

Roads and Trails Management Plan / Environmental Assessment

Fall 2015

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Ozark National Scenic Riverways
Missouri



Public Scoping Newsletter

Dear Friends,

The National Park Service is initiating a Roads and Trails Management Plan / Environmental Assessment for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways (Riverways). We are requesting your comments during the public scoping period, which runs from October 26 – November 25, 2015.

The Riverways consists of 80,785 acres of land and water in southeastern Missouri, including portions of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. The Riverways protects 134 linear miles of clear, free-flowing, spring-fed waterways and also contain a vast network of roads and recreation trails. The development of a roads and trails plan is critical to the protection of key resources and visitor experiences in the park. This newsletter provides you with information about the planning process and ways you can participate and contribute your ideas and opinions.

Thank you for your interest in the Riverways' Roads and Trails Management Plan.

Sincerely,

Superintendent Larry Johnson

You are invited...

The National Park Service will be hosting four open houses for the public. The purpose of these open houses is to gather public input to help us develop the roads and trails management plan. Each open house will provide participants with information about the existing roads and trails network and the planning process.

Please stop by and share your ideas at one of the following locations:

- **Monday, October 26, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**
Eminence High School (New Gym)
505 South Sixth Street, Eminence, MO 65466
- **Tuesday, October 27, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**
Van Buren Youth & Community Center
Intersection of Business 60 & D Highway
Van Buren, MO 63965
- **Wednesday, October 28, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**
Salem City Hall Auditorium
202 North Washington, Salem, MO 65560
- **Thursday, October 29, 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**
Holiday Inn St. Louis SW - Route 66
10709 Watson Road, Sunset Hills, MO 63127

Purpose of the Roads and Trails Management Plan / Environmental Assessment

The purpose of the Roads and Trails Management Plan (Plan) is to improve the system of roads and trails to ensure that it provides access to a variety of locations and experiences while also protecting the Riverways' fundamental resources and values.

The plan will serve as the primary implementation-level planning effort for future road and trail development and management in the Riverways.

Why is the Plan needed?

Currently, the Riverways contain a complex mix of both designated and undesignated travel corridors and public use areas, some of which are impacting park resources, the quality of the visitor experience, and visitor safety. Development of a comprehensive Roads and Trails Plan will help the Riverways better manage and protect the park through identification of an authorized system of roads, trails, and river access points, as well as authorized uses for those assets and appropriate levels of maintenance. The Plan will likely examine and explore options regarding:

- Designation of up to 45 miles of new horse trails.
- Identification of additional hiking trails and possible introduction of mountain bike trails.
- Clarification of jurisdictional ownership of roads.
- Possible closure and rehabilitation of highly impacted areas such as some unauthorized roads and trails.



Plan Objectives

Several objectives have been identified which will help guide the development of alternatives for managing park roads and trails. These objectives will assist the planning team in the evaluation of alternatives and selection of a preferred alternative. The Plan will help us ensure that roads, trails, river access points, and river crossings:

- Are located to protect important cultural areas that are sensitive to human impacts, and to avoid archeological sites, American Indian sacred sites, sensitive historic sites, and cultural landscapes.
- Are designed and located to minimize adverse impacts to water quality and important vegetation and wildlife communities, make use of existing disturbed areas, help restore heavily impacted and environmentally sensitive areas, and direct trail use to areas with suitable soils.
- Provide access to a variety of clearly defined locations and experiences in the park with minimal duplication. Trails would be designed and managed to minimize conflicts between user groups and to enhance visitor safety. Where possible, the trail system might connect to trails on adjacent public lands, creating an integrated network for the enjoyment of visitors.
- Are designed and located to maximize the efficiency of maintenance, interpretation, resource management, and

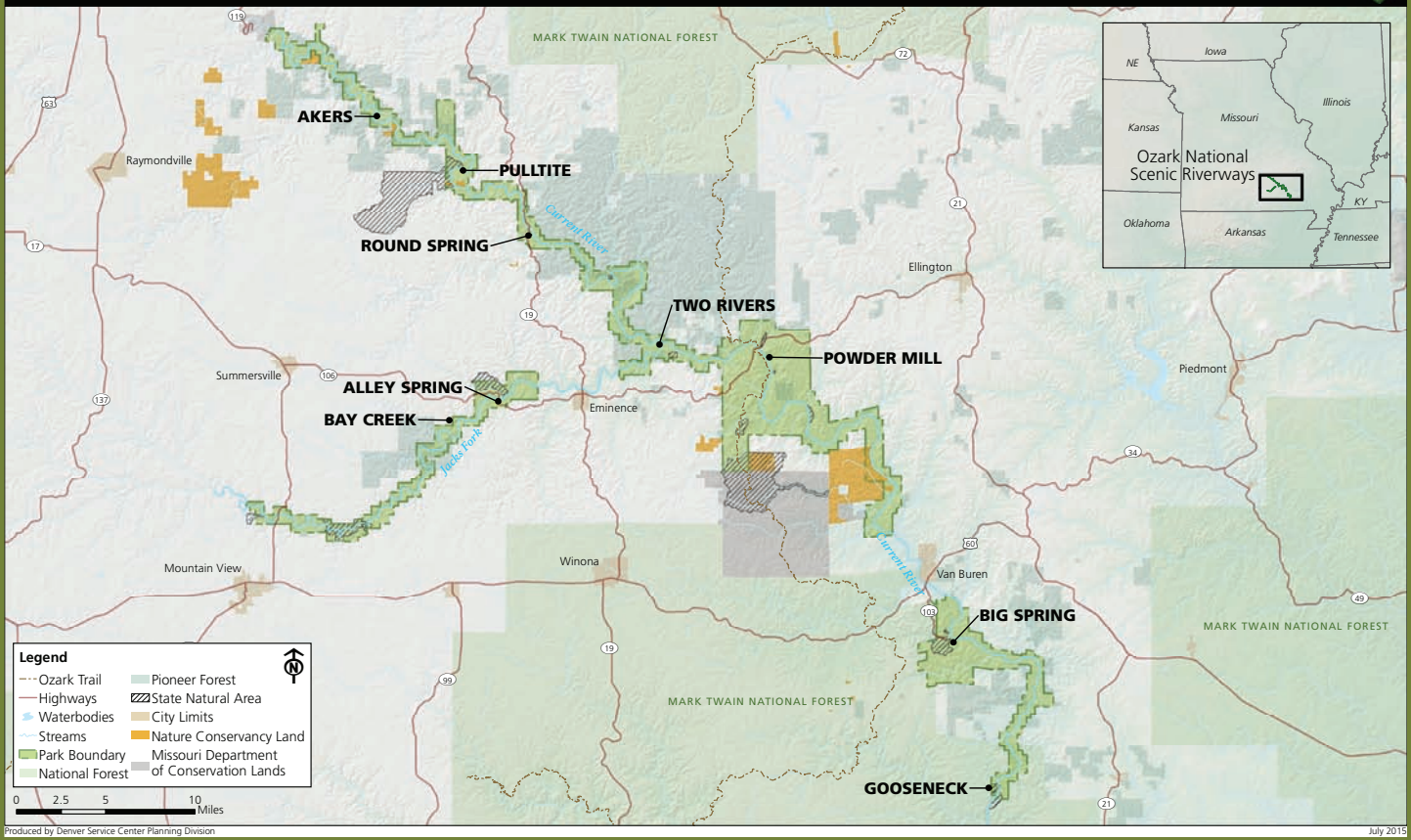
visitor protection staffs while minimizing financial costs to the park.

- Reflect the importance of the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers to communities and the surrounding region, both in terms of economy and lifeways.



Overview

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



How to Get Involved



Please share your thoughts!

Between October 26 and November 25, 2015, we are asking you to share your thoughts, concerns, and ideas for further improving and managing park roads and trails. Your input is very important in guiding the team's work. You can share your comments at one of our open houses, on our website at http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan or by mailing your comments to the return address listed at the end of the newsletter. Your responses will help guide the planning team in developing the roads and trails management plan, including the consideration of various management alternatives.

We'd like your input on the following questions during scoping:

1. What types of opportunities should the park's land trail system provide more of for the public?
2. How do you feel about multi-use trails in the park (i.e. equestrians, hikers, and mountain bikers sharing the same trails)? What tools could we use to address potential conflict between different user groups?
3. We will be analyzing the existing network of designated trails, unauthorized/user-created trails, and potential new trail alignments within the National Riverways. What factors should we consider as we update the network of park trails and consider where new trails might go?
4. We will be evaluating existing roads in the Riverways to determine the best road network for the future. We want to provide a road network that allows for adequate visitor access while also protecting the natural and cultural resources of the park. What factors do you think we should consider as we evaluate the existing road network?
5. Are there other considerations we should think about as we examine the park's road and trail system?

ATTN: ROADS & TRAILS PLANNING TEAM
 UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR
 NATIONAL PARK SERVICE
 OZARK NATIONAL SCENIC RIVERWAYS
 PO Box 490
 VAN BUREN, MISSOURI 63965

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Ozark National Scenic Riverways Roads and Trails Management Plan Planning Schedule and Opportunities to Provide Input

The table below shows the major steps in the planning process and when those events will take place.

Milestone	Time Frame	Opportunities for Public Input
WE ARE HERE Public Scoping	Fall 2015	Review the newsletter, attend the open house, and/or provide comments online by visiting the website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan
Development of draft alternatives	Winter 2015 — Summer 2016	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan
Public Meeting and Comments on Draft Alternatives	Summer— Fall 2016	Review the preliminary alternatives newsletter, attend open house meetings, and/or provide comments online by visiting the website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan
Prepare Draft Roads & Trails Management Plan / EA	Winter 2016— Spring 2017	Stay up-to-date on the planning process by visiting the website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan
Public Meeting and Comments on the Draft Roads & Trails Management Plan / EA	Fall 2017	Review the draft plan, attend the open house meetings, and provide comments online by visiting the website at: http://parkplanning.nps.gov/OZAR_RTplan
Targeted completion date	Winter 2017— Spring 2018	

Thank you for your interest in the Ozark Roads and Trails Management Plan!