation; water safety

**Visitor Experience Goals:** To welcome visitors to a National Park Service site and generate excitement about the many unique features of this nationally significant place; to intrigue visitors with a preview of a cave experience and provide an accessible cave experience for those unable to do the tour



- 1** Introduction : large graphic panel
  - Site and feature orientation
- 2** Section thru karst landscape
  - Geological samples featured in cases
- 3** Seating is extension of sculpture
- 4** Exterior orientation panel



Example: Cave Museum in Kentucky

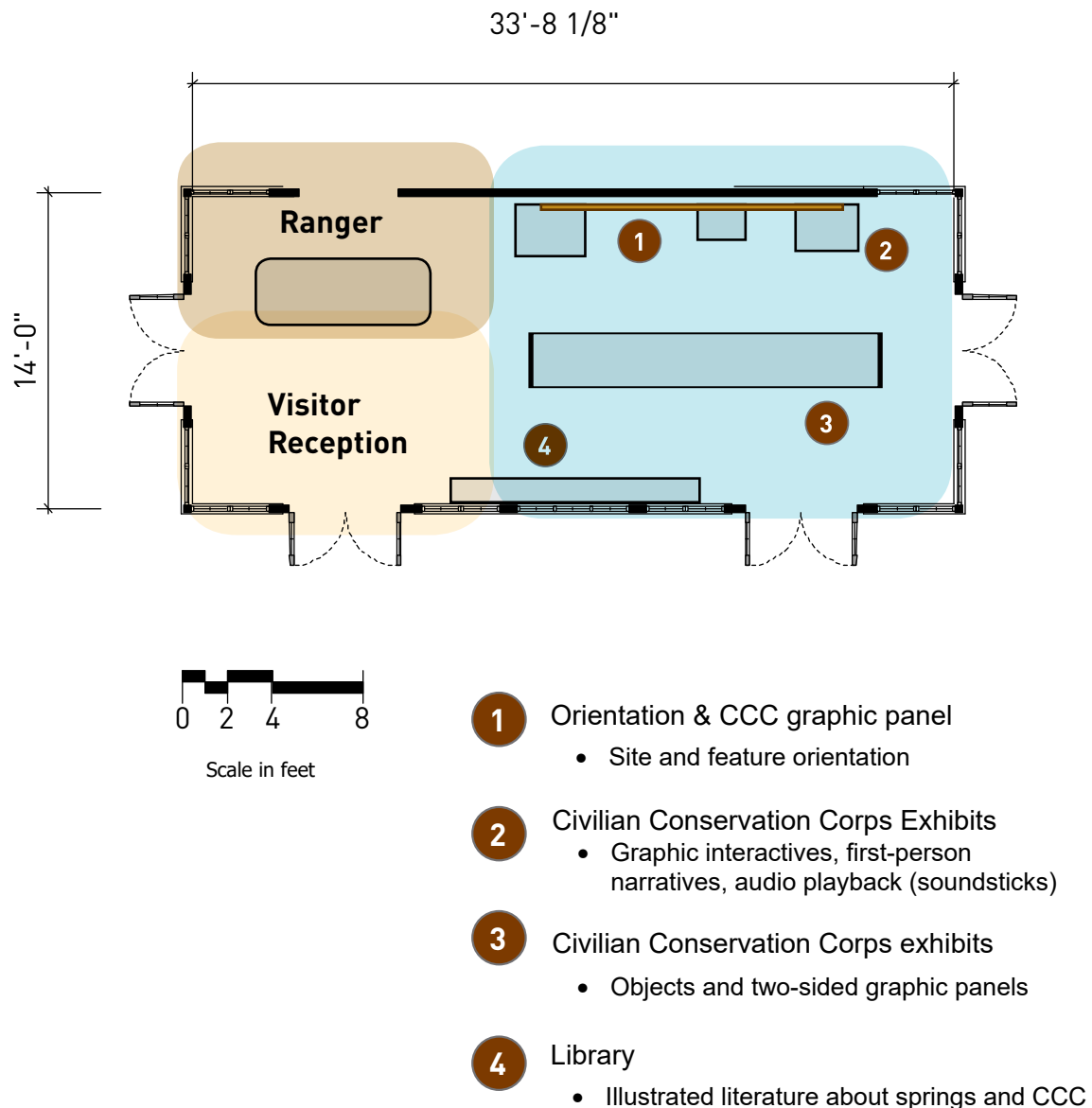


**Big Spring CCC Museum:** 435 square feet

**Primary Topic:** Park and spring orientation and history

**Secondary Topic:** Civilian Conservation Corps

**Visitor Experience Goals:** After a greeting from a ranger, visitors can orient themselves to the park and plan their day while sitting at a CCC-era long table in a light-filled room. An exhibit space in this historic building introduces the CCC, displays CCC artifacts, and examines its role in creating the park and showcasing the springs.

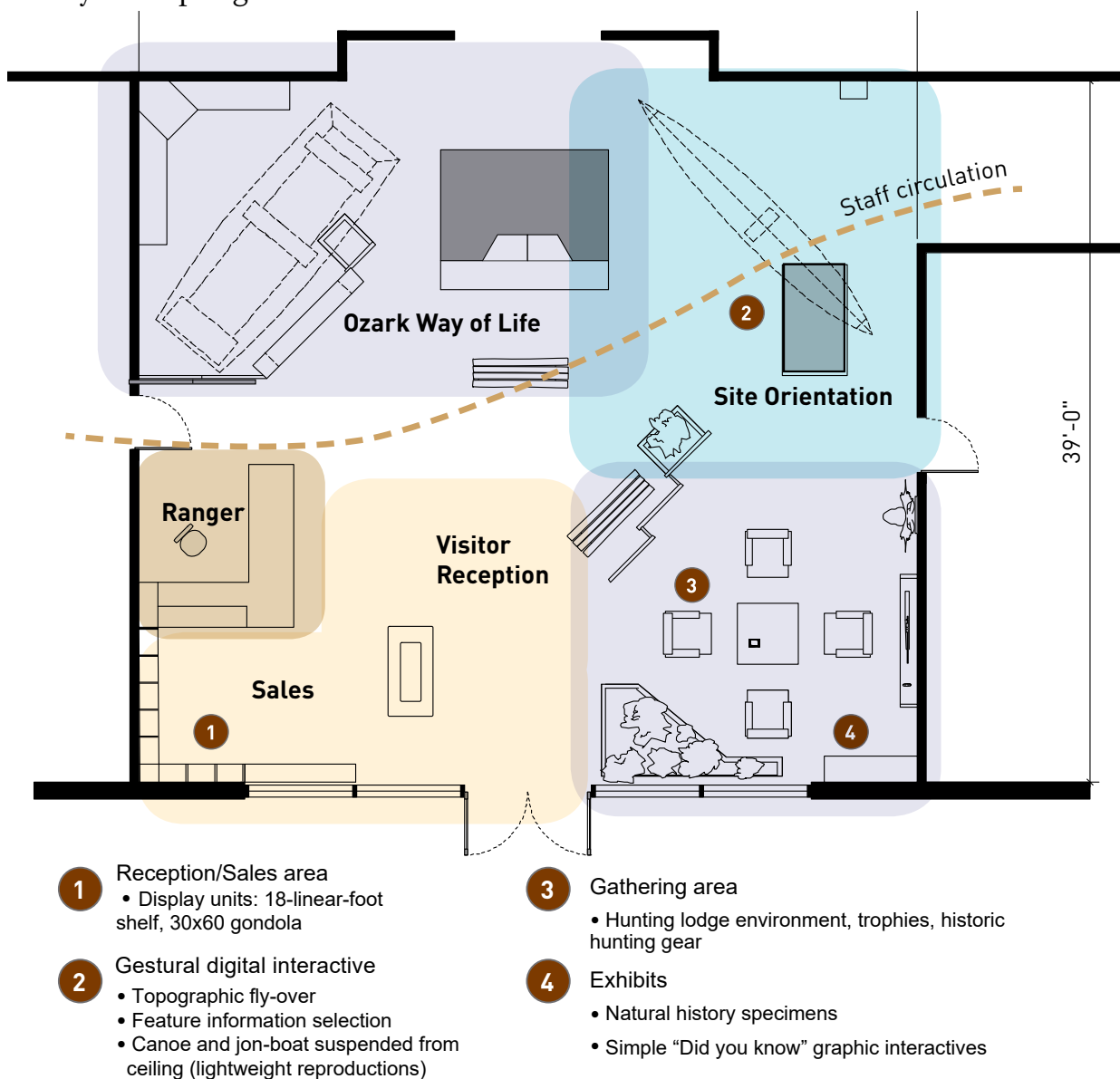


## Ozark National Scenic Riverways Headquarters, Van Buren

**Primary Topic:** Park orientation and history

**Secondary Topic:** Cultural heritage of the Ozarks

**Visitor Experience Goals:** To provide a welcoming, evocative Riverways experience for visitors arriving to get basic information and orientation; to help visitors understand the cultural heritage of the park and gain insight into the scope and importance of the Riverways and springs.



## Concluding Observations

In addition to the conceptual recommendations highlighted here, the planning team and stakeholders discussed a number of other ways to expand and improve spaces for interpretive activities throughout the Riverways. Among these recommendations were to upgrade the amphitheaters at the park campgrounds (and replace the one destroyed by the 2017 floods) and to add a new visitor station, similar to the Pulltite facility, at Two Rivers.

In the Implementation Guide published as part of this plan, park staff set priorities and desired schedules for completion of each of the facilities renovations addressed in this report. While the funding process will doubtless impact the timing of the various renovations, it is clear that, over the long term, the planning efforts outlined here will yield significant benefits for visitor experiences in the Riverways for years to come.

Submitted by: Goolrick Interpretive Group

Faye Goolrick, Certified Interpretive Planner  
Goolrick Interpretive Group (Atlanta, GA)

and

Ed Malouf, Exhibit Designer  
Content Design Collaborative LLC (Scituate, MA)  
*for Goolrick Interpretive Group*

## Appendix B: Legislation

PUBLIC LAW 88-192 – Aug. 27, 1964

### AN ACT

To provide for the establishment of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways in the State of Missouri, and for other purposes.

Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled. That, for the purpose of conserving and interpreting unique scenic and other natural values and objects of historic interest, including preservation of portions of the Current River and the Jacks Fork River in Missouri as free-flowing streams, preservation of springs and caves, management of wildlife, and provisions for use and enjoyment of the outdoor recreation resources thereof by the people of the United States, the Secretary of the Interior (hereinafter referred to as the “Secretary”) shall designate for establishment as the Ozark National Scenic Riverways the area (hereinafter referred to as “such area”) generally depicted on map numbered NR OZA 7002 entitled “Proposed Ozark National Rivers” dated December 1963 which map is on file for public inspection in the office of the National Park Service, Department of the Interior: Provided, That the area so designated shall not include more than sixty-five thousand acres of land now in private ownership and that no lands shall be designated within two miles of the present boundaries of the municipalities of Eminence and Van Buren, Missouri. The Secretary, with the concurrence of the State, shall designate for inclusion in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, the lands composing Big Springs, Alley Springs, and Round Spring State Parks, and the Secretary is hereby directed to negotiate with the State for the donation and the inclusion of such park lands in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

SEC. 2. The Secretary may, within the area designated or altered pursuant to section 4, acquire lands and interests therein, including scenic easements, by such means as he may deem to be in the public interest: Provided, That scenic easements may only be acquired with the consent of the owner of the lands or waters thereof: And provided further, That any parcel of land containing not more than five hundred acres, which borders either the Current River or the Jacks Fork River, and which is being primarily used for agricultural purpose, shall be acquired by the Secretary in its entirety unless the owner of any such parcel consents to the acquisition of a part thereof.

Property so acquired which lies outside the boundary generally depicted on the map referred to in section 1 of this Act may be exchanged by the Secretary for any land of approximately equal value within the boundaries. Lands and waters owned by the State of Missouri within such area may be acquired only with the consent of the State. Federally owned lands or waters lying within such area shall, upon establishment of the area pursuant to section 4 hereof, be transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary, without transfer of funds, for administration as part of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

SEC. 3. Any owner or owners, including beneficial owners (hereinafter in this section referred to as “owner”), of improved property on the date of its acquisition by the Secretary may, as a condition to such acquisition, retain the right of use and occupancy of the improved property for noncommercial residential purposes for a term ending at the death of such owner, or the death of his spouse, or at the death of the survivor of either of them. The owner shall elect the term to be reserved. The Secretary shall pay to the owner the fair market value of the property on the date of such acquisition less the fair market value on such date of the right retained by the owner.

SEC. 4. When the Secretary determines that lands and waters, or interests therein, have been acquired by the United States in sufficient quantity to provide an administrable unit, he shall declare establishment of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways by publication of notice in the Federal Register. The Secretary may thereafter alter such boundaries from time to time, except that the total acreage in the Ozark National Scenic Riverways shall not exceed sixty-five thousand acres, exclusive of land donated by the State of Missouri or its political subdivisions and of federally owned land transferred pursuant to section 2 of this Act.

SEC. 5. (a) In furtherance of the purposes of this Act, the Secretary is authorized to cooperate with the State of Missouri, its political subdivisions, and other Federal agencies and organizations in formulating comprehensive plans for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways and for the related watershed of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers in Missouri, and to enter into agreements for the implementation of such plans. Such plans may provide for land sue and development programs, for preservation and enhancement of the natural beauty of the landscape, and for conservation of outdoor resources in the watersheds of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers.



(b) The Secretary shall permit hunting and fishing on lands and waters under his jurisdiction within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways area in accordance with applicable Federal and State laws. The Secretary may designate zones where, and establish periods when, no hunting shall be permitted, for reasons of public safety, administration, or public use and enjoyment and shall issue regulations after consultation with the Conservation Commission of the State of Missouri.

SEC. 6. The Ozark National Scenic Riverways shall be administered in accordance with the provisions of the Act of August 25, 1916 (39 Stat. 535), as amended and supplemented, and in accordance with the other laws of general application relating to the areas administered and supervised by the Secretary through the National Park Service; except that authority otherwise available to the Secretary for the conservation and management of natural resources may be utilized to the extent he finds such authority will further the purposes of this Act.

SEC. 7. (a) There is hereby established an Ozark National Scenic Riverways Commission. The Commission shall cease to exist ten years after the date of establishment of the area pursuant to section 4 of this Act.

(b) The Commission shall be composed of seven members, each appointed for a term of two years by the Secretary as follows:

(1) Four members to be appointed from recommendations made by the members of the county court in each of the counties in which the Ozark National Scenic Riverways is situated (Carter, Dent, Shannon, and Texas), one member from the recommendations made by each such court;

(2) Two members to be appointed from recommendations of the Governor of the State of Missouri; and

(3) One member to be designated by the Secretary.

(c) The Secretary shall designate one member to be chairman. Any vacancy in the Commission shall be filled in the same manner in which the original appointment was made.

(d) A member of the Commission shall serve without compensation. The Secretary shall reimburse members of the Commission for travel, subsistence, and other necessary expenses incurred by them in the performance of the duties vested in the Commission.

(e) The Secretary or his designee shall from time to time consult with the members of the Commission with respect to matters relating to the development of the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, and shall consult with the members with respect to carrying out the provisions of this Act.

(f) It shall be the duty of the Commission to render advice to the Secretary from time to time upon matters which the Secretary may refer to it for its consideration.

SEC. 8. There are hereby authorized to be appropriated such sums (but not more than \$7,000,000 for the acquisition of lands or interests in lands) as are necessary to carry out the purposes of this Act.

Approved August 27, 1964.

## Appendix C: PLANNING PARTICIPANTS

Jim Anderson, Mayor, City of Eminence  
 Alan Banks, Local Resident  
 Reta Barkley, NPS volunteer (retired from Missouri Department of Conservation)  
 Skylar Bockman, Education Center Manager, Missouri Department of Conservation  
 Josh Chilton, District Interpretive Ranger, NPS  
 Alex Cox, NPS seasonal interpretive ranger  
 Chad Dierkes, NPS seasonal interpretive ranger  
 Roger Dillon, Current Wave newspaper (photographer)  
 Hugh Gibson, Professor, Missouri State University  
 Victoria Grant, Natural Resources division, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, NPS  
 Lindel Gregory, Chief Ranger, Ozark National Scenic Riverways  
 Courtney Heuring, NPS seasonal interpretive ranger  
 Scott House, Cave Research Foundation  
 Eleanor Maggard, Akers Ferry/Jacks Fork Canoe Rental  
 Sarah Marsh, Intern from Missouri State University  
 Dena Matteson, Chief of Interpretation, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, NPS  
 Maury Mertz, Back Country Horsemen of Missouri  
 Bill O'Donnell (NPS retired), volunteer  
 Barb Ostmann, Visitor, Volunteer, and Journalist  
 Jeff Pogue, Missouri State House of Representatives  
 Levi Pogue, Student  
 James E. Price, Archeologist (NPS retired)  
 Emily Rapp, Eastern National  
 Cathy Runge, District Interpretive Ranger, NPS  
 Larry Johnson, Superintendent, Ozark National Scenic Riverways  
 Larry Sandarciero, Acting Deputy Superintendent, Ozark National Scenic Riverways  
 David Savage, Manager, Current River State Park, Missouri State Parks  
 Peg Scherbaum, Contracting Officer's Representative, Harpers Ferry Center, NPS  
 Judy Stewart, President, Friends of Mt. Zion and Shannon County Museum  
 Dave Tobey, District Interpretive Ranger, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, NPS  
 Faye Walmsley (NPS retired), volunteer  
 Connie Weber, Interpretive Resources Specialist, Echo Bluff/Current River,  
     Missouri State Parks  
 Debbie Wisdom, Administration, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, NPS  
 Deloris Gray Wood, Dent County Historical Society  
 Allison Young, Park Archeologist, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, NPS

### *Facilitators:*

Goolrick Interpretive Group  
     Faye Goolrick, Certified Interpretive Planner  
     Ed Malouf, Exhibit Designer

## **APPENDIX D: REFERENCES**

*Big Spring Cultural Landscape Report/Environment Assessment draft*, January 2017. (Big Spring State Park National Historic District)

*Ozark National Scenic Riverways Historic Resource Study. A Homeland and a Hinterland: The Current and Jacks Fork Riverways.* By Donald L. Stevens, Jr. National Park Service Midwest Regional Office, Omaha, NB. 1991.

*Ozark National Scenic Riverways General Management Plan*, National Park Service, Van Buren, MO. 2015

*Round Spring Archeology, Ozark National Scenic Riverways.* NPS Midwest Archeological Center Technical Report No. 2, by Mark J. Lynott. National Park Service, Lincoln, NB. 1991.



Junior Ranger Day is a great way for students to learn about the Riverways.

*Back cover:* Alley Mill is a picturesque scene any time of year.



Harpers Ferry Center  
National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior



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