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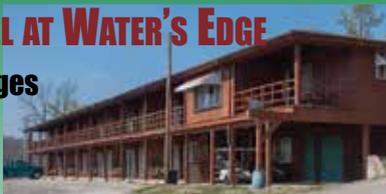
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The Real Ozarks

Escape. Unwind. Soak in the beauty of the Ozarks.

Ozark County's rolling hills
photo by Michelle Cooley

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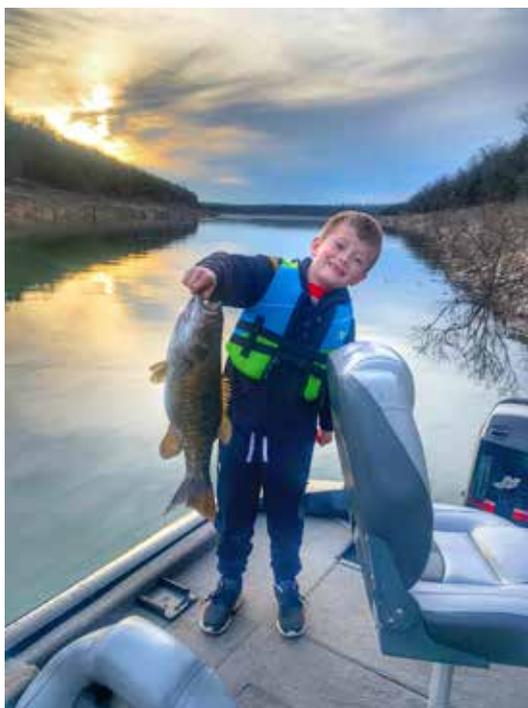
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ABOUT THIS YEAR'S COVER

Gainesville School superintendent Justin Gilmore snapped this photo of his son Parker last March while fishing on Bull Shoals Lake. Parker, who was 8 when the photo was taken, is the son of Justin and his wife, Chelsey Gilmore. On a Facebook post, Chelsey said, "Parker is loving all the fishing time he's getting at the lake with Dad. If you ask them, they could quarantine at the lake all day, everyday." Gainesville and other schools in the county closed to in-person classes from March through May 2020 due to covid concerns.

Welcome to the real Ozarks, the one and only Ozark County, Missouri, a remote and rugged haven where nature outshines neon and "heavy traffic" is something you're more likely to encounter on the rivers than on the roads.

Stay for a while, and you too may find there's something magical about the mornings when the mist hugs the hollows as the sun creeps over the hills. And what can compare with a night sky so clear and dark the stars seem close enough to touch?

The rush of the rivers' see-through water, the rhythm of the lakes lapping against their shores, the sounds of the woods, the beauty of spring blossoms floating through the forest . . . Don't be surprised if these treasures call to you the next time you're back in the city.

An Ozark County vacation combines the ease of modern conveniences and the appeal of bygone days. Modern resorts with all the amenities, whether they're tucked "back in the sticks," stretch along the river or overlooking our two Corps of Engineers lakes, offer the same downhome charm and personal friendliness that "mom-and-pop" lodging has provided for decades. Come for a stay, and soon you'll probably feel more like family than guests.

Our hills offer thousands of acres

of beautiful conservation areas and national forest webbed by hiking trails and scenic drives and dotted with campgrounds. The abundant wildlife, especially deer and turkey, make Ozark County a prime area for hunting.

And our waterways – lakes and rivers – are famous for trophy-winning fish. Canoeing, kayaking and tubing are popular pastimes on Bryant Creek and the North Fork of the White River, and Ozark County's friendly outfitters are ready to make the adventure easy for you.

If you prefer motorized water sports, the county's two full-service marinas offer rentals of everything you'll need to enjoy a day, or a week, cruising our lakes. Of course, they also offer stalls for you BYOB (bring your own boat) visitors too.

Come to Ozark County, and leave all the stress and hubbub behind. This is not a bright lights, big city kind of place. It's a retreat where visitors and residents slow down, settle in and soak up the peaceful pleasures of some of the oldest mountains on earth.

If you're like a lot of folks, the biggest problem you'll have is leaving. That's what happens when you discover the Real Ozarks.

Getting here

Ozark County, Missouri, is nestled amid the hills, rivers and lakes near the center of the Missouri-Arkansas border. This scenic, secluded heart of the Ozarks is far away from rush-hour traffic and big-city hubbub – but easy to get to if you know the way. Come visit!



Driving directions

Directions are to Gainesville, the county seat of Ozark County.

From Branson

Head east on Highway 76 for 14 miles to Highway 160. Then turn east (right) and continue for 45 miles to Gainesville.

From Kansas City

Take US 71 south to MO 7 south to Clinton. From Clinton, take MO 13 south to Springfield (see note about GPS below). Then take I-44 east to US 65 south. Take US 60 east to Mansfield and turn south onto MO 5 south to Gainesville.

From Springfield

Disregard what your GPS may suggest! Here's the route most locals take: Head east from Springfield on Highway 60 to Mansfield (45 miles). Turn south onto Highway 5 toward Ava then continue south for another 30 miles from Ava to Gainesville.

From St. Louis

Take I-44 west to Rolla. Then take US Highway 63 south to West Plains. From there, take US Highway 160 west to Gainesville.

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Times

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Tiger Swallowtail butterfly
photo by Lonnie Schmidt

Attribution

Much of the fishing, hiking, river, lake and hunting information in this volume is adapted from information available on the Missouri Department of Conservation, Mark Twain National Forest and US Army Corps of Engineers websites.

Closest airports

Springfield-Branson National Airport- (SGF)

92 miles from Gainesville

2300 N. Airport Blvd., Springfield, MO 65802
417-868-0500
flyspringfield.com

Branson Airport - (BKG)

68 miles from Gainesville

130 Wright Brothers Rd., Hollister, MO 65672
417-334-8234
flybranson.com

Location

Distances are to Gainesville, the seat of Ozark County.

Mountain Home, AR	26 miles, 33 minutes
Ava, MO	30 miles, 34 minutes
West Plains, MO	39 miles, 50 minutes
Branson, MO	60 miles, 1.2 hours
Springfield, MO	84 miles, 1.5 hours
Rolla, MO	118 miles, 2.2 hours
Fayetteville, AR	143 miles, 3 hours
Jefferson City, MO	174 miles, 3 hours
Little Rock, AR	173 miles, 3.5 hours
Memphis, TN	206 miles, 3.75 hours
St. Louis, MO	225 miles, 4 hours
Kansas City, MO	250 miles, 4 hours

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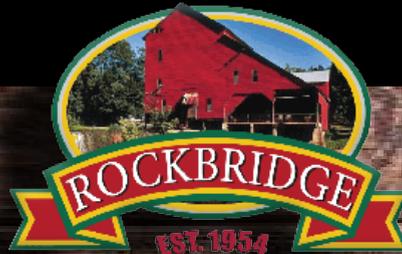
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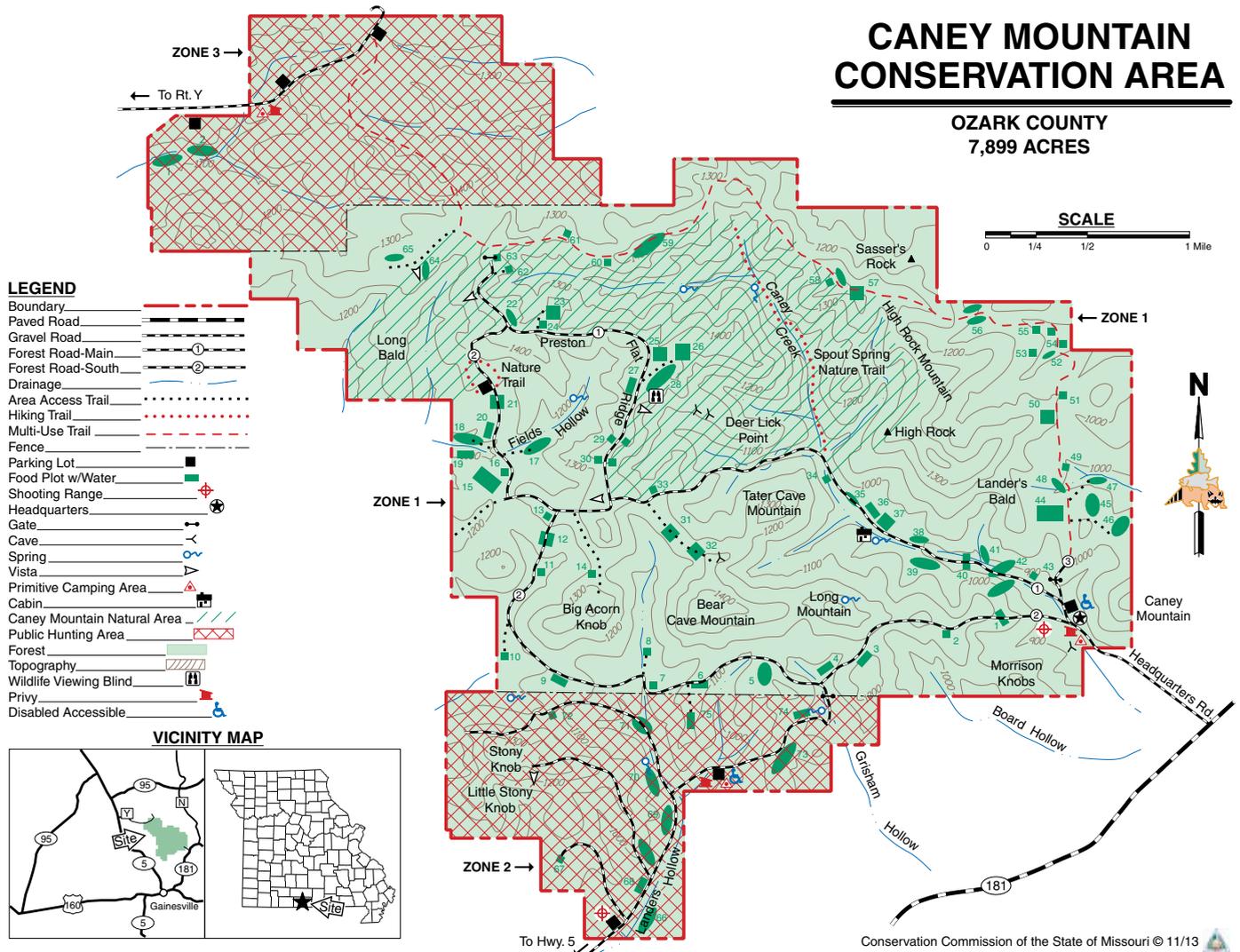


Caney Creek smiles

Reese and Cleo Jones loved playing in Caney Creek at Caney Mountain Conservation Area in summer 2019. The creek flows from an upstream spring to cross a low-water slab roadway near the area's headquarters. The relatively shallow water is typically cold and crystal clear with some deeper pools populated by crawdads and minnows waiting to be investigated. Reese and Cleo are the children of Sam and Chrissy Jones of Portland, Oregon, and the grandchildren of *Times* editor Sue Ann Jones.

CANEY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA

OZARK COUNTY
7,899 ACRES



Due to little-to-no cell phone reception, and no visitor display maps at the conservation area, visitors are encouraged to bring a map of the area with them when exploring Caney Mountain Conservation Area. This map is available on the Missouri Department of Conservation website at <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/downloads/conservation-areas/5202map.pdf>.

CANEY MOUNTAIN Conservation Area

Nearly 8,000 acres of public land includes high-quality forest, woodland and glades providing opportunities for recreation, hiking, horseback riding, wildlife viewing, hunting, camping and more.

OWNER: Missouri Department of Conservation
ACREAGE: 7,899 acres including 1,300 of wildlife refuge
CONTACT: MDC regional office, 417-256-7161
GPS COORDINATES: 36.58568° N, 91.14006° W
HOURS: Open 30 min. before sunrise to 30 min. after sunset
WEB: nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/caney-mountain-ca

Wildlife viewing.

This conservation area helped nurture the rebirth of the eastern wild turkey after the state's population dropped to fewer than 2,500 birds. Today wild turkeys flourish here, as do whitetail deer, squirrels, birds and many other native species. Bald eagle sightings are common, especially during the winter. Two wheelchair-accessible wildlife viewing blinds, placed on the edges of managed food plots, provide a good opportunity for visitors to spot wildlife and take photos. Find the viewing blinds on the MDC website "area map."

Bring creek shoes.

Get your toes wet, look for crawdads or just enjoy the sound of natural water surrounding you in Caney Mountain Conservation Area's water features. The area includes 112 intermittent streams including the 3-mile-long Caney Creek, the Spout Spring and over 40 fish-less ponds

Take a hike.

Two designated hiking trails weave through the center wildlife refuge section of Caney Mountain Conservation Area. The **Spout Spring Trail** (more details about this hike can be found on page 38) is an easy 1.5-mile out-and-back trail that passes through a variety of surroundings and runs along a creek, giving a glimpse of Spout Spring near the end. The **Long Bald Nature Trail** is a half-mile loop through glade country. Dozens of other unnamed multi-use trails, gravel roads and forestry roads run throughout the acreage and can be used by the public for hiking, bicycling or horseback riding. Maps are generally not available at the conservation area, so it's wise for travelers to download or bring their own before visiting. A map is available at <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/downloads/conservation-areas/5202map.pdf>

Managed hunts.

The center of the Caney Mountain Conservation Area, zone 1, is considered the natural area or wildlife refuge. This 1,100-acre section is closed to public hunting all year with the exception of a few managed hunts that include a muzzleloader deer hunt, an archery deer hunt, spring archery and shotgun turkey hunts and a youth-only spring shotgun turkey hunt. Participants are selected for the managed hunts in a lottery drawing, with application deadlines submitted several months ahead of the hunts. For more information or to submit an application to be considered for a management hunt, visit huntfish.mdc.mo.gov.

Public hunting.

Caney Mountain Conservation Area is separated into three zones, and two of them – Zone 3 on the north end and Zone 2 on the south end – are open to public hunting. Hunting is prohibited in the center (Zone 1) "natural area," except for managed deer and turkey hunts (see above right).

Caving.

Spelunkers can check out the "wild" caves at Caney Mountain Conservation Area, including the Davis Cave near the entrance off Highway 181. See the website map for icons indicating the caves' location.

Camping.

Pitch a tent or bring an RV to camp at one of the many campsites within the park. Each of the three zones has a campsite area that includes privies, fire rings and picnic tables.

Directions

Caney Mountain Conservation Area has three access points. All directions are from Gainesville. **Zone 1:** Take Highway 181 north 5 miles. Turn left onto Headquarters Road, the graveled entrance to the conservation area. **Zone 2:** Take Highway 5 north 2 miles. Turn right onto County Road 107 and continue for a half-mile. **Zone 3:** Take Highway 5 north 10 miles. Turn right (east) onto Highway Y and drive 3 miles, then turn right onto County Road 116. Continue until you reach the entrance.

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Above: Glade Top Trail is especially appealing in the fall when the foliage begins to put on a show, as shown in this photo from Gentryville resident Jan VanSchuyver. **Below:** The area is also a popular place for horseback riding. Thornfield resident Jeri Hedges shared this photo of a group ride that provided spectacular views of the surrounding countryside. Pictured, from left, are John Howard, Earl Stoner, Valerie Stoner and Russ Howard.



GLADE TOP TRAIL

Missouri Scenic Byway

OWNER: Mark Twain National Forest, US Forest Service
LENGTH: 23 miles
CONTACT: Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs District Ranger
 Cody Lunsford, 417-683-4428

GPS COORDINATES: Latitude: 36.75° N, Longitude: 92.76° W

OPEN: Year round; quiet hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

MAP: www.fs.fed.us/wildflowers/regions/eastern/GladeTopTrail

Points of interest. Notable areas include Hayden Bald, which has a picnic table and parking area, and Smoke Tree scenic overlook, a pull-off with a bench for sitting and taking in the view. The Corbitt Potter and Willie Lee areas are good for “dispersed camping” (meaning camping outside of a designated campground, which is allowed along the trail). The Arkansas View site has a picnic table and spectacular views south. Watershed Divide offers views of a vast area of countryside. Wolf Junction has a picnic table, and Big Creek Basin offers an impressive view. Close to the Glade Top Trail on the southwest side, trails are available for hikers, equestrians and dispersed campers. A vault toilet is located at the Hercules Tower trailhead.

Scenic byway. The Glade Top Trail is Missouri’s only National Forest Scenic Byway. Its wide, sweeping views of the Ozarks countryside are beautiful anytime of year, but they’re especially breathtaking in the fall, when the hardwoods transform from their usual green blanket into a tapestry of vibrant autumn color. The all-weather road is accessible to all vehicles and is maintained regularly.

Flaming Fall Revue. Each year the Ava Chamber of Commerce sponsors an outdoor fall festival, the Flaming Fall Revue, at the Caney Picnic Area on the Glade Top Trail. This year’s festival is Saturday, Oct. 19, 2021. The event begins with an outdoor church service at 10:30 a.m. followed by live music, fall activities, pumpkin painting, exhibits and local artists, a dessert auction and various dinner options for purchase. For more information, contact the Ava Chamber of Commerce at 417-683-4594 or visit www.avachamber.org.

Considered one of the most scenic locations in Missouri, the Glade Top Trail cuts through the Mark Twain National Forest and borders the Hercules Glade Wilderness Area, following narrow ridgetops rising 500 feet above the surrounding rolling countryside.

Wildflowers.

Native to these glades is a high diversity of both common and rare plants. Some of the wildflowers that can be seen along the Glade Top Trail include Arkansas calamint (*satureja arkansana*), aromatic aster (*symphotrichum oblongifolium*), Barbara’s buttons (*marshallia caespitosa* var. *signata*), Bush’s skullcap (*ccutellaria bushii*), Gattinger’s goldenrod (*solidago gattingeri*), Missouri black-eyed Susan (*rudbeckia missouriensis*), Missouri evening primrose (*oenothera missouriensis*), purple beardtongue (*penstemon cobaea* var. *purpureus*), purple coneflower (*echinacea purpurea*), rosinweed (*grindelia lanceolata*), stenosisiphon (*stenosisiphon linifolius*), silky aster (*symphotrichum sericeum*), Spanish needles (*palafoxia callosa*), Trelease’s larkspur (*delphinium treleasei*) and yellow coneflower (*echinacea paradoxa*).

Overlooks.

Seven overlook pull-off locations provide visitors with panoramic views of the Ozarks that reach 20 miles northwest to the Springfield Plateau and 40 miles south to the Boston Mountains in Arkansas.



**Missouri
Black-Eyed Susan**



Eastern Collared Lizard

Unique landscape.

Missouri has some of the greatest abundance and diversity of glades in the United States, and Glade Top Trail lies within the heart of the best remaining examples of this unique natural landscape. Also known as barrens, balds or knobs, glades consist of areas of thin soil with relatively large amounts of exposed bedrock, and they’re dominated by herbaceous vegetation. The glades provide habitat for some species not generally found in the Ozarks, including the Bachman sparrow, a state endangered species. If you’re lucky, you might see the colorful eastern collared lizard, pictured left.

Directions

From Gainesville, travel north on Highway 5 about 25 miles. Turn left on Highway A in Douglas County. (Note: Ozark County has an A Highway just south of Wasola; don’t turn there.) Go 3.6 miles and turn left on County Road 409, where you’ll see a Glade Top Trail sign. The trail’s south end can also be accessed at Longrun, off Highway 95 in Ozark County. From the west, access the trail from Highway 125 2 miles south of the Hercules Glade Wilderness.



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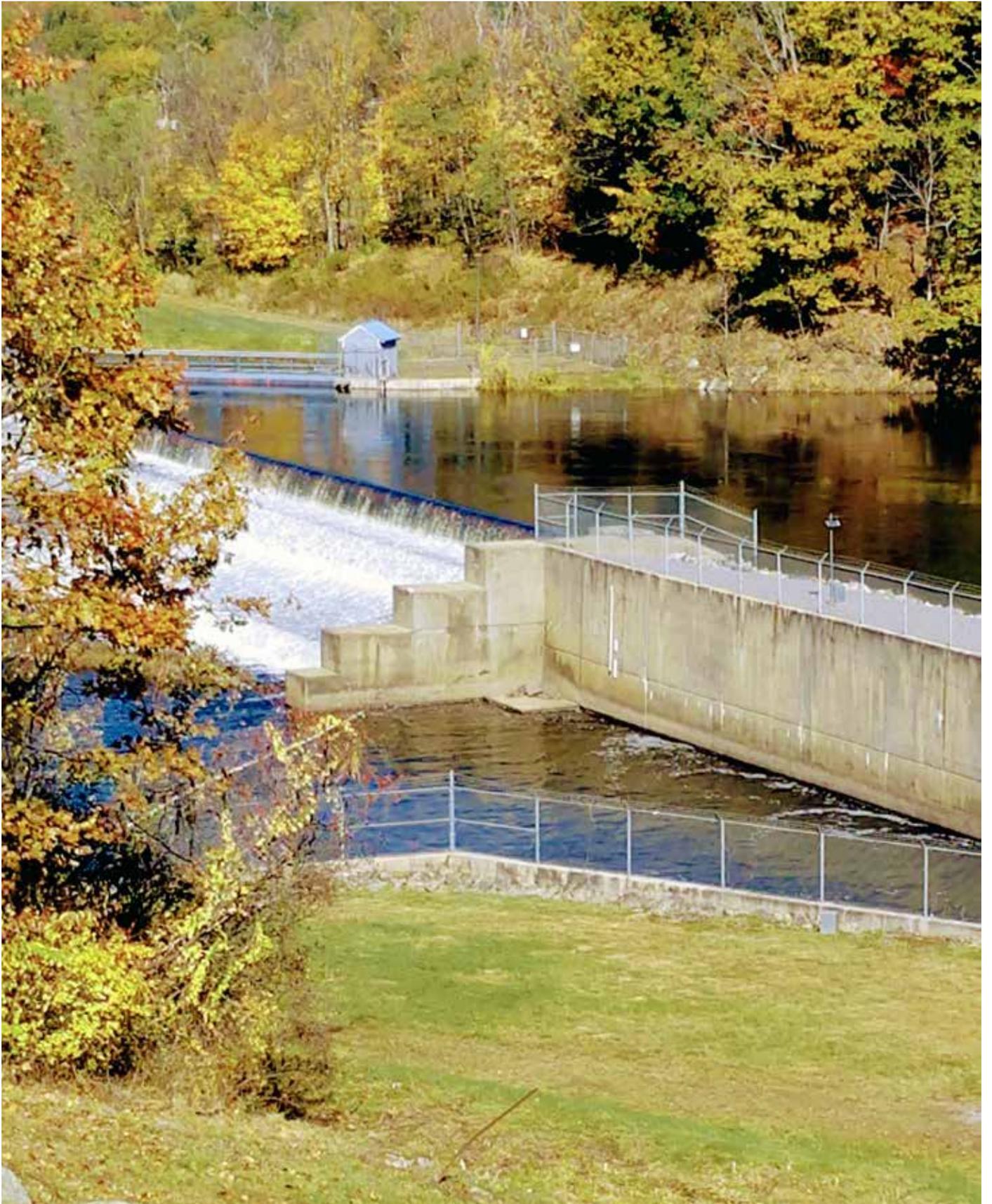
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Debbie Egert submitted this photo of the dam at Noblett Lake, which is just a few miles from her house, she says.

NOBLETT LAKE

Recreation Area

Originally constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps, this scenic recreation area on the shore of a 26-acre lake offers picnicking, fishing, birdwatching, canoeing and electric motor boating.

OWNER: Mark Twain National Forest, US Forest Service
CONTACT: Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger District
 District Ranger Cody Lunsford, 417-683-4428
HOURS OPEN: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.
FEES: No day use fee. Group picnic pavilion \$25/day.
GPS COORDINATES: Latitude: 36.90 Longitude : -92.09

Camping. Dispersed primitive camping is allowed in loops below the dam and on the hill across from the Noblett trailhead, known locally as "Sugar Hill." Camping is not allowed in the day use area.

Canoeing and fishing. Noblett Lake is a popular place to canoe and fish for blue gill, sunfish, bass and catfish. Only electric motors are allowed on the water.

Ridge Runner trail. This National Recreation Trail offers backpackers, mountain bikers and equestrians a 36.5-mile route that begins with a 6-mile loop at Noblett Lake and continues south for 21 miles, where it meets a 6-mile loop at the North Fork Recreation Area (see page 24). Horses are not allowed in the day use areas at Noblett Lake or North Fork Recreation Area or near Blue Spring in the North Fork Recreation Area.

The lake.

Noblett Lake Recreation Area was built in the late 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps.

Picnicking, and a pavilion.

Picnic tables and grills are available on a first come, first serve basis. Vault toilets are available. No drinking water is available; visitors must bring their own. The pavilion, pictured at right, can be reserved for \$25 per day at the website recreation.gov. If not reserved, it can be used on a "first-come, first-serve" basis. Reservations may be made at least four days and up to 12 months in advance. Groups of more than 75 people, whether or not they're using the pavilion, must obtain a special permit. Contact Teresa Crow at MTNF, 417-967-4194.



Riding horses.

The Ridge Runner Trail is popular among equestrians who are seeking an all-day ride. A 6-mile loop serves those seeking a shorter ride. Limited trailer space at the trailheads makes it difficult for more than a few riders to use the trail at any given time. Parking is especially limited on spring and fall weekends. Horses are not allowed in the dispersed camping area below the dam, around the lake or in the picnic area.

Lake loop.

The Loop Trail around Noblett Lake on the north end of the Ridge Runner Trail is a good option for day hikers. If vehicle shuttling is an option, the main trunk of the Ridge Runner Trail (see above) also provides point-to-point day hike options.

Directions

From Dora in northern Ozark County, travel north on Highway 181 for 20 miles. Turn right onto State Highway AP and continue about 3 miles. Turn right onto Forest Road 857 and continue for about 1 mile to the turnoff for the day use area. The road continues to the Noblett dam and trailhead.



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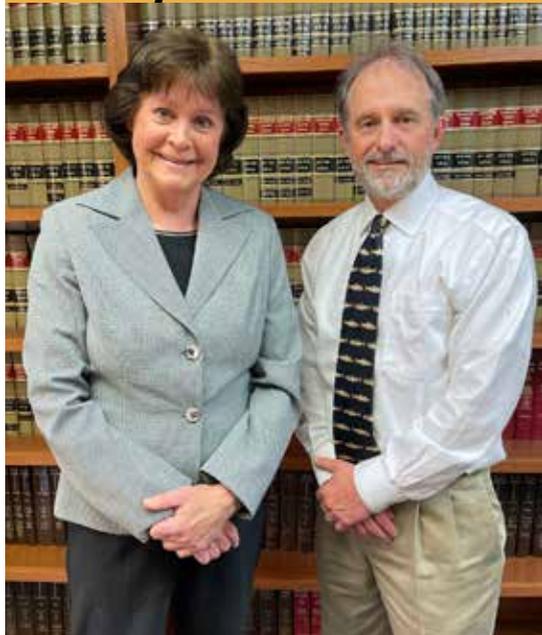
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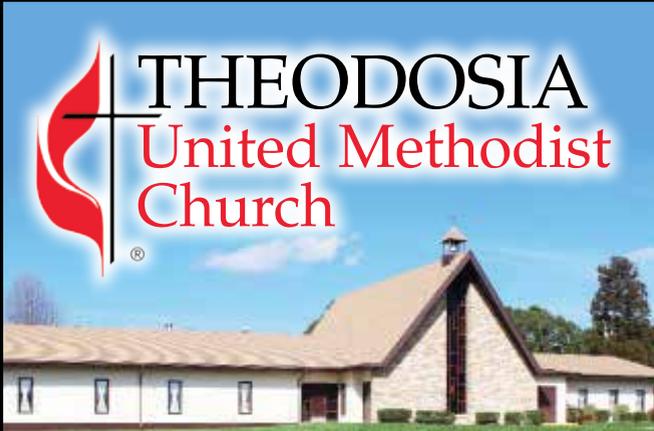
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The North Fork Recreation Area, known locally as Hammond access, features a canoe/kayak launch area, pictured above, and a day-use area, located slightly downstream, providing access to the North Fork of the White River for floating, swimming and water play. Day-use fees are \$2 per vehicle, and the walk-in day-use area is generally open from March 1 through November 30. Photo courtesy of Mark Twain National Forest.



The Devil's Backbone Wilderness is named for this long, narrow ridge that was known to early settlers of the area as "devil's backbone." The 30-foot-wide section of "vertebra" pictured here is 1,020 feet above sea level at its highest point, offering long views of the surrounding countryside. The area can be accessed from a system of trails, including a trailhead that begins in the North Fork Recreation Area. Photo by Jessi Dreckman.

NORTH FORK Recreation Area

North Fork Recreation Area provides camping, picnicking, boating, canoeing, hiking and fishing access on the beautiful North Fork of the White River, which has a total of nine major springs flowing into it.

Blue Spring

Day hikers can enjoy a .6 mile walk on the Blue Spring Trail from the North Fork Recreation Area campground to Blue Spring, a vibrant, oval-shaped spring about 30 feet in diameter. The spring averages 7 million gallons per day of cold, clear-blue water. The colorful pool is tucked into a dramatic setting: On three sides, a stone wall made of cherty gasconade dolomite rock surrounds the spring and represents the karst topography of the Ozarks.



Photo by Wren Haffner

OWNER: Mark Twain National Forest, US Forest Service

CONTACT: Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger

District Ranger Cody Lunsford, 417-683-4428

GPS COORDINATES: Latitude : 36.7547818, Longitude : -92.1548502

FEES: Day use fee is \$2 per vehicle, \$10 per bus

HOURS OPEN: 6 a.m. to 10 p.m.

OPERATIONAL DATES: Gates are open May 15 - Nov. 30, and closed Dec. 1 - March

1. Walk-in traffic and day use is permitted when gate is closed, but no camping.

Canoe/kayak.

The North Fork Recreation Area is more commonly known by locals as Hammond access, especially in reference to the public canoe and kayak access ramp. Small jon boats can be launched here; however, motorized boats are prohibited. This is one of three public access points on the North Fork of the White River. While this access is managed by the U.S. Forest Service, the other two, at Blair Bridge and Patrick Bridge, are managed by the Missouri Department of Conservation. Private access points are offered by local outfitters Twin Bridges, River of Life Farm, Pettit's Canoe Rental, Sunburst Ranch and Dawt Mill Resort.



Camping.

The North Fork Recreation Area offers 20 campsites, each with a picnic table, fire ring, post for a hanging lamp and a tent pad. Drinking water (available May 15 - Oct. 15), vault toilets and garbage receptacles are centrally located. No water or sewer hook-ups for camping trailers are available at this location. Campground nightly fees of \$10 for non-electric sites and \$15 for electric sites. The use of generators is not prohibited, but quiet hours are from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.

Devil's Backbone Trail.

The North Fork Recreation Area at Blue Spring serves as a gateway into the Devil's Backbone Wilderness, a 6,687-acre area of wild, public land that takes its name from a long, narrow ridge known to the area's early settlers as the Devil's Backbone. At 1,020 feet, the highest "vertebrae" of the ridge trail glides through the center of the wilderness. The trail is rated as moderately difficult with sometimes steep terrain. Thirteen miles of maintained foot and horse trails follow the Devil's Backbone and four other ridges, dropping off into surrounding hollows in a forest dominated by oaks, hickories and shortleaf pines. Although equestrians are allowed on the trail, they are not allowed near Blue Spring or in the day use area of the North Fork Recreation Area. Alternatively, horseback riders can access the Raccoon Hollow Trailhead from the south side of CC Highway about 1.5 miles east of Dora.

Picnic and swim.

Ten sites with grills and picnic tables are available for day-use picnicking. The area also offers vault toilets, drinking water and centralized garbage collection. This area is used for swimming, tubing and wading during the summer months. There is no lifeguard, and using the water access is done at one's own risk. A \$2 per vehicle day use fee is charged for those visiting.

Ridge Runner Trail.

This National Recreation Trail provides backpackers, mountain bikers and equestrians with a 36.5-mile route that begins with a 6-mile loop at the North Fork Recreation Area and continues north for 21 miles, where it meets a 6-mile loop at Noblett Lake. The landscape varies from gently rolling to very steep terrain with rock outcrops and buffs. Vegetation along the trail is diverse and includes oak-hickory, shortleaf pine and bottomland forests. Remnant prairie plants can be seen, a reminder of a time when repeated wildfires burned the Ozarks, allowing fingers of prairie to extend into the woods. Horses are not allowed in the day use area at North Fork Recreation Area, near Blue Spring or in the day use area at Noblett Lake. The Ridge Runner Trail can also be accessed at the Hay Hollow Trailhead on Forest Road 759, off Highway 14 east of Twin Bridges. The trail passes through the creek bottom approximately .4 miles south of Braddock Lake. Primitive camping is available at this trailhead.

Directions

From Gainesville, take Highway 181 northeast to CC Highway just south of Dora. Turn right and travel east for 3 miles.

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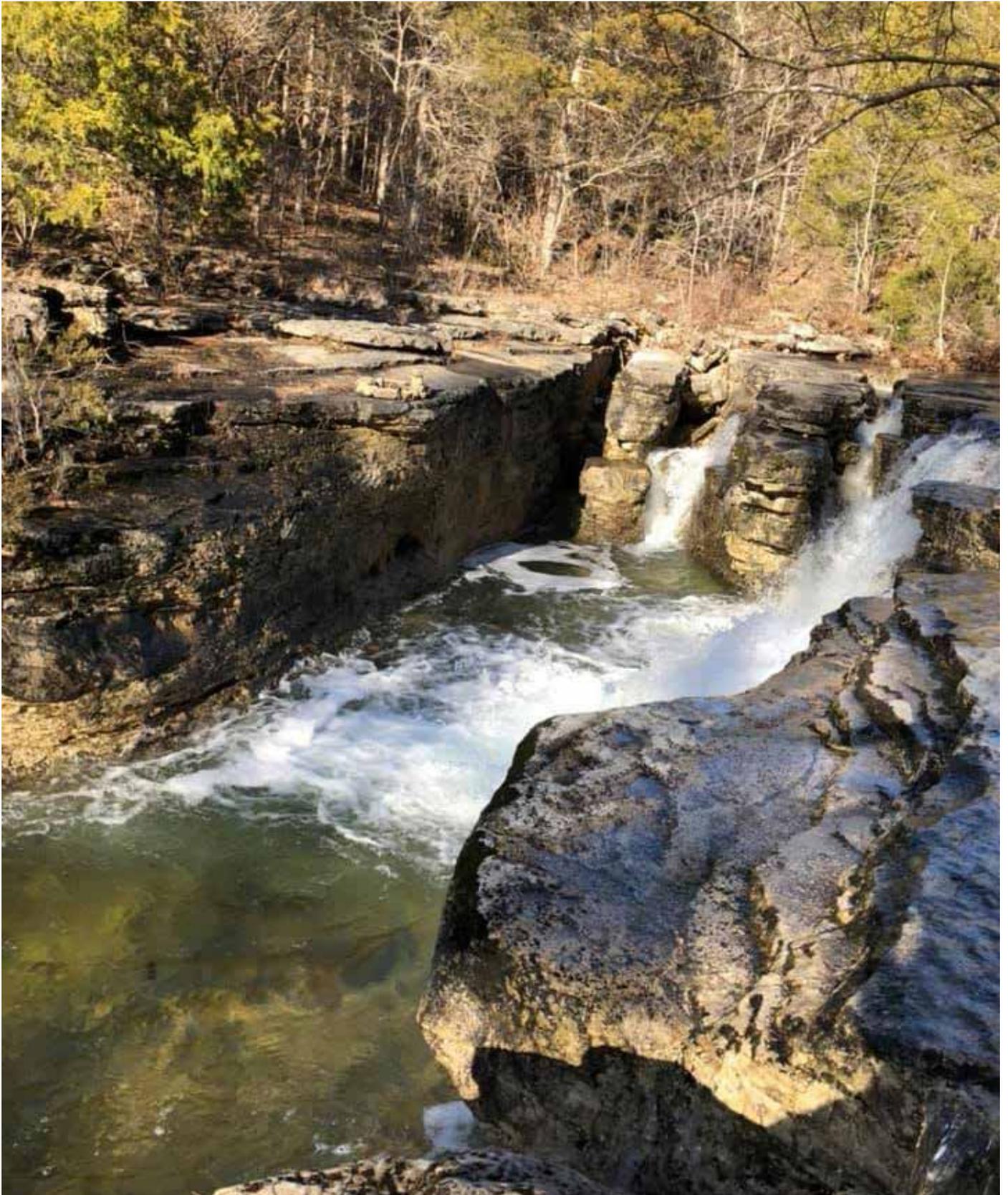
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Long Creek Falls, sometimes referred to as the “shut-ins” by locals, creates a beautiful stretch of cascading waterfalls when rains fuel the creek that flows through the Hercules Glade. During the drier months, visitors can appreciate the deep cuts that Long Creek has made in the limestone riverbed, pictured above. Photo by Mindy Pippin.

HERCULES GLADE Wilderness

This 12,413-acre wilderness encompasses some of the most scenic and unique country in the Midwest. Its varied landscapes offer unusual beauty and a measure of solitude within easy reach of large numbers of those who love the outdoors.

Hiking:

Hercules Glade features 32 miles of maintained trails to explore by foot or on horseback. The National Forest Service rates the terrain as “more difficult to most difficult.” It features steep areas, stream crossings, sparse trail markings and elevations ranging from 600 to 1,200 feet. Due to these conditions, the wilderness area receives only light use. Cross-country hiking is allowed, but those hikers should bring a map and compass or a GPS unit.

OWNER: Mark Twain National Forest, US Forest Service
ACERAGE: 12,413 acres
CONTACT: Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs District Ranger
 Cody Lunsford, 417-683-4428
GPS COORDINATES: Latitude: 36.68, Longitude : -92.88
OPEN: Year round, quiet hours from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m.
WEB: www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mtnf/recreation/?cid=stelprdb512313

Scenic.

Described as some of the “most scenic and unique country in the Midwest” by the U.S. Forest Service, the Hercules Glade Wilderness Area features more than 12,000 acres of open grassland, forested knobs, steep rocky hill-sides, narrow drainages, limestone rock outcroppings and open glades.



Three trailheads.

Three trailheads provide entry to the Hercules Glades Wilderness. The Hercules Tower Trailhead is located along Highway 125, 7 miles north of Highway 160 in Taney County. It has a vault toilet, space for camping and parking. The Blair Ridge Trailhead is also off Highway 125. Turn onto Forest Road 155 and go approximately 2 miles. Only parking is available at this location. The Coy Bald Trailhead, farthest from Ozark County, is off Highway 160, 9 miles east of Forsyth. Turn left onto Forest Road 566 and go approximately 4 miles. Only parking is available at this location.

Dispersed camping.

“Dispersed camping” is allowed in the Hercules Glade Wilderness Area. According to the Mark Twain National Forest Hercules Glade website, “dispersed camping” indicates free camping anywhere in the national forest outside of a designated campground. It also means there are no toilets, no structures, no trash cans, no treated water and no fire grates. Thus, extra responsibilities are required for this type of camping. The MTNF website lists these guidelines:

- Pick a campsite and follow “Leave no trace” principles
- Camp 100 feet away from trails or water sources. Treat any water found in the area before consuming it.
- Human waste must be buried at least 6 inches deep and covered.
- Pack out all of your garbage.

The falls.

Known by locals as “the shut-ins,” Long Creek Falls is an impressive display of the power of water on a dolomite creekbottom. The 10- to 12-foot drops, pictured on page 30 and also above, left, create beautiful waterfalls. During the wetter months, many visitors can’t resist hopping into Long Creek for a refreshing dip. Access the falls from the Blair Ridge Trailhead.

Directions

From Gainesville, head west on Highway 160. Continue about 29 miles to Rueter, then turn right (north) onto Highway 125. Travel about 7 miles and turn left onto the fire tower road to reach the Hercules Tower Trailhead.



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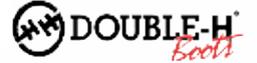
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A long bridge spans Lake Norfolk at Pigeon Creek south of the Missouri line on Arkansas Highway 201. Times reporter Jessi Dreckman took this photo of ice on the lake on an exceptionally cold Valentine's Day 2021.

PIGEON CREEK

Trails and Park

Corps run.

The Pigeon Creek National Recreation Trail is owned by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and is maintained through a volunteer program operated by the Twin Lakes Bicycle Club. The trail system can be accessed from Arkansas Highway 201 (a continuation of Missouri J Highway) just south of the Missouri/Arkansas line at Pigeon Creek Park on Lake Norfolk.



Cypress.

A grove of cypress trees, unique in this area, is an appealing area to explore. The majestic trees stand between the lake and the paved access road at Pigeon Creek Park.



Boat ramp, swimming.

The park includes a public boat-launch ramp and parking lot for visitors. The lake in this area is enjoyed by swimmers during the summer months. There is no lifeguard, and using the water access is done at one's own risk.

Fish.

Anglers can often be found lining the banks of Norfolk Lake, and fisherman with boats use the boat ramp heavily throughout the year. Those fishing here must have an Arkansas fishing license or a Missouri fishing license with a Border Lakes tag.

Trail system.

The Pigeon Creek "stacked loop" trail system consists of more than 20 miles of bicycling and hiking trails along the shores of Lake Norfolk. The trail system is a favorite with off-road bicyclists and draws a large crowd from all over the Midwest. No horses or motorized vehicles are allowed on the trails. The Pigeon Roast, one of the annual Arkansas Mountain Bike Championship Series events, is held here each spring. Revenue from the race goes to maintain and expand the trail system. The trailhead is on the west (right) side of Highway 201, opposite the boat ramp side, when coming from Missouri.

The Pigeon Creek public access on Norfolk Lake is a great area to visit for a wide variety of activities. Fun can be had by lake-goers launching boats, fishing, hiking, bicycling and enjoying the unique cypress grove.

Directions

From Gainesville, take Highway 160 east to J Highway. Turn right (south) and continue into Arkansas, where the road becomes Arkansas 201. Pigeon Creek Park is approximately 6 miles south of the state line on Lake Norfolk.



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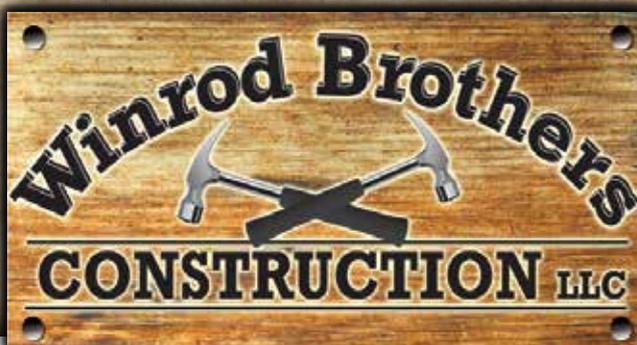
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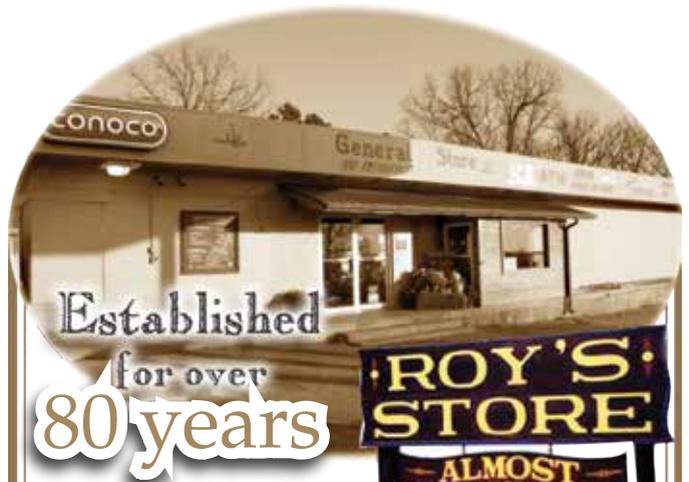
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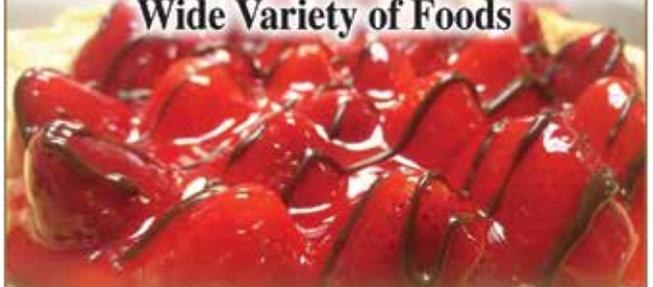
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HIKING

Trails



1. SPOUT SPRING NATURE TRAIL

Caney Mountain Conservation Area, page 10

Distance and configuration: 3-mile out-and-back trail

Facilities: Restrooms, parking, camping and picnic areas

Description: This easy trail traverses 1.5 miles of the shady depths of Caney Creek Valley in the Caney Mountain Conservation Area's interior. The trail follows Caney Creek most of the way, providing beautiful scenery along the gently rolling hills. There are a few shallow-water crossings along the way, and a picnic table just a short way from the trailhead provides a nice spot for a packed lunch.

Directions: From Gainesville, travel north on Highway 181 to Caney Mountain Conservation Area Headquarters Road, on the left. When you get to the headquarters area, bear right to stay on the Main Trail. The trailhead is 1.5 miles ahead on the right.

2. PIGEON CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

Pigeon Creek Park, page 35

Distance and configuration: Multiple trails ranging from .5 to 1.5 miles can be joined together for a 20-mile stacked loop

Facilities: Restrooms, parking and picnic areas

Map: www.norfork.com/cycling/trails

Description: The Pigeon Creek Trail System, one of the premier cycling and hiking systems in the Ozarks, is located on the banks of Lake Norfolk at Pigeon Creek Park in Arkansas. A stacked loop system provides a wide variety of different trail-length options, which can be linked together for up to 20 miles. The trails vary in difficulty with an elevation difference of 250 feet maximum.

Directions: From Gainesville, head east on Highway 160 for 5 miles. Turn right (south) onto J Highway and continue into Arkansas, where J Highway becomes Arkansas Highway 201. Continue for 8 miles to Pigeon Creek Park just before crossing the Lake Norfolk bridge. The trailhead access is on the right (west) side of the highway, and the recreation area is on the left (east) side.

3. BLUE SPRING TRAIL

North Fork Recreation Area, page 25

Distance and configuration: 1-mile out-and-back hike

Facilities: Restrooms, camping, parking, picnic areas and water during warmer months

Description: This very short walk takes you from the campground at the North Fork Recreation Area to the turquoise, ice-cold waters of Blue Spring. The trail parallels the North Fork of the White River and, after the spring, continues on into the Devil's Backbone Wilderness area. Among the trees, cardinals, woodpeckers and other birds glide from tree to tree. Flowering dogwood and redbud trees catch springtime sunshine in the awaking forest and display brilliant colors. Averaging 7 million gallons of cold, clear water each day, Blue Spring creates a deep, oval-shaped pool about 30 feet in diameter that's surrounded on three sides by a stone wall of cherty Gasconade dolomite. Horses and motorized vehicles are prohibited from this area of the National Forest.

Directions: From Gainesville, take Highway 181 to CC Highway just south of Dora; turn right on CC and travel 3 miles.

4. DEVIL'S BACKBONE LOOP

North Fork Recreation Area, page 25

Distance and configuration: 10-mile or 13-mile balloon loop options; a 4-mile out-and-back option makes for a good day trip

Facilities: Restrooms, camping, parking, picnic areas and water during warmer months

Map: www.ozarktrail.com/northfork.php

Description: The Devil's Backbone Wilderness includes 13 miles of moderately difficult trails within the area accessible from Blue Spring Trailhead, including a 10-mile loop or a 13-mile loop option. Accessed from the North Fork Recreation Area, known locally as Hammond access, visitors can follow the half-mile trail to Blue Spring (horses are prohibited in this trailhead and near Blue Spring), then travel along a bluffline and down to the North Fork River around mile 2. This stop provides a nice spot for a picnic and a 4-mile hiking option to return back to the trailhead for those desiring a shorter trek. After the river, hikers can take a left onto a trail to make a 10-mile loop or continue straight for a 13-mile loop. The other three trailheads – Raccoon Hollow on the south side of CC Highway about 1.5 miles east of Dora; McGarr Ridge Trailhead on the south side of CC Highway about 4 miles east of Dora; and Collins Ridge Trailhead on County Road KK/362 about 16 miles west of West Plains – provide options for point-to-point hikes as well. The terrain is sometimes steep, ranging in elevation from 1,020 to 680 feet, and there are few blazes. Visitors should bring a map and compass and be comfortable route-finding if continuing on past the 4-mile out-and-back hike.

Directions: From Gainesville, take Highway 181 to CC Highway just south of Dora; turn right onto CC east and continue 3 miles.

5. RIDGE RUNNER TRAIL

North Fork Recreation Area, page 25

Distance and configuration: 22-mile point-to-point

Facilities: Restrooms, camping, parking, picnic areas and water at trailhead during warmer months

Map: www.ozarktrail.com/northfork.php

Description: The Ridge Runner Trail incorporates parts of two shorter loop routes at Noblett Lake (8 miles) and North Fork Recreation Area (12 miles). The diverse vegetation along the trail includes native wild flowers and remnant prairie species, oak-hickory, shortleaf pine and bottom land forests. The Ridge-runner Trail is rated as moderate and ranges in elevation from 800 to 1,100 feet. The trail is not well defined in some areas and crosses several old logging roads, so visitors should feel comfortable route-finding and should bring a map and compass. Backpackers and hikers should carry plenty of water, as stream accesses are limited to the northern and southern ends of the trail, and water sources can be extremely scarce. The trail is designed and maintained for foot traffic, horse use and mountain bike use. Motorized travel, including on dirt bikes and ATVs, is not permitted.

Directions: From Gainesville, take Highway 181 to CC Highway just south of Dora; turn right on CC east and continue 3 miles.

6. NOBLETT LAKE LOOP

Noblett Lake Recreation Area, page 19

Distance and configuration: 8-mile loop

Facilities: Restrooms, camping, parking, picnic areas and water at trailhead during warmer months.

Map: www.ozarktrail.com/northfork.php

Description: An 8-mile loop trail surrounding the 26-acre Noblett Lake provides an appealing opportunity for hikers, equestrians and mountain bikers. This challenging, single-track loop is crisscrossed by a double-track horse trail and crosses Noblett and Spring creeks and Cord Hollow. Trail users sometimes describe deadfall, difficult route-finding and steep, loose hills on the trek. The east half of the loop, by the lake, forms the northern end of the Ridge Runner section of the Ozark Trail, which ends at the North Fork Recreation Area. The frustrations of this trail are usually more than offset by the beauty of the surroundings, the adventure of an unfamiliar and remote experience, and the great view of Noblett Lake from the amazing downhill section near the end of the hike.

Directions: From Gainesville, take Highway 181 north, continuing past Dora to AP Highway in Douglas County. Turn right and follow AP for about 3 miles then turn right onto Forest Road 857 and continue for about 1 mile to the turnoff for the day-use area. The road continues to the Noblett dam and trailhead.

7. COY BALD LOOP

Hercules Glade Wilderness, page 31

Distance and configuration: 6.8-mile loop linking in with the Hercules Glade system of 32 miles of trails

Facilities: Primitive camping, picnic tables and a pit toilet
Map: www.fs.usda.gov and search for "Hercules Glade"

Description: Coy Bald Trail is a 6.8-mile lightly trafficked loop trail located within the Hercules Glade Wilderness near Bradleyville. The loop features a waterfall and is rated as moderate. The trail offers a number of activity options and is accessible year-round. Dogs are also permitted on this trail but must be kept on a leash. From this and other trailheads in the Hercules Glade Wilderness Area, 32 miles of maintained trails traverse open glades, forested ridgetops and Long Creek, the primary drainage of the area. Cross-country hiking in other parts of the area is allowed. Key attractions along the trail include Long Creek Falls, panoramic views of the Ozarks countryside and a variety of native landscapes, including open limestone glades and mixed forests.

Directions: From Gainesville, head west on Highway 160 for 39 miles. Turn right (north) onto Cross Timber Road (Forest Road 566), and drive approximately 4 miles to the trailhead.

8. BATEMAN TRAIL

Distance and configuration: 16 miles of trail made from several smaller segmented trails ranging from 6.25 miles to .75-mile.

Facilities: Primitive camping, picnic tables and a pit toilet

Description: The Bateman Trail, a non-motorized trail system, consists of approximately 16 miles of hiking and equestrian trail that carries visitors through limestone glades and other landscapes that vary from gently rolling hills to moderately steep terrain with rock outcrops and tall grass prairies. Natural water for horses along the trail is very limited and may be seasonal. Vegetation along the trail is diverse and includes oak-hickory and eastern red cedar trees. Prescribed fire is often used to maintain the unique glade habitats. A good map and compass, along with knowledge of how to use them, are strongly suggested.

Directions: From Gainesville, travel west on Highway 160. Past Theodosia, turn right onto Highway 95 and drive 6.8 miles to the Longrun community. Turn left (north) onto County Road 917 and continue 8.4 miles to Bateman Road.

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Bull Shoals Lake is known for its low boat traffic and spectacular sunsets. This photo was submitted by Isabella resident Lonnie Schmidt.



Colton Ewry, son of Katie Walker and Isiah Ewry, of Theodosia, was pretty proud of this catch while fishing on Bull Shoals Lake.



Chase Aumiller and his dog Zoe took a quick nap on board their family's boat after a fun day on Bull Shoals Lake. Photo submitted by grandparents Kevin and Connie Geers.



BULL SHOALS

Lake

Willow Springs resident Reda Foster shared this photo of her grandkids, Hannah and Nathan Thornton, during a fun day tubing on Bull Shoals Lake. The newlywed couple married last September, Reda says.

Bull Shoals Lake features open stretches perfect for boating; quiet, secluded coves great for swimming and water sports; clear, uncrowded water for scuba divers; and 48,195 surface acres of water that offer rewarding fishing for largemouth and smallmouth bass, crappie and striped bass. Whatever your lake plans, Ozark County's two concessionaire-operated marinas (described below) can get you going.

Pontiac Cove Marina. Pontiac Cove Marina is a full-service marina, campground and resort located off Highway W southwest of Gainesville. Amenities include nightly and long-term boat slips, boat rentals, fuel dock, scuba air station and a convenience store/gift shop with bait, tackle, Missouri fishing licenses, boating accessories, stand-up paddleboards, towables, souvenirs, snacks, soda and beer. Stay at one of Lake Harbour Resort's six fully furnished suites or at the Red Barn Lodge, which sleeps 10, and Loft, which sleeps five. Eat at Just Jackie's restaurant located within the park and accessible to boaters. The Pontiac bluffs on the northwest corner of the park are a favorite jumping-off point for lake-going daredevils. 417-679-3676. pontiaccove.com. See ad, page 17.

Theodosia Marina Resort. Theodosia Marina Resort, off Highway 160 in Theodosia, offers rentals of a variety of boats and equipment for fishing and fun on the water. A boat-and-motor sales and repair facility is affiliated with the marina. Marina staff can help you connect with local fishing guides, and the marina's gift shop/convenience store sells fuel, picnic supplies, beverages, fishing tackle and bait, water skis, boat accessories, clothing and novelties. The marina also offers short- and long-term boat-stall rentals. Nearby Fort Cook offers several types of lodging choices plus pads for motorhomes and a swimming pool for guests. The adjoining Corps of Engineers campground and nearby boat ramp stay busy throughout the summer season. And Cookie's restaurant is a popular eatery for tourists and locals alike. 417-273-4444. tmrbullshoals.net. See ad, page 3.

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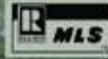
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Norfolk and Bull Shoals Lakes are known for great fishing and water sports. **Pictured above, left and right:** Husband-and-wife team Laurel and Bill Driscoll take advantage of their home in Tecumseh to fish Norfolk Lake, Bryant Creek and the North Fork River frequently. The two rivers converge at a point just upstream of the Tecumseh access to pour into Norfolk Lake. **Right:** Caden Foster of Willow Springs displays a large striper he caught in Ozark County. **Below:** Isabella resident Lonnie Schmidt shared these photos of family members enjoying watersports on Bull Shoals Lake.





Tecumseh resident Laurel Driscoll and husband Bill are avid fishermen on Ozark County's waterways. This photo, taken in May 2018, shows a large hybrid bass Laurel caught from a boat on Norfolk Lake near Tecumseh access.

NORFORK Lake

About 2,000 acres of the 22,000-acre Norfolk Lake extend into Missouri. Recreation is recognized as an important resource, attracting fisherfolk and water-sports-loving lake-goers who enjoy the Norfolk's clear, spring-fed water. For a beautiful overview of Lake Norfolk, drive across the Highway 101 bridge south of Bakersfield.

Access/boat ramps. Boat accesses on Norfolk Lake in and near Ozark County include Bridges Creek (known locally as "Stump Hole") located off County Road 551B (Smokey Road), Udall on O Highway, Liner Creek off T Highway, and Calamity Beach on Baxter County Road 24 off Arkansas Highway 201 in Clarkridge, Arkansas. The popular Tecumseh boat ramp that was washed away in the spring 2017 flood is currently being rebuilt by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with a projected May 2020 completion date. The access is closed to foot and vehicle traffic during construction.

Fishing. Fishing is a popular pastime on Lake Norfolk. Anglers can catch bass, walleye, crappie, striped bass, catfish and other species. The Tecumseh access of Lake Norfolk off Highway 160, an especially popular fishing spot for the annual spring white bass run, is usually preceded by good walleye fishing followed by excellent hybrid catches. At press time, the access was undergoing repairs. Construction is scheduled to be completed in spring 2021.

History. Norfolk Lake, like Bull Shoals, is in the White River Basin. Both were originally built for flood control and power generation. President Harry Truman came to the Ozarks in July 1952 to dedicate both Norfolk and Bull Shoals dams, constructed and maintained by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in Arkansas a few miles south of the state line.

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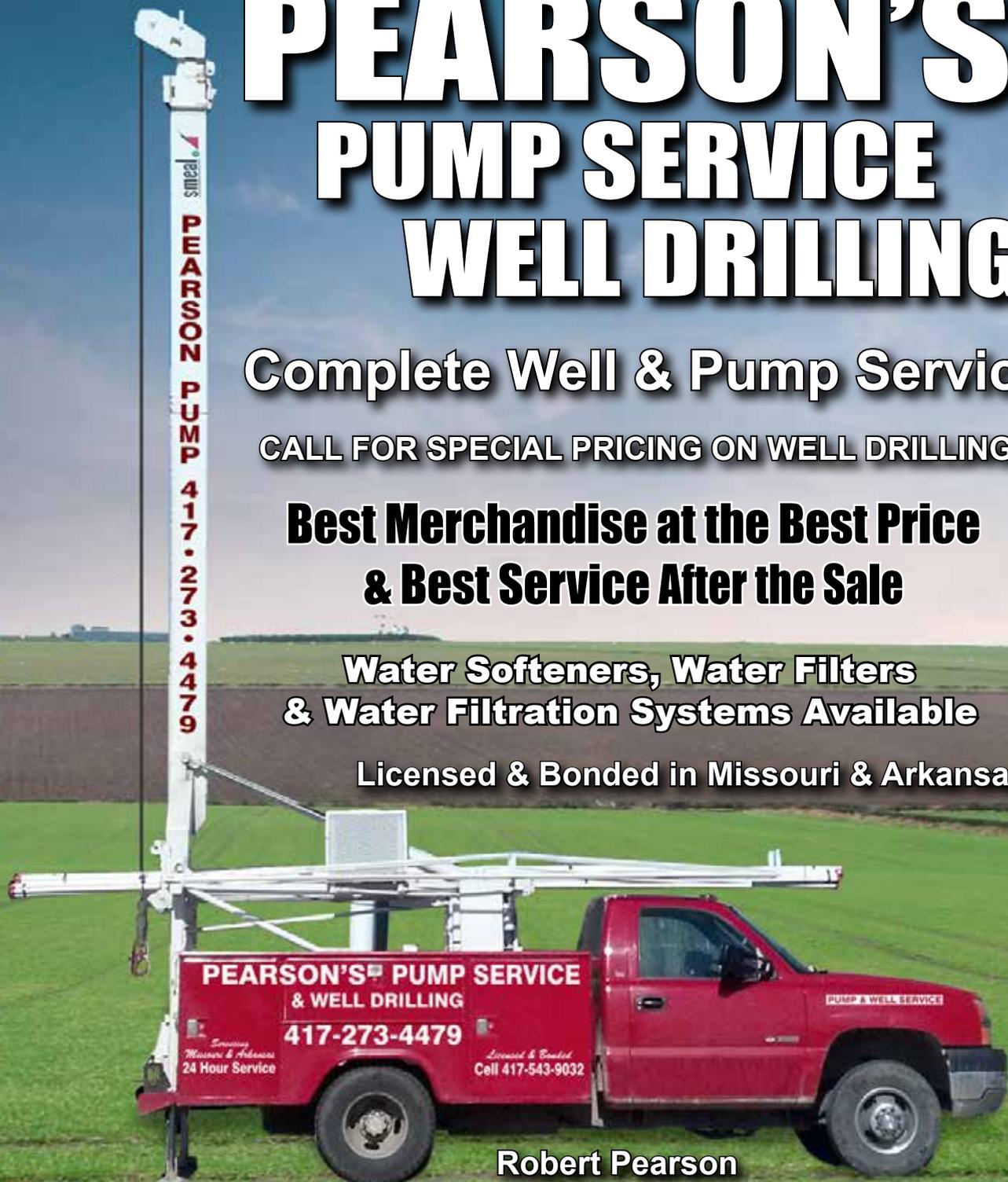
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NORTH FORK

of the White
River

The cold, clear waters of the spring-fed North Fork of the White River provide the perfect place to cool down with a canoe, kayak or rafting trip during the peak of a hot Ozarks summer. Photo by Bryan Bade.

Fed by springs and protected by national forest for the top two-thirds of its 50-mile length, the North Fork of the White River in eastern Ozark County is a pristine jewel among Missouri's Ozarks float streams. A national forest recreation area, Missouri Department of Conservation access points, a legendary old grist mill and Blue Ribbon and Red Ribbon trout areas enhance the river's appeal to vacationers and locals alike.

Year-round beauty.

Since its upper reaches are in the Mark Twain National Forest, the North Fork retains its native natural character and has good watershed protection. The section from Highway 14 (Twin Bridges) south to H Highway (Patrick Bridge) is near-wilderness, and this stretch of river is fed by large springs that emerge amid stands of short-leaf pine and other lush forest. Seasonal water levels are consistent enough to keep the North Fork almost always floatable, and although the gradient of the lower sections is not spectacular as the river flows into Lake Norfork, the volume is good and the scenery is beautiful. If you have visited the North Fork of the White River in the past, be aware that during the historic April 2017 flood, the river reached an all-time high and washed away homes, resorts and bridges, forever changing the river and its banks. The river is now back to a floatable, fishable, enjoyable state, but it definitely looks different than it did before the flood!



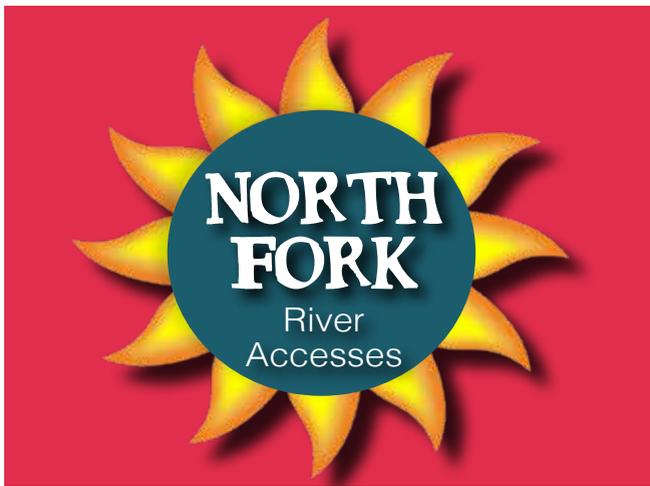


photo courtesy of MO Dept. of Conservation

HEBRON ACCESS

public access, mile marker 18.7
From Gainesville, take Highway 181 north past Dora. After 181 joins Highway 14, turn left (north) on County Road 279; go 2 miles. No fee is charged to use this access, which has a boat ramp, parking, pit toilets and primitive campsites.



photo by Twin Bridges Canoe

HIGHWAY 14 BRIDGE

Twin Bridges Canoe & Camp resort access, mile marker 24.1
The Highway 14 Bridge access is at Twin Bridges Canoe and Campground. Guests can rent canoes, kayaks, tubes and rafts here. A campground and cabins provide lodging options. The "twin" bridges cross the North Fork and nearby Spring Creek.



photo by Nat'l Forest Service

HAMMOND BRIDGE

public access, mile marker 29.2
The CC Highway bridge, known as Hammond Bridge or the Irwin C. Cudworth Bridge, crosses the North Fork River at the North Fork Recreation Area, which is managed by the Mark Twain National Forest (locally known as Hammond access). A \$2 day-use fee is charged for using the river access and parking lot.



PETTIT'S CANOE

private access, mile marker 39
417-284-3290;
pettitscanoerental.wixsite.com/home
This outfitter, located at Blair Bridge, offers canoe, kayak, tube and raft rentals. A campground on the property is open to Pettit's guests who rent boats there. The outfitter also offers cabin rentals.



photo courtesy of ROLF

RIVER OF LIFE FARMS

private access, mile marker 35
417-261-7777; Riveroflifefarm.com
River of Life Farm Resort is located about halfway between the CC Highway Bridge and Blair Bridge. Guests and day trippers can rent canoes, kayaks and rafts from this outfitter. The river in this area features the famed "falls," a rock ledge that drops about 2-3 feet. It's a tricky spot, so boaters should be careful navigating the chute. The resort is on River of Life Drive, off County Road 365 south of Dora.



photo by Dawt Mill Resort

BLAIR BRIDGE

public access, mile marker 39.2
Blair Bridge is a tall, concrete bridge on Ozark County Road 354 off H Highway. The free public access, a short distance east of the bridge, includes a concrete boat ramp, pit toilets and parking area.



photo by Sunburst Ranch

SUNBURST RANCH

private access, mile marker 39.5
417-284-3443;
www.sunburstranchcanoe.com
Sunburst Ranch is located a half mile downstream from Blair Bridge. The resort offers canoe, kayak and raft rentals as well as shuttle service for its guests. The resort also owns another access, known as "The Landing," about a half mile upstream from Dawt Mill. The dual sites give guests multiple float-trip options.



photo by Amy Spencer

PATRICK BRIDGE

public access, mile marker 42.2
Patrick Bridge is a concrete low-water bridge on H Highway. The access includes a concrete boat ramp and a parking lot for public use. No fee is charged to use this access. During high water, boaters may have to portage around the bridge.



DAWT MILL

private access, mile marker 47.1
417-284-3443; Dawtmill.com
Until recently, a dam at Dawt Mill made this the southernmost end of any North Fork float trip. The dam was removed in February 2107, and floaters may now continue downriver to Lake Norfolk. The resort offers canoe, kayak, raft and tube rentals with shuttle service for guests plus camping and lodging options, a riverside food-truck cafe, general store and ice cream parlor.

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Fishing the **NORTH FORK**

Sunburst Ranch owner Bryan Bade poses with an impressive brown trout he caught while fishing the North Fork of the White River. The fishing report on this page is reprinted from the Missouri Department of Conservation's annual prospects report. To view the full online report or to check for updates, visit fishing.mdc.mo.gov/reports/north-fork-white-river.

Smallmouth and Goggle-eye.

Smallmouth bass can be caught in good numbers throughout the North Fork of the White River. Most of the fish will be 12-15 inches. However, there are decent numbers of quality fish that exceed 15 inches. Jigs, crankbaits, and soft plastic baits are good choices for catching smallmouth bass (soft plastics cannot be used in the Blue Ribbon Trout Area).

Goggle-eye also occur throughout the river, but anglers can expect lower catch rates after recent floods. These fish can be caught on the same type of lures as smallmouth, but generally smaller versions are more productive.

Be sure to concentrate fishing efforts in and around aquatic vegetation, boulders and rootwads. In-stream and riparian habitat was naturally changed by a record 1,000-year flood experienced in 2017.

Brown & Rainbow Trout.

Anglers can expect to catch quality trout in a variety of lengths, but overall in 2021 should expect fewer numbers of trout compared with the pre-flood years. Catch-and-release practices are recommended to help sustain trout numbers while the population recovers from the record flood.

The Blue Ribbon Trout Area (BRTA), from Rainbow Spring to Patrick Bridge access, is still the best bet for rainbow trout. Anglers will continue to notice that the body condition of these fish is very good. Woolly buggers and prince nymphs bounced along the bottom are traditionally good wet-fly patterns while Adams and elk hair caddis dry flies work well when fish are surface feeding. Crayfish- and minnow-imitating crankbaits, as well as various spinners, are also effective.

The opportunity to catch brown trout in the Red Ribbon Trout Area (RRTA), from Patrick Bridge to Norfolk Lake, has declined since the 2017 flood. Anglers should expect the majority of brown trout to range from 12 to 15 inches, but also expect fewer numbers of brown trout compared with the pre-flood years. Quality brown trout also migrate into the BRTA and can be pursued with streamers. To catch more brown trout, try fishing during the sunrise and sunset hours. Stocking of brown trout will continue in the spring and fall to provide anglers with quality fishing opportunities. Anglers can also expect more abundant numbers of black bass, striped bass and other warm-water species migrating into the RRTA and BRTA due to recent spring high-water events, and sustained high water Norfolk Lake levels throughout the summer.

FISHING

CHANNEL CATFISH can be found throughout most of Bryant Creek, although they are most prevalent in the section downstream of Highway 181 at Hodgson Mill. Anglers should expect good fishing for this species and should catch fish of all sizes. Bass anglers can expect good catch rates of black bass (largemouth, smallmouth and spotted bass), although the vast majority of fish will be less than 12 inches.

BASS ANGLERS fishing below Highway 181 at Hodgson Mill will encounter more largemouth and spotted bass than those fishing upstream of the bridge. Ozark bass (goggle-eye) can be found in good numbers around rootwads and aquatic vegetation. Anglers can expect most of their catch to be over 6 inches with an occasional fish greater than 9 inches.

WALLEYE can be found in the lower river inhabiting the deeper pools and positioned around boulders and rootwads.

Photo courtesy of Bill and Laurel Driscoll



Bryant Creek, a relatively wild stream, has only slightly less paddling mileage than the North Fork of the White River. It's highly fishable, without the big crowds the North Fork sometimes boasts. Less spring-fed, the Bryant has less volume and can be more difficult to float because it is narrower and has more obstacles. But it also has some fairly fast rifts. Before floating sections above Hodgson Mill in the summer, find out if those sections are floatable without having to wade and portage the shallow riffles.

BRYANT Creek

VERA CRUZ ACCESS

public access, mile marker 0.0

This access is at the uppermost headwaters of Bryant Creek in Douglas County. The Bryant cuts a surprisingly deep valley at this point, leaving interesting bedrock features and beautiful bluffs. To reach the Vera Cruz Access, take Highway 14 east from Ava then turn onto Route AB and go northeast 3 miles.

RIPPEE CONSERVATION AREA ACCESS

public access, mile marker 4.0

The 419-acre Rippee Conservation Area includes the Bryant Creek Natural Area and has an access point to Bryant Creek that is floatable via canoe during the early spring months when the water is high. This area offers camping, picnic and parking areas. To get to the Rippee Conservation Area access, take Highway 14 east from Ava for 11 miles then take Country Road 328 south for 1.5 miles.

BERTHA FORD BRIDGE

private access used by the public, mile marker 11.6

Reach the Bertha Ford low-water bridge access in Douglas County from County Road N-345 off N Highway or County Road 95-345 off Highway 95. Floaters may need to portage or walk boats at some points from this access. No amenities; limited parking. Not an official public access.

HIGHWAY 95 - BELL BRIDGE

private access used by the public, mile marker 16.3

Located on Highway 95 northeast of N Highway and south of Genyville. Low-water bridge and boat ramp. No amenities; not an official public access.

SYCAMORE ACCESS AT HODGSON MILL

public access, mile marker 25.9

The Sycamore Access is located just downstream of a low-water bridge on Highway 181 near Hodgson Mill (see page 62). The creek forms a popular swimming hole near the bridge. The spring that powered the old grist mill flows into Bryant Creek at this point, averaging a daily flow of 24 million gallons; it's ranked 15th in size in the state. The 8-mile section of creek above this access is excellent fly fishing water. It's located 12 miles north of Gainesville on Highway 181.

WARREN BRIDGE ACCESS

public access, mile marker 33.3

Warren Bridge is on County Road 328 between Highways FF and H. A float trip from Sycamore Access to Warren Bridge is one of the most scenic on Bryant Creek. The 2017 flood removed gravel bars and made the area a little harder to negotiate as an access, but for many floaters, it's worth the extra work. To drive there, head north on Highway 181 from Gainesville. About 2 miles past Zanoni Mill, turn right onto Highway FF then left onto County Road 328. Continue east for 2.5 miles.

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THEODOSIA SIZZLIN' SUMMER KICK-OFF

May 29, 2021

The Theodosia Area Chamber of Commerce hosts the Sizzlin' Summer Kick-off event every year at the Bull Shoals Lake Shopping Center on Highway 160 across from the Theodosia post office. The event, which raises money for the Fourth of July fireworks show over Bull Shoals Lake at Theodosia, features food, crafts, music, information and fun. Booth space is free but limited; contact Vikki Cook at Cash Saver Pantry, 417-273-4784, for booth-space info. For more about the festival, call the Theodosia Area Chamber of Commerce at 417-273-4245 or visit theodosiaareachamber.com.

FIREWORKS DISPLAYS

July 3, 2021 and Sept. 4, 2021

Celebrate the Fourth of July, Ozark County-style! The county's free fireworks displays are open to everyone, although related festivities, including games, food vendors and fundraiser offerings may have charges or request donations. Enjoy the fun on July 3 at the Theodosia Corps of Engineers park and Theodosia Marina Resort off Highway 160 on Bull Shoals Lake, and on Sept. 4 at the Pontiac campground and Pontiac Cove Marina, also on Bull Shoals. Also, the town of Bakersfield generally hosts a fun-filled "picnic" featuring vendors, music and fireworks sometime in July. The celebration usually also includes the annual Bakersfield all-school reunion. Watch for updates on the "Festival Committee of Bakersfield" Facebook page.

BAKERSFEST

Sept. 11, 2021

Bakersfest, the annual festival that celebrates everything Bakersfield, packs the little town with happy folks who gather each year on the second Saturday in September. Festival events vary a little with each rendition but usually include a big car show and lots of family-style activities with food vendors and game booths that fill the town's Pride Park with colorful fun. The event usually includes the crowning of Bakersfest royalty as well.

Ozark County's famed

HOOTIN AN HOLLARIN

Sept. 16, 17, 18, 2021

Three days of hillbilly heritage and good, old-fashioned family fun

Ozark County's Hootin an Hollarin festival has been drawing families, friends and visitors together on the Gainesville square for nearly 60 years. The beloved event celebrates old-fashioned traditions and highlights downhome country music all day and into the night. Square dancers swirl under the lights, accompanied by some of the Ozarks' best fiddlers and strummers. A wide variety of contests include gun and archery shoots, horseshoe pitching, a quilt show and such silliness as hog- and husband-calling contests that keep the laughter and adrenaline flowing. And through it all, a large outdoor craft fair offers the cleverest handmade items imaginable.

A queen and her court

Hootin an Hollarin begins late in the afternoon on the third Thursday in September with a musical kick-off that sets everyone's toes to tapping. Then comes one of the festival's most popular events: the Hootin an Hollarin queen contest when teen girls from all over the county, clad in their best old-time dresses, share tales of sweet family memories and goofy hillbilly shenanigans.

...and a passel of young'uns

Some area schools let out early on the afternoon of the third Friday in September, and everybody from babies to great-grandmas dress up in their hillbilly best for the costume parade and contest. Next, little boys and girls charm the crowd as contestants in the Lil Cedar Pete and Lil Miss Addie Lee contest, followed by the Hootin an Hollarin princess pageants.

What? You've never seen an outhouse race?

Well, get yourself down to the Gainesville square when the Hootin an Hollarin outhouse racers come streakin' down the street. The competition begins right after the bed races, another crowd-pleasing event. Check out the schedule in the Hootin an Hollarin magazine (published the week before Hootin an Hollarin by the *Ozark County Times*). And make sure you're on time for the Hootin an Hollarin pet show Saturday morning and the Big Parade Saturday afternoon. There's so much to see and do (and hear, eat and enjoy) at Hootin an Hollarin, you're sure to have a hillbilly good time!

More information

Find continual updates on Hootin an Hollarin festival plans on the Hootin an Hollarin Facebook page, at hootinanhollarin.com or by reading the *Ozark County Times*. The Times' Hootin an Hollarin festival guide, inserted into the Times newspaper, will be published Sept. 8, 2021.

Photos from Hootin an Hollarin



High school girls twirl around the square dance platform in 2019 during the popular Hootin an Hollarin queen pageant, which kicks off each year's festival on Thursday night.



The annual outhouse race, where teams compete to see who can wheel an occupied outhouse down the street quickest, is one of the festival's signature events.



Emcee April Luna interviews Emery Hogan, a contestant in the Lil Mr. Cedar Pete and Miss Addie Lee contest during Hootin an Hollarin 2019



The highly anticipated costume contest and parade is a favorite of Hootin an Hollarin participants young and old.

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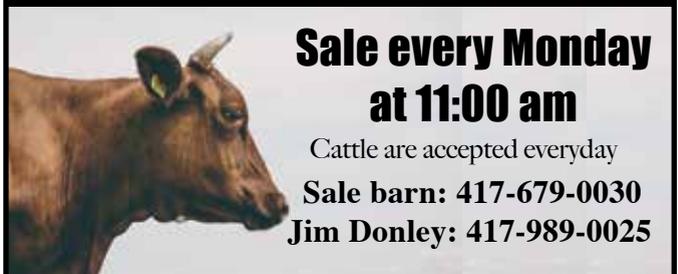
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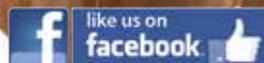
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LAKE NORFORK

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Fout Road, Gamaliel, Arkansas
870-467-5277

Thebayouresort.com

Bayou Resort, located on Lake Norfolk at Gamaliel, features an RV park in addition to several cabins. Each RV site is on a level area with a picnic area and campfire ring and features water, sewer and electric (50- and 30-amp) hookup. The resort offers parking spaces for boats and trailers and free wifi. Trees in the RV park

provide shade and privacy. The Bayou Resort facilities also include a laundry, pool, playground, convenience store and large covered group-gathering area.

CLASSIC RV PARK

83 RV Oasis Circle, Hardenville; 417-679-2328

Classic RV Park features 11 sites for RV or tent campers with 30- and 50-amp electrical hookups, sewer and water. Men's and women's restrooms and showers are also available. Located across Highway 160 from Miller's One Stop convenience store and deli.

GAMALIEL PARK

Gamaliel, Arkansas; 870-467-5680.

Make reservations at recreation.gov

Gamaliel Campground is a Corps of Engineers park in the Bennett's Bayou area of Lake Norfolk south of Bakersfield. The campground features 64 sites with electric hookups and accessible drinking water. Most sites are shaded by tall trees; others come equipped with canopies to shade the picnic tables. Most campsites do not have a view of the lake. A boat-launch ramp, playground, swim beach, shower house, dump station and marina are also on site. A mile-long nature trail loops around the campground.

ROCKY TOP CAMPGROUND

Off Highway 160 on Easterday Loop, Tecumseh

417-679-0149 or 417-989-0668

www.rocky-top-campground.com

See ad on page 74.

Rocky Top Campground & Cabins is situated on 17 acres west of Lake Norfolk in Tecumseh. The campground features 20 sites with water and electrical hookups that can be utilized for tent or RV camping. Each site has 30- and 20-amp electric plug-ins, a fire pit and a picnic table. Showers and toilets are located on site. Fourteen cabins are also available for rent.

UDALL PARK

Off O Highway at Udall; 870-425-2700

US Army Corps of Engineers

Make reservations at recreation.gov (see below)

The Udall Campground on the banks of Lake Norfolk at Udall is open from May 1 to Sept. 30. It features seven campsites, vault toilets, a sanitary dump station, drinking water and a boat launch ramp. In a change from the past, sites are now 100 percent reservable; however, at press time, to find Udall Park on the recreation.gov website, users had to type "Udall Bull Shoals" in the search box (even though the park is on Norfolk Lake, not Bull Shoals). A Corps spokesman told us it's hoped the error is fixed by summer camping season.

BULL SHOALS LAKE

BIG CREEK RESORT

2247 County Road 644, Theodosia, MO 65761

bigcreekresort.biz 417-372-7430

This veteran-owned resort overlooking Bull Shoals Lake has nine rustic cabins and four back-in full-hookup RV sites with 30- and 50-amp electric service plus water and sewer hookups. Each site is large enough to accommodate vehicles with any number or size of tip-outs. All sites have grills and picnic tables. Four boat-dock slips are also available. Military discount offered. Call for directions; GPS systems tend to lead visitors astray!

BUCK CREEK CAMPGROUND

Highway 125, Protem; 417-785-4313

US Army Corp of Engineers

Make reservations at recreation.gov – search for Buck Creek (MO).

This campground features 36 campsites with 30- and 50-amp electrical hookups (plus two more with no electric service), flush toilets, showers, drinking water, a dump station, boat launch ramp, swim area, playground and picnic shelter. Many sites are fully or partially shaded. Buck Creek is located at Protem, where you can ride across Bull Shoals Lake to Peel, Arkansas, on the only operational public ferry boat left in the state of Arkansas. The ferry, which transports vehicles and passengers, operates from 7 a.m. to 8:20 p.m. in the summer season. The campground is open May 1 to Sept. 30.

CEDAR HAVEN PARK

Highway 160, Theodosia; 417-293-5359

Cedar Haven RV Park features RV sites and tent camping at this resort located 4 miles from Theodosia near Bull Shoals Lake. Cedar Haven guests have access to mini golf, clean bathrooms and firewood for campfires. The 22 full hook-up pull-thru sites can accommodate 50-foot RVs. Sites have water, sewer and 50-amp service.

FORT COOK RV PARK

L.B. Cook Memorial Drive in Theodosia Marina Resort, Theodosia; 417-273-4444

tmrbullshoals.net

See ad on page 3.

Fort Cook RV Park is located within Theodosia Marina Resort on the shores of Bull Shoals Lake. The RV park offers annual and nightly RV sites and tent campsites with water, electricity, hot showers (not available in off season), picnic tables and bathroom facilities. Campers have access to the pool and recreation facilities. TMR also has cabins and a lodge, a marina and Cookie's Restaurant.

HIGHWAY 125 PARK

Peel, Arkansas; 870-436-5711

Make reservations at recreation.gov.

This campground features 39 campsites with 50-amp electrical hookups, showers, flush toilets, drinking water, a dump station, designated swimming area and marina offering boat rentals. Many sites are fully or partially shaded. This park is minutes away from the Peel-Protem ferry, which can take you across the lake to Protem, Missouri (see Buck Creek Campground, above). This campground is open from April 1 to Oct. 31.

PONTIAC CAMPGROUND

Privately managed by Pontiac Cove Marina

Off W Highway, Pontiac; 417-679-3676

pontiaccove.com

See page 43 for more information, and see ad on page 17.

This campground on Bull Shoals Lake in Pontiac features nearly 40 campsites 30- or 50-amp service, flush toilets, showers, picnic pavilions, a dump station, drinking water, a boat launch ramp and access to the Pontiac bluffs, a popular jumping-off point (literally!) for fun-loving lake-goers. The campground is located within walking distance of the Pontiac Cove Marina, Just Jackie's Restaurant, Lake Harbour Resort and the Lake Bums BrewCo.

THEODOSIA PARK

Highway 160, Theodosia; 417-273-4626

US Army Corp of Engineers

Make reservations at recreation.gov.

See page 43 for more information, and see ad on page 3.

This campground has 31 campsites with 30- and 50-amp electrical hookups, flush toilets, showers, drinking water, a dump station, boat launch ramp, swimming area, playground, picnic shelters and a view of Bull Shoals Lake. It's situated alongside Theodosia Marina Resort and provides quick access to the shoreline for those who love the water. Open May 1–Sept. 30.

THEO'S RV PARK & CAMPGROUND OKOKOK

Off Highway 160 in Theodosia; 417-712-4443

theosrvpark.business.site

Theo's Campground features an in-ground pool, shower facilities and 22 RV campsites with 30- and 50-amp electrical hookups. Seasonal or nightly rentals are available.

NORTH FORK OF THE WHITE RIVER

BLAIR BRIDGE CAMPGROUND

KK Highway and County Road 354, Caulfield

Missouri Department of Conservation

417-256-7161

See page 50 for more information.

This small public campground, on the banks of the North Fork of the White River at the public access point near Blair Bridge, features three primitive tent sites available on a first come, first served basis. Pit toilets and picnic tables are provided.

DAWT MILL RESORT

County Road 318 off PP Highway, Tecumseh

417-284-3540

dawtmill.com

Dawt Mill Resort features five RV sites that offer water, 30-amp electricity and sewer outlets. Those preferring to tent camp can choose from 27 sites. Campers can access water, the bath house, picnic tables and stationary grills. The sites are within walking distance of the open-air Beach Bar cafe. The resort also offers cabins and other lodging options, as well as canoe, kayak, raft and tube rentals. A general store offers ice cream, supplies and souvenirs. Chef's Table dining is available with a 24-hour reservation.

NORTH FORK RECREATION AREA

Also known as Hammond Camp

Highway CC east of Dora at the North Fork River in Mark Twain National Forest

417-683-4428

See page 24 for more information.

North Fork Recreation Area offers 20 campsites for tent camping and smaller travel trailers near the North Fork of the White River. Each has a table, fire ring, lamp-hanging post and tent pad. Drinking water, vault toilets and garbage collection are centrally located. No water and sewer hookups for vehicular camping are available at this location. One electric site is available. The use of generators is not prohibited, but quiet hours are 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. Campground is open May 15–Nov. 30.

PATRICK BRIDGE CAMPGROUND

H Highway, Caulfield

Missouri Department of Conservation

417-256-7161

See page 51 for more information

This campground, located on the banks of the North Fork of the White River at the public access point near Patrick Bridge, features 12 primitive campsites with picnic tables available on a first-come, first-serve basis. A gravel bar near this access is frequented by visitors in the summer months, and a short walk brings visitors to Althea Spring and its adjoining dam, where the waterfall is another popular water-play area.

PETTIT'S CANOE RENTAL

County Road 356 near Blair Bridge, Dora

417-284-3290

pettitscanoerental.wixsite.com/home

See ad on page 52.

Pettit's Canoe Rental, on the banks of the North Fork of the White River, offers campsites rentals to customers who are also renting canoes, rafts, tubes and/or kayaks from the outfitter. The campsites are not available to rent by those not renting float equipment. Campground amenities include flush toilets, hot showers, RV sites with electric/water, spacious camp areas, fire pits, picnic tables and complementary firewood for small camp fires.

SUNBURST RANCH

776 County Road 352 off H Highway

Caulfield; 417-284-3443

sunburstranchcanoe.com

See ad on page 68.

Sunburst Ranch, on the North Fork of the White River, features more than a mile of riverfront with primitive camping, RV sites, tent campsites with electricity and full-service cabins. Flush toilets and hot showers with tiled floors and private dressing areas are available. A camp store has supplies and souvenirs; ice and firewood are also available. The resort rents canoes, rafts and kayaks, and provides shuttle services for its guests.

TWIN BRIDGES CAMPGROUND

Highways 181 and 14 northeast of Dora

417-256-7507

twinbridgescanoe.com

See ad on page 13.

Twin Bridges Canoe & Campground features two separate camping areas on the North Fork of the White River. In addition, a large wooded campsite overlooking the river provides individual or group camp options. Camp facilities include picnic tables, fire grills, firewood, hot showers and flush toilets. Full-hookup RV sites have both 30- and 50-amp service as well as sewer and water. A community fire ring awaits guests on a gravel bar. Cabins and other lodging are also available, and a popular restaurant operates on site. The resort rents canoes, rafts and kayaks.

OTHER CAMPGROUNDS IN OZARK COUNTY

CANEY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA

Highway 181, 5 miles north of Gainesville

Missouri Department of Conservation

417-256-7161

See page 10 for more information.

This 7,899-acre conservation area includes more than 30 campsites in three separate areas. Maximum RV length is 24 feet. Caney Mountain Conservation Area offers visitors 20-plus miles of gravel roads, high vista overlooks, hiking trails, streams and picnic tables.

CLOUD 9 RANCH

Off Highway 160, Caulfield

417-284-7321

cloud9ranch.com

Cloud 9 Ranch is a camping and ATV resort based on a private membership system. Memberships provide owners with equally shared deeded equity in the nearly 6,400 acres of property. The resort features six full-service campgrounds, more than 150 miles of ATV trails, a restaurant, camper tow service, trading post, horseback riding, a gas station, laundromat, 24-hour security staff, gated entrance, ranger station, fire department, emergency first response team, storage for ATVs and campers and hunting and fishing privileges.

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Off N. Main Street, Gainesville

417-679-4858

The Gainesville Saddle Club grounds feature 48 RV sites that have 30- or 50-amp electric service, and water and bathrooms are available. Events are held throughout the year by the Gainesville Saddle Club, and the sites provide a popular place for RV-ing Hootin an Hollarin festival attendees to stay (see page 58). Those wishing to make reservations should call Gainesville City Hall at 417-679-4858.

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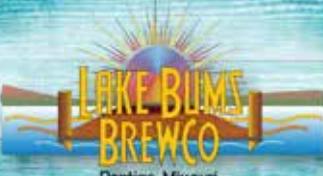
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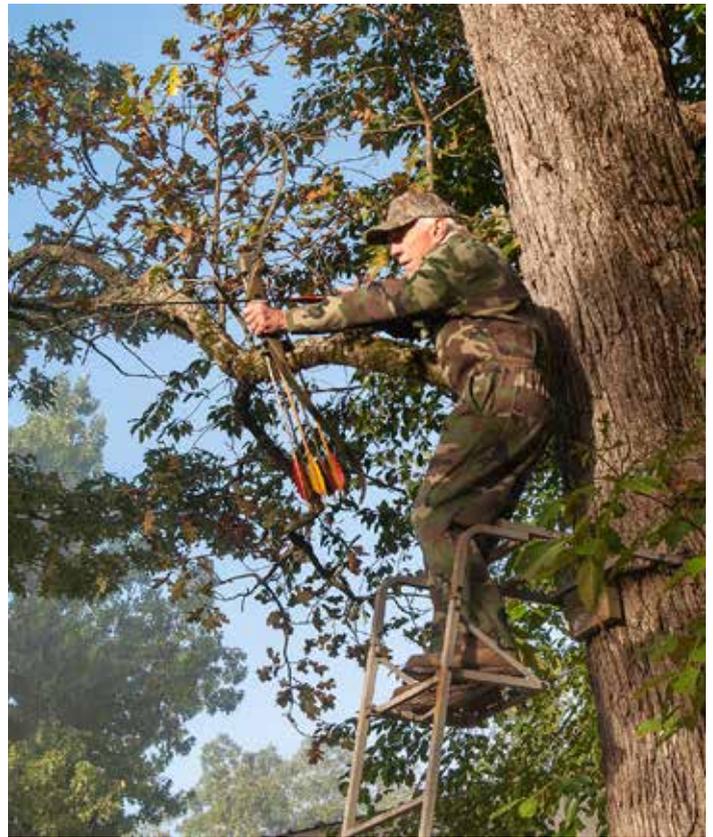
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Theodosia resident Don Smiley. Photo by Connie Smiley.



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ACTIVITIES

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DEER SEASONS

Archery

Sept. 15 - Nov. 12, 2021 and
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Firearms, main

Nov. 13 - 23, 2021

Alternative methods

Dec. 26, 2020 - Jan. 5, 2021

Antlerless season

Dec. 4 - 12, 2021

Youth firearms (ages 6-15)

Oct. 30 - 31, 2021 and
Nov. 26 - 28, 2021

TURKEY SEASONS

Spring youth (ages 6-15)

April 10 - 11, 2021

Spring, main

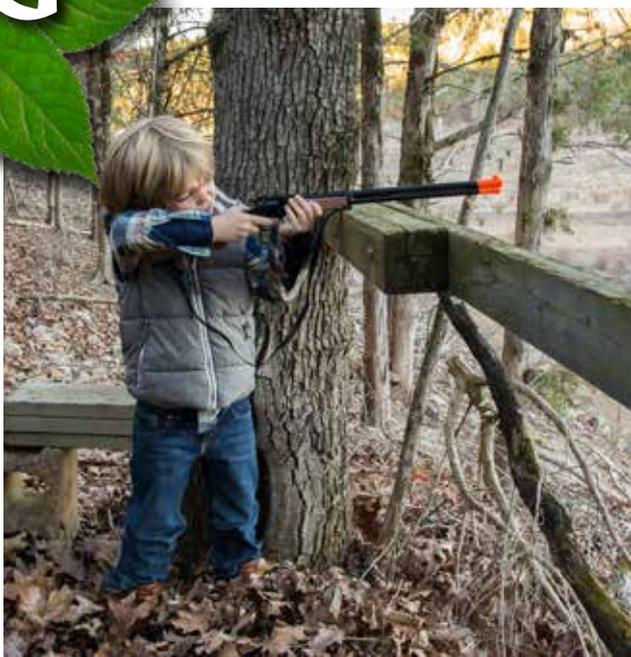
April 19 - May 9, 2021

Fall, main

Oct. 1 - 31, 2021

Archery

Sept. 15 - Nov. 12, 2021 and
Nov. 24, 2021 - Jan. 15, 2022



Lochlan Hawk Robinson was honing his shooting skills while visiting his grandparents, Don and Connie Smiley, at their Theodosia home. Lochlan is the son of Lauder Robinson and Tava Smiley Robinson.

Public hunting.

Caney Mountain Conservation Area includes 6,599 acres of public hunting (see pages 10-11), while Rippee Conservation Area provides another 419 acres and the Mark Twain National Forest has another 38,000 acres of public land. For more information about these areas and others, call the Missouri Department of Conservation's Ozark Regional Office at 417-256-7161 (or visit mdc.mo.gov) and the Ava-Cassville-Willow Springs district office of the Mark Twain National Forest at 417-683-4428 (or visit fs.usda.gov/mtnf).

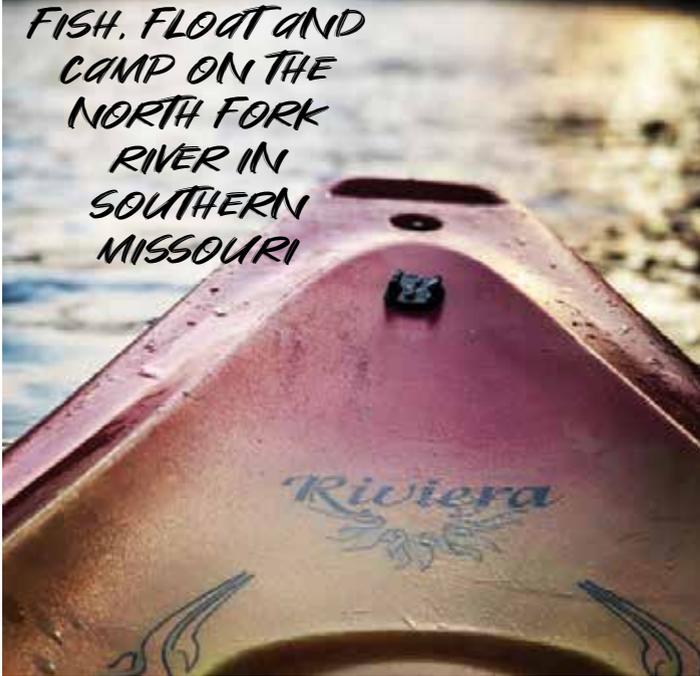
Other. Ozark County boasts ample hunting opportunities for hunting other species, including rabbit, squirrel, dove, waterfowl, frogs and coyotes.

Permits. You can buy hunting permits online at huntfish.mdc.mo.gov/permits, by phone (800-392-4115), through the smartphone app "MO Hunting," at any Missouri Department of Conservation office or from more than a thousand vendors around the state.

Ranges. Caney Mountain Conservation Area features three public shooting ranges, one archery range, one rifle/handgun range and one blackpowder range. The archery range and the blackpowder range are located near the main entrance off Highway 181. The rifle/handgun range is located near the Caney Mountain entrance off Highway 5 north of Gainesville. See page 11 for more information about Caney Mountain.

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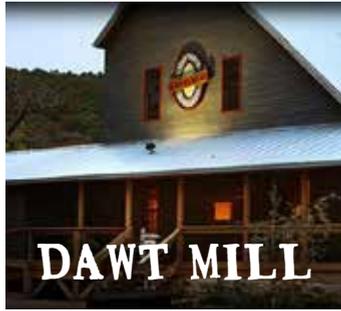
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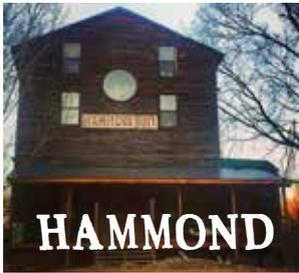
15 Min. from Mountain Home • Hwy 177 Between Norfolk Dam & Jordan, Overlooking the Lake

Historic GRIST MILLS

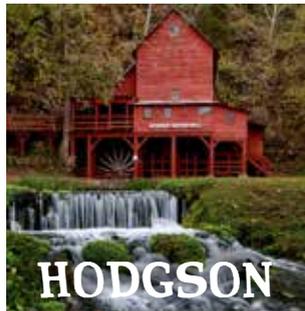


This rebuilt landmark, once the heart of a tiny Ozarks milling village founded in the mid-1800s, is the modern-day focus of a resort offering fun and hospitality in a beautiful riverside setting. Located northeast of Tecumseh on County Road 318, off Highway 160 via PP Highway, Dawt Mill Resort has several lodging choices, including the Cotton Gin Inn. The open-air Beach Bar Café overlooking the North Fork of the White River serves burgers and other casual fare. Ice cream and picnic supplies are available in the general store. The Chef's Table offers a by-reservation fine dining experience. River-floating rentals and shuttle service are available. Dawt is a popular site for destination wed-

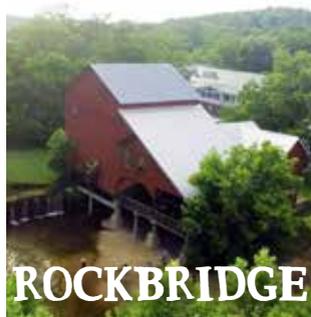
dings. The resort also has camping and picnic sites. For more information, visit dawtmill.com or call 417-284-3540. Photo courtesy of Dawt Mill Resort.



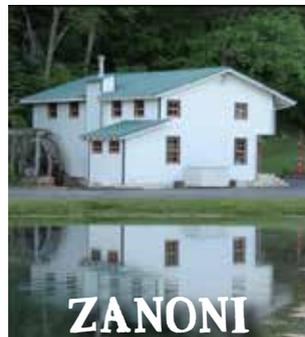
The original mill at Hammond was built in 1856 out of local logs. A replacement mill burned in 1876, and *that* mill's replacement washed away in a 1904 flood. The current structure was built as a four-story roller mill in 1907. At one time, tall black lettering on the side of the white mill identified the building as the "Home of Ozark Queen Flour." The mill, privately owned, is not open to the public, but it's viewable from County Road 855, off D Highway about 3 miles southeast of Thornfield. At one time the old mill was the heart of a quaint Ozarks village that also included a licensed distillery, a bank, a sawmill, general store and a post office that opened in 1894. Milling ceased at Hammond in the early 1940s, and the little town essentially disappeared after the Bank of Hammond closed. Photo by Jennifer Porter.



This beautiful old grist mill, on Highway 181 about 12 miles northeast of Gainesville, stands a short distance from Bryant Creek, where generations of residents and visitors have cooled off on hot summer days in a swimming hole just above the low-water Highway 181 bridge. The Sycamore access to the Bryant, a creek-gravel boat launch, is just downstream. The first mill on this site was built in 1883, powered by what is said to be the 15th largest spring in Missouri. Rebuilt by Alva Hodgson in 1897, the mill continued producing flour and meal for decades before falling into disuse. In 1969, Ken and Teena Harrington took over the lease and began producing Hodgson Mill stone-ground products that soon were distributed in grocery stores nationwide. Today those products, in packages carrying a stylized picture of Hodgson Mill, are still sold in some stores, now produced by an Illinois-based company. The mill is closed to the public, but the roadside parking area in front of the overflowing mill pond is a perfect rest stop and picture backdrop. Photo by Karen Eubank.



The original Rockbridge settlement, a few miles away from the present-day site, served as Ozark County's first seat of government. After the town was destroyed by raiders during the Civil War, the post office reopened in 1867 at Rockbridge's present site on Spring Creek off N Highway near the Douglas-Ozark County line. Rockbridge Mill was built here in 1892 by B. V. Morris, whose son, Frank, took over milling operations after his dad's death in 1918. Lile and Edith Amyx and Dr. M. C. and India Amyx purchased the property in 1954 and launched Rainbow Trout Ranch, one of the Ozarks' most successful and enduring resorts. Today, this picturesque attraction sits on 3,000 scenic acres, including 2 miles of sparkling clear Spring Creek stocked with rainbow trout from the resort's own hatchery. A wide variety of lodging facilities is available plus a full-service restaurant that attracts diners from throughout the Ozarks. Resort guests enjoy the swimming pool, horseback trail rides, hiking trails, a gun club and, in season, guided turkey and deer hunts. For more information, call 417-679-3619 or visit rockbridgemo.com. Photo courtesy of Rockbridge Rainbow Trout Ranch.



Located 9 miles northeast of Gainesville on Highway 181, Zanoni Mill features a big, overshot water wheel powered by a hillside spring with a daily average flow estimated at 194,000 gallons. The current mill is the successor to earlier versions that have operated on the site since before the Civil War. A village grew up around the mill, including a general store and post office, a blacksmith shop and a cotton gin. Milling operations ended in 1951, but the general store and post office continued at Zanoni until owner A.P. Morrison's death in 1969. Morrison's daughter, Classy Shanks, then became postmaster and moved the post office a few miles west on Highway 181. Later Zanoni owners Dave and Mary Morrison built a large home they eventually adapted into a popular bed and breakfast; they also rebuilt the mill as a quaint site for special events, including weddings and family reunions. Today Zanoni Mill is owned by a private family. The mill and nearby general store and post office, long closed, are no longer open to the public but are viewable from nearby Highway 181. Photo courtesy of Zanoni Mill.

OZARK COUNTY MILL TOUR *63 miles, approximate drivetime 2.5 hours*

Ozark County is home to five historic grist mills (see page 70, left), and many visitors enjoy a driving tour to visit them. Here's a route that lets you see the four mills on the west side of the county. A fifth mill, Hammond, on County Road 855 off D Highway south of Thornfield, has been converted to a private residence.

Directions: Starting from the Gainesville square, head east on Highway 160 to Highway 181. Travel several miles on Highway 181, going past the Caney Mountain Conservation Area and continuing to N Highway. Head north on N for 10-12 miles, crossing Highway 95 and continuing on N Highway to County Road 142 (watch for the Rockbridge sign). After visiting Rockbridge, return to N Highway and retrace your route back to Highway 181. Turn left (east) and drive along the ridge and down the steep Zanoni Hill. Zanoni Mill is on the left (north) side of the road at the bottom of the hill and is viewable from the highway. Continue on Highway 181 another 5 miles or so, and shortly after crossing Bryant Creek, you'll see Hodgson Mill on the right (east) side of the road. Enjoy a photo stop and then head on to Dawt Mill by continuing northeast on Highway 181 to its junction with H Highway. Turn right (south) on H and continue to PP Highway. Turn right onto PP, and a mile or so after crossing the North Fork of the White River, turn right (west) onto County Road 318 at Clear Springs Church. Dawt is about a mile down the road. To return to Gainesville, get back on PP and continue southeast to Highway 160. Turn right (west) on 160 and drive about 11 miles.

GLADE TOP TRAIL LOOP *70 miles, approximate drivetime 3.5 hours*

A trip to the Ozarks isn't complete without a ride over the Glade Top Trail (see page 14), Missouri's first National Forest Scenic Byway. The 23-mile gravel roadway offers travelers glimpses of some of the most spectacular panoramic views in Missouri. This drive is particularly scenic during the fall months when the leaves have changed color and the Ava Chamber of Commerce sponsors the "Flaming Fall Revue" event along the trail. The Caney Picnic Area, about halfway, is a nice

place to stop and enjoy a picnic lunch, a beautiful view and a breath of Ozark Mountain air. Continue to the trail's end near the Longrun community then drive on to Theodosia to view Bull Shoals Lake before returning to Gainesville.

Directions: Starting from the Gainesville square, head north on Highway 5 for 27 miles into Douglas County. Turn left (west) onto Douglas County A Highway a few miles south of Ava. (Be careful not to turn onto Ozark County A Highway south of Wasola.) Continue on Douglas County Highway A for 3.6 miles. Turn left onto County Road 409 at the sign for Glade Top Trail. Follow the signs along the 23-mile trail. At the trail's end, you can return the way you came or, at Wolf Junction, where the trail splits, bear left on Forest Service Road 147 for about 2 miles. The gravel road will turn onto hard-surfaced Highway 95 near Longrun. Turn right (south) onto 95 and drive to Highway 160. Turn left (east) onto 160 and continue about 20 miles back to Gainesville. You will cross Theodosia Bridge over Bull Shoals Lake about 3 miles after turning onto Highway 160.

BRANSON VIA HIGHWAY 160 *60 miles, approximate drivetime 1.5 hours*

Visitors either love or hate the drive from Gainesville to Branson over crooked, hilly Highways 160 and 76. A favorite of sportscar and motorcycle enthusiasts, this drive features lots of hairpin curves and long stretches of national forest beauty. It isn't the best option for those who suffer from car sickness or those driving large RVs. Once in Branson, visit the Silver Dollar City theme park, watch one of the many music and variety shows or visit The Landing in downtown Branson for shopping and dining. College of the Ozarks, nicknamed "Hard Work U," is in nearby Point Lookout. C of O's Keeter Center is a favorite restaurant (keetercenter.edu for hours and directions).

Directions: Starting from the Gainesville square, head west on Highway 160 and continue 45 miles to the junction of Highway 76 west near Forsyth. Turn left onto 76 and continue 12 miles to Branson, carefully following road signs.



VISIT THE BUFFALO RIVER *194 miles, approximate drivetime 4 hours*

A little south of the Missouri border in Arkansas is the beautiful Buffalo National River near the towns of Ponca and Jasper. A favorite day trip for locals, this area features massive towering bluffs, countless waterfalls, a beautiful river and one of the largest elk herds in the area. Visitors can check out nearby trails including Whittaker's Point trail to the widely photographed Hawksbill Crag formation. Visit the Ponca Elk Education Center, canoe the scenic river or watch for elk. Autumn early mornings and sunsets are particularly good times to view them.

Directions: Starting from Gainesville, head south on Highway 5 into Arkansas. Continue 20 miles, and in Midway, Arkansas, take a slight right onto Highway 126 and drive about 7 miles to Highway 62/412 west. Turn right (west) and drive 67 miles. Then take Highway 43 south to Ponca, a good place for a rest stop. Turn onto Arkansas Highway 74 east and continue 14 miles to Jasper. To head back to Missouri, take Arkansas Highway 7 north from Jasper for 13 miles back to Highway 412. Turn right and continue 40 miles back to Gassville, where you'll turn left (north) onto Arkansas Highway 126. Continue to Highway 5 north in Midway which will return you to Gainesville.

EXPLORE THE BACKROADS
Some of the best Ozarks scenery is off the beaten track. So fill up the gas tank, check the tires, pack a lunch and explore the winding, rollercoaster roadways of Ozark County and beyond. Endless beauty is waiting just around the bend!

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MOVING HERE?

What you
need to know

For generations, Ozark County's rugged beauty, clean air, crystal-clear streams, inviting lakes and game-rich forests have attracted vacationers seeking quiet solitude, active water activities or rewarding hunting and fishing. That was especially true during the covid-19 pandemic of 2020-21, when virus precautions caused many travelers to cancel airline tickets and look instead for an inviting vacation spot within a day's drive of home. The friendly purveyors of Ozark County's tourism and outdoors businesses welcomed this influx of visitors with hillbilly hospitality at its best.

Something else also happened during the pandemic that brought newcomers to Ozark County. Office workers, forced to work from home, realized "home" could be anywhere with an internet connection.

Theodosia resident Lonnie Schmidt took this amazing photo of a double rainbow over the sunlit Theodosia bridge during a time of high water in Bull Shoals Lake.

City dwellers who had yearned for a quieter, slower-paced lifestyle began looking around for reasonably priced land in soul-nourishing settings. As a result, Ozark County real estate sales showed remarkable growth in 2020 as folks from coast to coast discovered the amazingly affordable joys of Ozarks living and the cherished sense of independence we enjoy in our rather isolated corner of the world, where the nearest three-color traffic light is 30 miles away.

If you're thinking along those lines, check out the area's talented Realtors and real estate agents, who can help you find just the right place. (See the ad index, page 83, for some of the best agents anywhere.) It might be a home in town with convenient services or that little farm you've always wanted to own or a house overlooking the water or set on a hillside with panoramic views.

To help those who are planning to make Ozark County their home, we've gathered some helpful moving-in information:

Electricity: Depending on where you live in the county, your electric service

will be provided by one of two cooperatives: In central and western Ozark County, it's White River Valley Electric Co-op (contact the co-op's Gainesville office at 417-679-4916; whiteriver.org). On the far-east side, it's Howell-Oregon Electric Co-op (417-256-2131; hoecoop.org). *Important:* Before you move, contact the cooperative serving your area and make sure the power will be turned on the day you arrive. Sellers usually close their accounts and have the power turned off when they leave; without notifying the co-op of your expected arrival, you could spend your first days here in the dark!

Water: If your new home is in one of Ozark County's three incorporated villages, your water will be provided by the city of Bakersfield (417-284-7238) or Gainesville (417-679-4858) or Public Water District No. 1 in Theodosia (417-273-4825).

If you're outside these areas, you'll most likely have a private well with an electric pump. (See the note, above, about the importance of contacting the electric co-op providing service to your area before your move-in day).

MOVING HERE?

continued from page 74

Registering vehicles, drivers and voters: A person moving to Missouri has 30 days to transfer his or her vehicle registration at the license office (another name for authorized fee agent for the Missouri Department of Revenue). In Ozark County, this office is on First Street in Gainesville, just north of the Bullseye convenience store. Newcomers moving from other locations in Missouri should notify the fee agent of their new address.

To obtain Missouri license plates and a Missouri vehicle title, you will need a personal property tax waiver (obtained from the county assessor's office in the courthouse; 417-679-4705). You'll also need a current Missouri inspection of your vehicle (out-of-state inspections are not accepted), the title and proof of insurance. The cost of a Missouri inspection is \$12. Inspections are provided by authorized Missouri inspection stations, usually auto-care or service stations. If there is a lien on your vehicle and your out-of-state lienholder has your title, you will need to obtain the title from the lienholder to submit with your application (or the electronic title and letter from the lienholder). Complete form 5834 "Owner out-of-state title request" and send it to the lienholder to be signed and returned to you. (The form and more information are available at dor.mo.gov.) Out-of-state registration is not acceptable for licensing.

To obtain a Missouri driver's license, you must have a current out-of-state driver's license, a Social Security card, proof of residency and a certified birth certificate or U.S. passport. A sign and vision test will be given in the license office. Visit the Missouri Dept. of Revenue website for more information about additional documentation needed for a REAL ID-compliant license: dor.mo.gov.

For more information, call the license office at 417-679-0280.

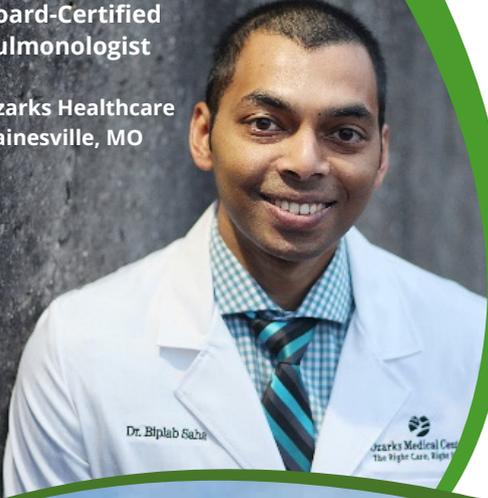
You may register to vote in the license office or in the county clerk's office in the courthouse. For more information, call the county clerk's office at 417-679-3516.



Photo by Michelle Cooley

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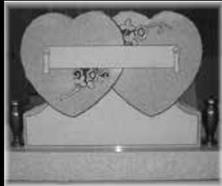
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Places to eat & drink DINING

Ozark Countians love to eat, and they know where to find good food, even in unlikely places. Here's a listing of some of the appetizing choices you'll find in area restaurants right in town or tucked away in beautiful countryside or waterfront settings – and also in convenience stores, gas stations and even a sale barn! In these uncertain times of covid concerns, it's always best to call ahead to inquire about operating hours.



Antler restaurant interior

ANTLER PIZZA AND PACKAGE
Highway 5 north and Third Street,
Gainesville; 417-679-4598
antlerpackageandpizza.com

Famous for its pizza, the Antler also offers burgers, baskets and sandwiches, Mexican selections, salads and sides plus other dining specials. The restaurant also has a full bar, popular karaoke sessions and live bands most weekends. Open daily at 11 a.m. Check the website for evening closing times, which can vary by volume.

BULLSEYE - GAINESVILLE
Highways 5 north & 160; 417-679-4666
and First Street, Gainesville; 417-679-2459

These two convenience-store gas sta-

tions, less than 1/4 mile apart, serve popular American fast-food choices including pizza, hamburgers, sandwiches, Champ's chicken, potato wedges and corndogs. See ad on page 45.

BULLSEYE - THEodosIA
Highway 160, Theodosia;
417-273-5502

This popular convenience store is much more than meets the eye. Featuring hand-breaded fish, chicken, jojos and more, the parking lot is generally full at lunch-and dinnertime. The staff may be proudest of their pizza that features a special homemade crust. The morning menu includes breakfast sandwiches and, of course, biscuits and gravy. Open 6 a.m. to 10 p.m. daily. See ad on page 45.



**CACTUS RIDGE RESORT
CANTINA**
Highway W, Price Place, Arkansas,
south of Pontiac; 417-679-3775

This seasonal pub at the Cactus Ridge Resort offers burgers, pizza and snacks, cold beer, wine and sodas in a friendly atmosphere. Call first to confirm hours.

CASH SAVER PANTRY
Highway 160, Theodosia;
417-273-4784

This full-service supermarket includes a deli that sells a variety of sandwich fixings, famous fried chicken and picnic supplies. Open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Monday through Saturday and 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday. (Operating hours change seasonally.) See the Theodosia Marina Resort ad on page 3.



COOKIE'S RESTAURANT
Off Highway 160, Theodosia;
417-273-4444

tmrbullshoals.net

Home cooking at its best, including breakfast offerings, sandwiches, plate dinners, seafood, steaks and salads. The Friday and Saturday night prime rib is a weekly tradition for many locals. Dessert is a must; choose from a variety of homemade pies or Nadine Cook's famous carrot cake. From Memorial Day through Labor Day, the restaurant, overlooking Bull Shoals Lake, is open 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m. Friday-Saturday. Off-season hours are 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday-Saturday. The restaurant sometimes closes for a brief winter break. Call ahead to confirm. See the Theodosia Marina Resort ad on page 3.

DAWT MILL RESORT
County Road 318 vi PP Highway off
Highway 160, Tecumseh; 417-284-3540
dawtmill.com

At this landmark riverside resort, a food truck at the open-air Beach Bar overlooking the river serves up burgers, fries and other casual offerings Fridays and Saturdays from Memorial Day through Labor Day. The resort also offers by-reservation Chef's Table fine-dining experiences featuring professional tableside preparation. Ice cream and sandwiches are served in Sawyer's Deli inside the general store. Hours vary; check website for details.

THE DINNER BELL
9647 S. State Highway 125, Protem;
417-785-4240

This little cafe, just north of the ferry to Peel, Arkansas, features quality home-cooking for breakfast and lunch. Famous for their fried pies, daily lunch specials and friendly service, the Dinner Bell is a gathering place for locals and visitors to

nearby Bull Shoals Lake. Open 7 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday- Sunday.

GUFFEY'S GRUB STEAK

109 Main St., Bakersfield

417-284-3757

This classic small-town cafe offers up great food in a friendly atmosphere. Breakfast and lunch are served daily; popular lunch specials include the chicken, roast beef and turkey-and-stuffing dinners. The cafe stays open until 7 p.m. on Friday to accommodate the catfish-dinner crowd. Pam Guffey's homemade pies are always a hit, and so are the muffins, cinnamon rolls and cherry cheesecake. Open daily from 6 a.m. to 2 p.m., except Friday, when the cafe closes at 7.

HUNGRY BEAR

Inside the Treasure Gallery antique mall, Highway 160, Theodosia;

417-273-4411

Diners enjoy a warm, welcoming atmosphere at this quaint little cafe featuring daily plate lunch specials, custom-built sandwiches and salads. Open 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and Sunday. Call first to confirm hours.



Just Jackie's pizza

JUST JACKIE'S

Pontiac campground off W Highway Pontiac; 417-679-2593

This seasonal café in the Pontiac campground off Highway W in Pontiac is a mecca for lake-going tourists and locals alike. Folks come for the pizza, the famous wings, sandwiches (especially the Landing Burger) and basket combos plus beer, wine and soda. Indoor and outdoor dining areas. Call to confirm hours.

MISS MARY'S FAMILY DINER

In front of Cash Saver Pantry, Highway 160, Theodosia 417-372-3934

This popular little Theodosia eatery serves all-day breakfast and some of the

best burgers around, in addition to other sandwiches, daily specials and old-fashioned, home-cooked favorites. Hours are 7 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Monday-Thursday, and 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

KWIK STOP #2 - BAKERSFIELD

212 Highway 101, Bakersfield

417-284-7005

Stop by for biscuits-and-gravy breakfast sandwiches, pizza and hand-scooped ice cream. Open Monday-Friday 6 a.m. to 9 p.m. and 7 a.m. To 9 p.m. weekends.

KWIK STOP #3 - TECUMSEH

Highway 160 at Norfolk Lake,

Tecumseh, 417-284-3334

Biscuits-and-gravy breakfasts, and grab-and-go choices the rest of the day: pizza, chicken wings and chicken bites and Landshire microwave sandwiches. Open 7 a.m. until 8 or 9 p.m., depending on the season.

LAKE BUMS BREW CO



Lake Bums Brew Co.

112 Parrothead Lane, Pontiac

417-679-0070; lakebumsbrewco.com

Ozark County's only craft beer brewery and tasting room serves an innovative variety of its own tasty brews. Locals know to pick up a pizza or other take-out options from nearby Just Jackie's restaurant – or bring your own snacks or sandwiches. Open year-round. Call for hours. See ad page 66.

LOST WOODS GOLF COURSE

131 Lost Woods Drive, Theodosia

417-273-4877; lostwoodsgolf.com

Unwind with a favorite beverage, including margaritas, and enjoy a quick meal at the restaurant at Lost Woods Golf Course. Offerings include burgers and fries, pizza, wings and similar fare. The restaurant is open Tuesdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays. (The golf course is open daily except Mondays, unless Monday is a holiday; then it's open Monday too.) The facility is open year-round, but the winter

schedule may vary; call first.

MILLER'S ONE STOP

Highways 160 and J, Tecumseh

417-679-4243

This humble-looking gas station is well-known locally for its huge ice cream cones and milk shakes. It also serves up breakfast and made-to-order deli sandwiches along with hamburgers, jumbo hotdogs and pizza. See ad on page 32.



101 Pastries & Cream

101 PASTRIES & CREAM

Highways 101 & 160, Caulfield; 417-284-1770. Check the Facebook page for menu updates.

This little sweet shop serves up an eye-popping, tummy-pleasing array of baked goods and pastries that are made from scratch each day plus hand-dipped ice cream from The Ice Cream Factory in Eldon. Biscuit-and-gravy is a popular breakfast option. Pulled pork sandwiches or nachos, chicken wraps and crumbled burgers are among the changing lunch offerings. Open 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. Tuesday-Thursday, 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Friday and Saturday.

THE PIONEER STORE

Highway 125, Protem; 417-785-4415

This general store has deli sandwiches, pizza and everything you need to stock your cooler for camping and boating on nearby Bull Shoals Lake. Open daily all year except Christmas Day.

ROCKBRIDGE RAINBOW TROUT RANCH

Off N Highway northwest of Gainesville in Rockbridge; 417-679-3619 rockbridgemo.com

A tucked-away gem, famous throughout the region, this resort's restaurant is open 8 a.m. to 7 or 8 p.m. daily, depending on the season.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 80

Places to eat & drink DINING

Continued from page 79

Fisherfolk can catch their own rainbow trout in the resort's spring-fed stream to be prepared in the Rockbridge kitchen – or opt to order off the menu, which also includes steaks, sandwiches and plate dinners. Grilled cinnamon rolls are a popular breakfast item. For dessert, try the homemade cobbler or order an “Edith special” (a grilled chocolate bar sandwich). Reservations recommended. See ad on page 8.



Roy's Store homemade pies

ROY'S STORE Highway 181, Dora; 417-261-2810

A magnet for hungry locals and river-floating tourists, Roy's serves breakfast, lunch and supper offering a wide variety of custom-made home-cooked meals, sandwiches, burgers and baskets. Catfish is a favorite – and oh, those homemade pies! See ad on page 37.

THE SALE BARN CAFE Highway 160 west of Gainesville 417-679-0032

This popular cafe in the Gainesville sale barn serves local livestock producers and anyone else looking for a good home-cooked meal. The cafe serves breakfast and lunch including daily specials and homemade desserts. Open Mondays from 7:30 a.m. until the end of the sale, usually between 1 and 5 p.m.

SUBWAY – CAULFIELD & GAINESVILLE

Highway 160, Caulfield; 417-284-1434 and Highways 160 & 5 north, Gainesville, 679-2527

The world's largest submarine sandwich chain has two Ozark County outlets. One adjoins the Bullseye store on Highway 160 in Caulfield. The other adjoins Bullseye at Highways 160 and 5 north in Gainesville. See ad page 45.

SMOKIN JOE'S BBQ AND PIZZERIA

410 Third St., Gainesville 417-679-0443

Smokin Joe's in downtown Gainesville offers breakfast as well as ribs, pulled pork, brisket, made-from-scratch pizza and hand-dipped ice cream in a friendly atmosphere. Carry-out is also available. Open Monday-Thursday 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Friday-Saturday 7 a.m. to 8 p.m.

SWEET LITTLE THINGS BAKERY & MORE

22 Court Square, Gainesville 417-679-0454; See the shop's Facebook page for daily lunch specials.

Deb Garcia, well-known cake decorator and former co-owner of Deb & Lou's Cafe, offers a tempting selection of pastries, cookies and other sweet treats in addition to specialty coffee drinks. Breakfast and lunch specials are available daily. Special-order custom-decorated cakes are a specialty. The shop is open from 8:00 a.m. to 2 p.m. Tuesday through Friday.

THREE-LEGGED MULE 12015 Highway 101 south of Highway 160, Caulfield; 417-284-3991

This casual restaurant is known for its one-pound Alaskan burger for two as well as its crowd-pleasing pizza plus other sandwiches, wings, salads with homemade dressings and weekend specials. That homemade hot sauce is to die for! Open 4-9 p.m. Thursday through Satur-

day and 4-8 p.m. Sunday.

TOWN & COUNTRY SUPERMARKET

Main Street south of the Gainesville square, 417-679-4584

Made-to-order sub sandwiches are available in the deli, and the hot bar features a changing variety of fried foods plus on-site smoked ribs. Breakfast, lunch or supper choices are available for takeout. See ad on page 29.

TWIN BRIDGES BAR & GRILL at Highways 181 & 14 north of Dora 417-255-9260; “Twin Bridges Bar and Grill” on Facebook

This bar and grill at Twin Bridges Resort on the North Fork of the White River features a riverside patio deck where guests relax and enjoy breakfast, lunch or dinner featuring BBQ, burgers, daily specials and other casual fare. Open 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Sunday and Tuesday through Thursday; and 8 a.m. to midnight Friday-Saturday. Closed Mondays except for Memorial Day, Labor Day and the Monday after July 4. See ad page 13.

VFW POST #5366 Highway 160 to HH, Isabella; 417-273-5008

The VFW kitchen is open to the public from 6 to 9 p.m. during Tuesday Bingo night and from 9 p.m. to midnight Thursday through Saturday, offering a variety of specials each week, in addition to burgers and sandwiches. Karaoke is a popular feature on Fridays, and a weekly pool tournament is held on Thursdays.

THE GRILL AT WHISPERING WOODS

4245 Highway 177 South,
Jordan, Arkansas; 870-499-5531
whisperingwoodsar.com

With a spectacular view overlooking Lake Norfolk, the Grill at Whispering Woods offers gourmet dinner entrees, pan-seared fish, steak, chicken, pasta, vegetarian options and even a “Burger of the Month.” The restaurant is a scenic 50-minute drive from Gainesville, through Mountain Home, Arkansas, to the restaurant's location between Norfolk Dam and the town of Jordan. Open for lunch and dinner Tuesday through Sunday from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. Reservations recommended. See ad page 69.



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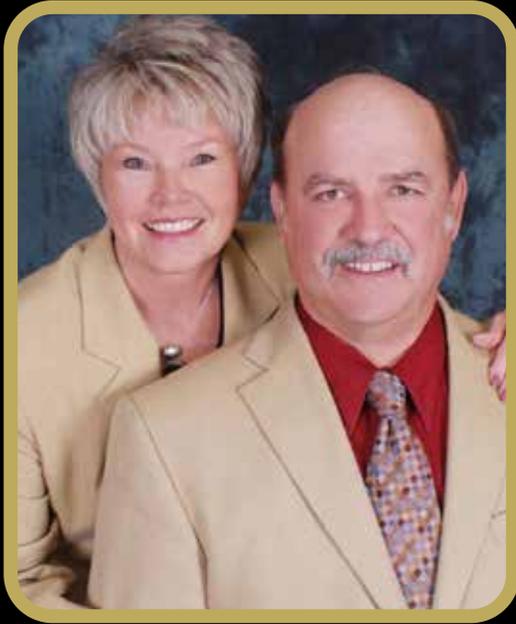
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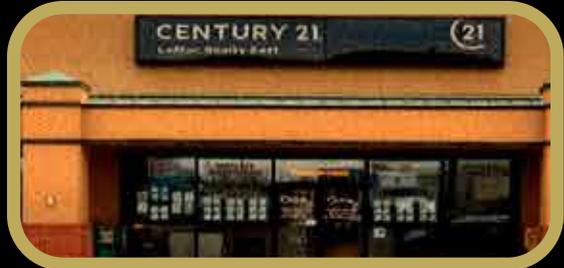
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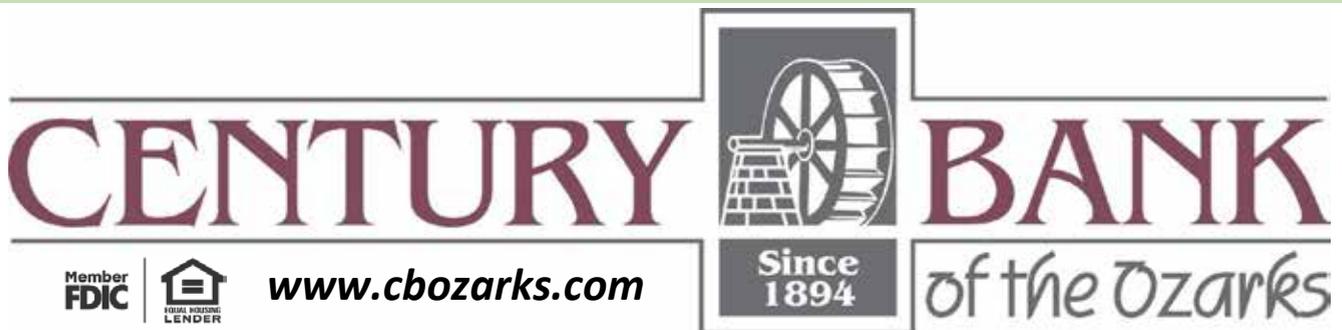
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