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The Real Ozarks

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



photo submitted by Lauren Johnson

what's inside

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Looking for a business in the area?

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,” stretched along the river or overlooking our two Corps of Engineers lakes, offer the same down-home 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.

ABOUT THIS YEAR’S COVER

Isabella resident Jessica Smith submitted this photo, which features her husband Titus Smith sitting around a campfire with his dad, Halbert Smith, who is holding their son, Miles. Jessica said she took the photo at the Gainesville Church of Christ, where they were hosting a summer kick off devotional event, complete with s’mores, when a pop-up storm caught them off guard. They took shelter under a nearby pavilion until the rain passed, then headed back out under the stars to enjoy the rest of the night.



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.

The Real Ozarks magazine is published by:

OZARK COUNTY
Times

504 Third Street; PO Box 188; Gainesville, MO 65655
Phone: 417-679-4641; www.ozarkcountytimes.com

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photo by Beth Schultz

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)

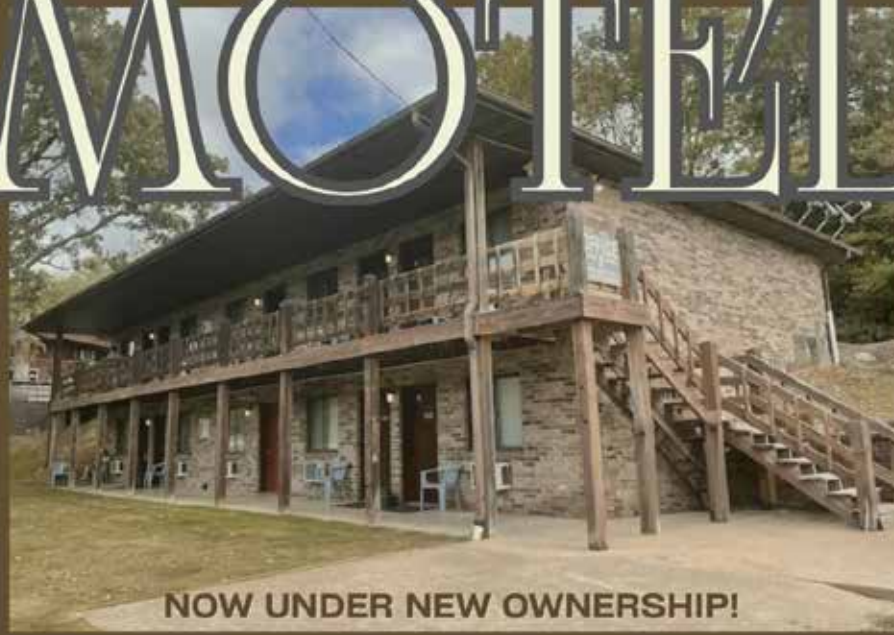
68 miles from Gainesville
130 Wright Brothers Rd., Hollister, MO 65672
417-334-8234
flybranson.com

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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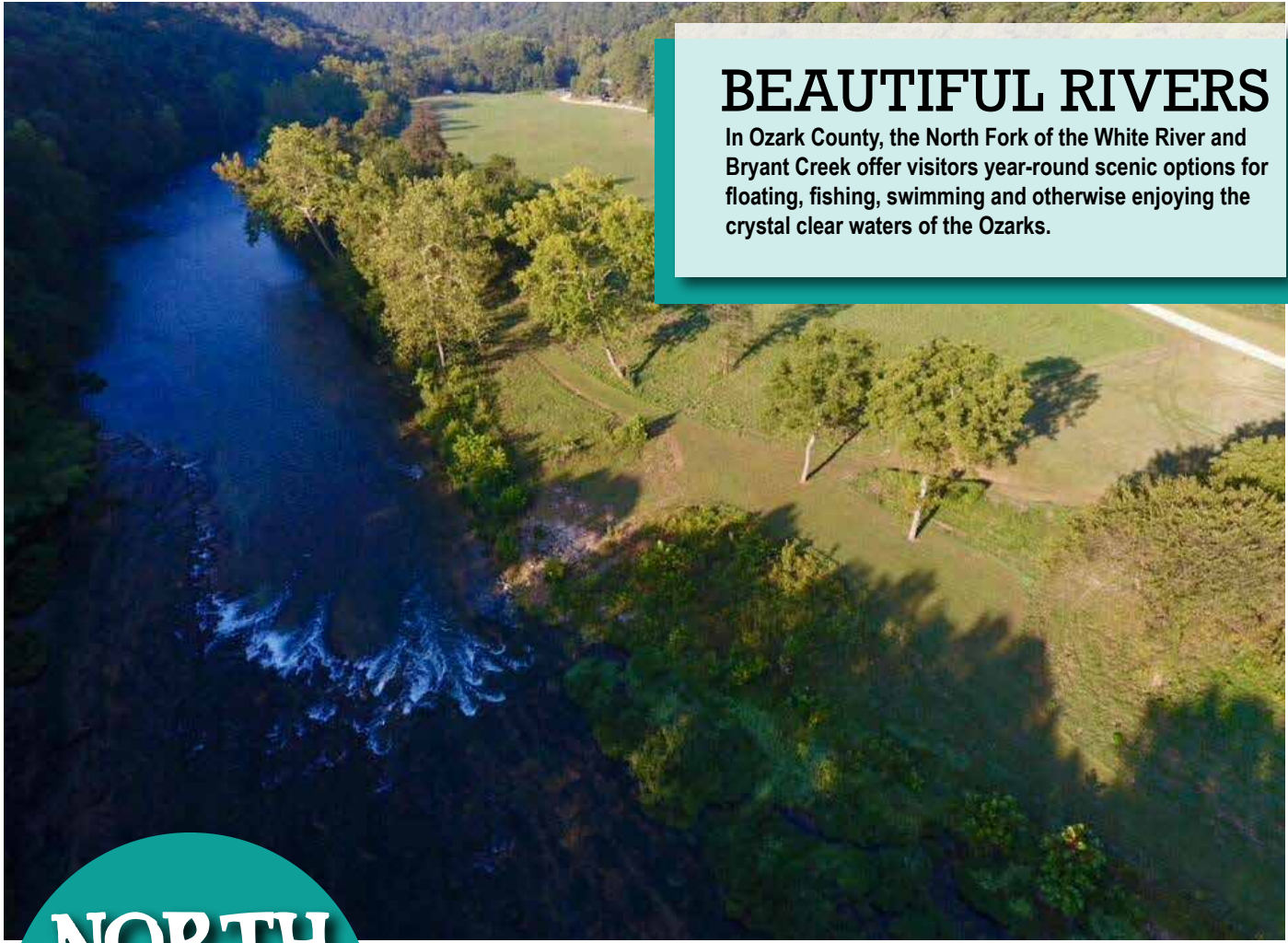
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BEAUTIFUL RIVERS

In Ozark County, the North Fork of the White River and Bryant Creek offer visitors year-round scenic options for floating, fishing, swimming and otherwise enjoying the crystal clear waters of the Ozarks.

NORTH FORK of the White River

The cold, clear water of the North Fork of the White River is lined with beautiful green riverbanks and rolling hills, as shown in this photo, submitted by Ben McKee.

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 the 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 some part of the North Fork always floatable, and although the gradient of the lower sections is not as spectacular as the river flows into Lake Norfork, the volume is good and the scenery is beautiful.



Whether you want to canoe, kayak or raft, the North Fork of the White River is the place to do it! The river has multiple outfitters available with boat rentals, or you can bring your own and shuttle to and from public accesses. See accesses and additional information on page 11, at right. Photo submitted by Jessica Smith.

{ GET ON THE NORTH FORK RIVER }

Public and private river accesses.

Hebron Bridge and access
Mo. Dept. of Conservation
public river access
mile marker 18.7
Douglas County
Road 279 off
Highway 14

Twin Bridges Canoe and Campground
Private outfitter
and river access
mile marker 24.1
Highway 14, Dora

North Fork Recreation Area/ Hammond Bridge
Mark Twain Nat'l Forest public access
mile marker 29.2
CC Highway, Dora

River of Life Farm
Private outfitter
and river access
mile marker 35
River of Life Dr, Dora

Pettit's Canoe Rental
Private outfitter
and river access
mile marker 39
County Road 354,
Dora

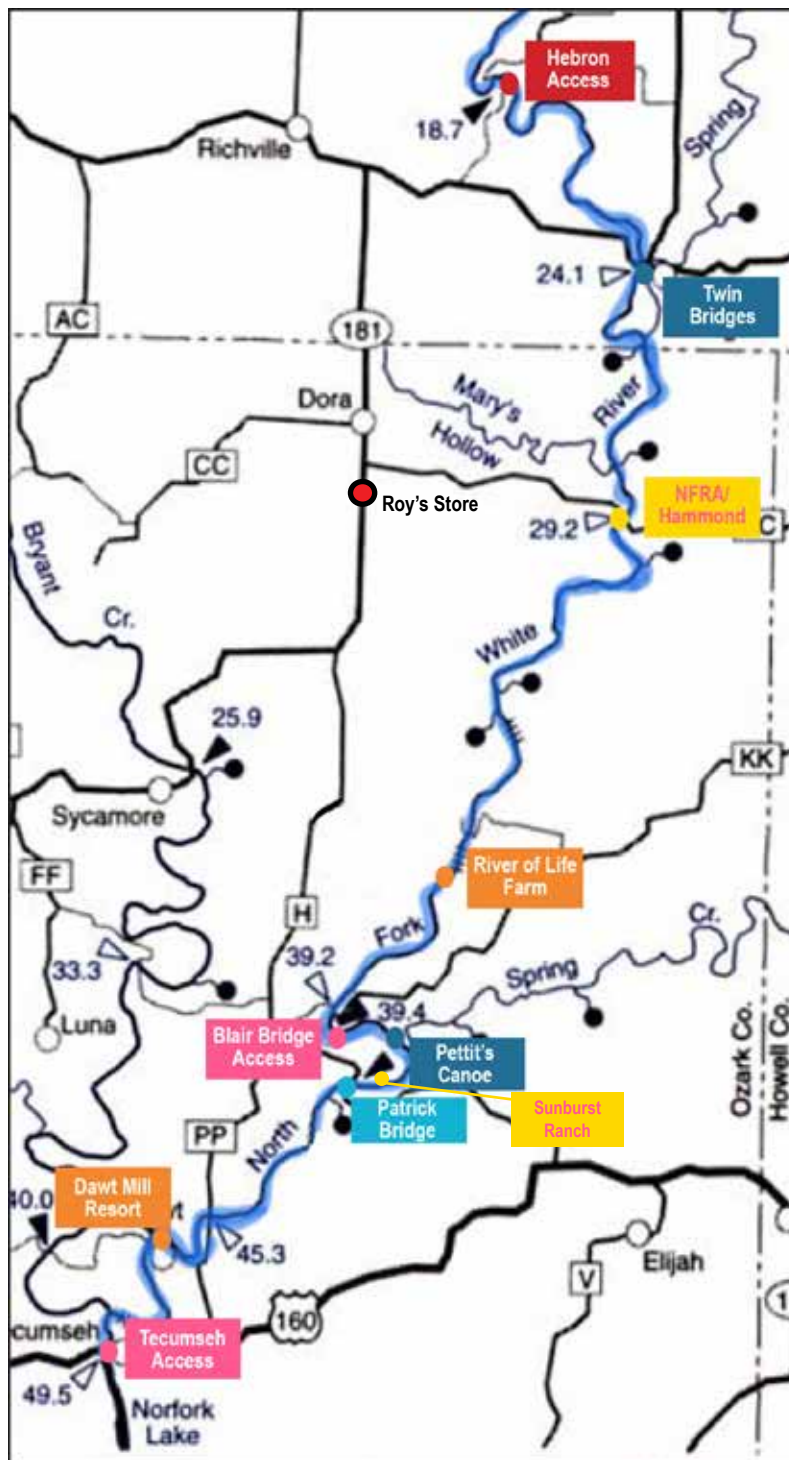
Blair Bridge
Mo. Dept. of Conservation
public river access
mile marker 39.2
County Road 354,
Dora

Sunburst Ranch
Private outfitter
and river access
mile marker 39.5
County Road 354,
Dora

Patrick bridge and access
Mo Dept. of Conservation
public river access
mile marker 42.2
H Highway, Dora

Dawt Mill Resort
Private outfitter
and river access
mile marker 47.1
Dawt Mill Drive,
Tecumseh

Tecumseh bridge and access
U.S. Army Corps of Engineer public
river/lake access
mile marker 49.5
Highway 160,
Tecumseh



North Fork River accesses

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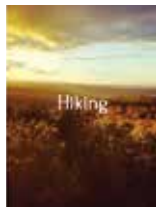


CAMPING

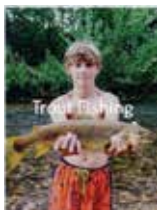


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Many anglers cast off for the North Fork of the White River in search of rainbow trout, especially in the Blue Ribbon Trout Area, from Rainbow Spring to Patrick bridge.

Fishing the **NORTH FORK**

Trout, black bass and stripers

In-stream and riparian habitat have been naturally changed by a record 1,000-year flood experienced in 2017. Anglers can expect to catch quality trout in a variety of lengths, but overall should expect significantly fewer numbers of trout, when compared to the pre-flood years, in 2026. 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. Wooly buggers, pats rubber legs, 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 Norfork Lake, has declined since the record flood in 2017. Anglers should expect the majority of brown trout to range from 12-15 inches, but also expect fewer numbers of brown trout, when compared to the pre-flood years, in 2026. 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 the recent spring high water events and sustained high water Norfork Lake levels throughout the summer.

Smallmouth and Goggle-eye.

Bluegill, channel catfish and largemouth bass are a proven stocking combination that provides both food and sport-fishing. When stocked in this order and properly managed, these species provide great fishing and good eating.

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 which 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.



Among the most popularly photographed sites in Ozark County is Hodgson Mill, located on Bryant Creek near the Sycamore Access. Photo by Kaitlin Kelly.

{ QUIETER THAN THE NORTH FORK }

Bryant Creek, often called simply “the Bryant” by locals, is a relatively wild stream. It has slightly less paddling mileage than the North Fork of the White River and is highly fishable. There are no public canoe outfitters that service the Bryant, meaning only those who plan to bring and shuttle their own boats can float it. Because of the lack of outfitters, the Bryant doesn’t boast the big crowds the North Fork sometimes does. Less spring-fed, the Bryant has less volume and can be more difficult to float at times 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, it’s wise to find out if those sections have enough water to float without having to wade and portage the shallow riffles.

{ FISHING THE BRYANT }

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

BRYANT
Creek



Photo submitted by Lonnie Schmidt

{GET ON BRYANT CREEK}

Public river accesses along Bryant Creek. There are no outfitters on this river.

Bryant Creek public river accesses

Vera Cruz access
MDC access
river mile marker 0
Highway AB, Ava

Highway 14 bridge
Highway bridge/
public access
river mile marker 2.5
Highway 14, Douglas Cty.

Rippee Cons. Area
MDC access
river mile marker 4
County Road 328, Ava

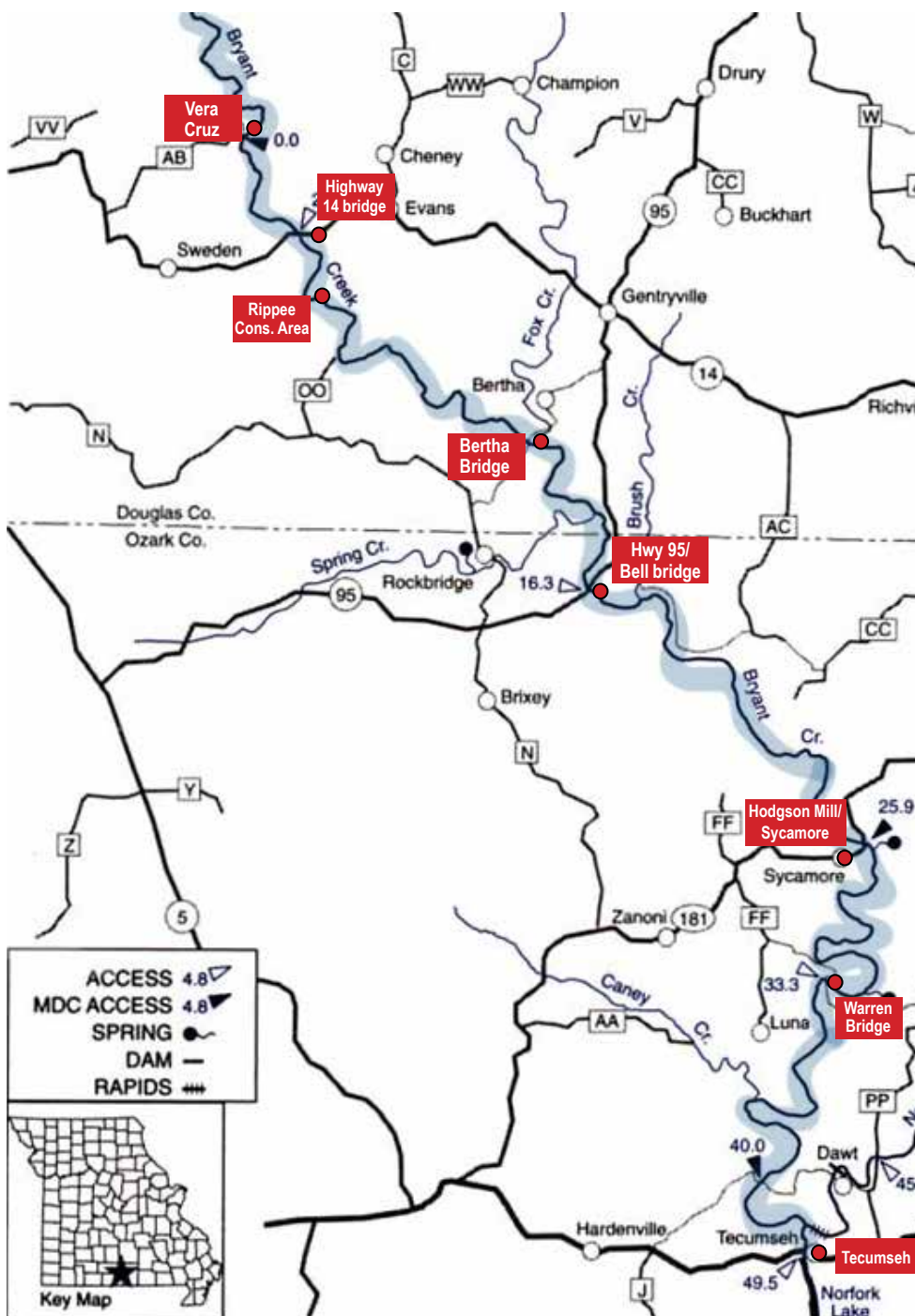
Bertha Ford Bridge
County Road bridge public
access
river mile marker 11.6
County Road 345, Ava area,
Douglas County

Highway 95/Bell Bridge
Highway bridge
public access
mile marker 16.3
Highway 95 near Rockbridge

**Hodgson Mill/
Sycamore access**
MDC access
mile marker 25.9
Highway 181, Sycamore

Warren Bridge
MDC access
mile marker 33.3
County Road 329, Tecumseh

**Tecumseh bridge and
access**
U.S. Army Corps of
Engineer public river/lake
access
mile marker 49.5
Highway 160, Tecumseh



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CELEBRATING AMERICA'S 250TH BIRTHDAY



In honor of America's 250th birthday in 2026, we commemorate how Ozark Countians have always stepped up to do their part in defense of our freedom. The Ozark County Historium is proud to recognize and celebrate those who have done so. Join us in saluting the service of our ancestors as well as those serving today.

This photo was taken Feb. 23, 1918, at the Romance-area home of "Uncle Carroll" Beasley, who hosted a send-off gathering for four young men as they headed off to World War I: (standing, from left) Deggie Cantrell, Ed Beasley (Carroll's grandson), Fred Eslinger and Rena Robinson. Seated are four of Ozark County's Civil War veterans still living in 1918: Carroll Beasley, H. W. Byrd, the Rev. Bevins and D. W. Melton. In its March 1, 1918, edition, the Ozark County Times reported that "about 200 friends and neighbors" attended the sendoff. All four young veterans served overseas and survived the war.

The Historium: *Part emporium, part museum, all about Ozark County history.*

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UNSPOILED LAKES

Bull Shoals and Norfolk Lakes in Ozark County and the surrounding area provide a quiet, peaceful destination for boating, swimming, fishing, water sports, snorkeling, scuba diving and best of all - relaxing.



photo submitted by Diane Cockrum Ellison



BULL SHOALS

Lake

Although paddling on the area rivers is a popular pastime for many, others enjoy the smooth waters of the lake. John Crane took this photo of kayakers on Bull Shoals Lake.

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 resort's adjoining campground and nearby Corps of Engineers boat ramp stay busy throughout the summer season. Cookie's restaurant is a popular eatery for tourists and locals alike. 417-273-4444. tmrbullshoals.net. See ad, page 4.

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 is a full-service marina, campground and resort located in Pontiac 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 is 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 21.

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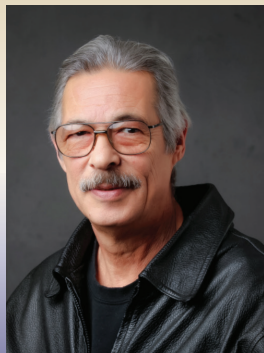


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www.PontiacMo.com

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Pontiac, MO

417-967-2001



photo by Jessica Smith.

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.

The popular Tecumseh access on Norfolk Lake off Highway 160 offers lake-goers a boat ramp, separate kayak/canoe ramp and large parking lot. The access was damaged in November 2024, so inquire if it's open before making a trip. Other 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. Ozark County is a good base for exploring the rest of the lake, which extends south into Arkansas.

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.

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.

Visit the Norfolk dam.

The Norfolk reservoir is formed by a large concrete dam across the North Fork of the White River four miles upstream from where the North Fork runs into the White River at the City of Norfolk, Arkansas. It also serves as a bridge across the river gorge. The dam is less than an hour's drive south of Gainesville, and a great nearby visitor's center about the dam offers an interesting educational experience for guests of all ages.

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6 months	\$30
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MISSOURI

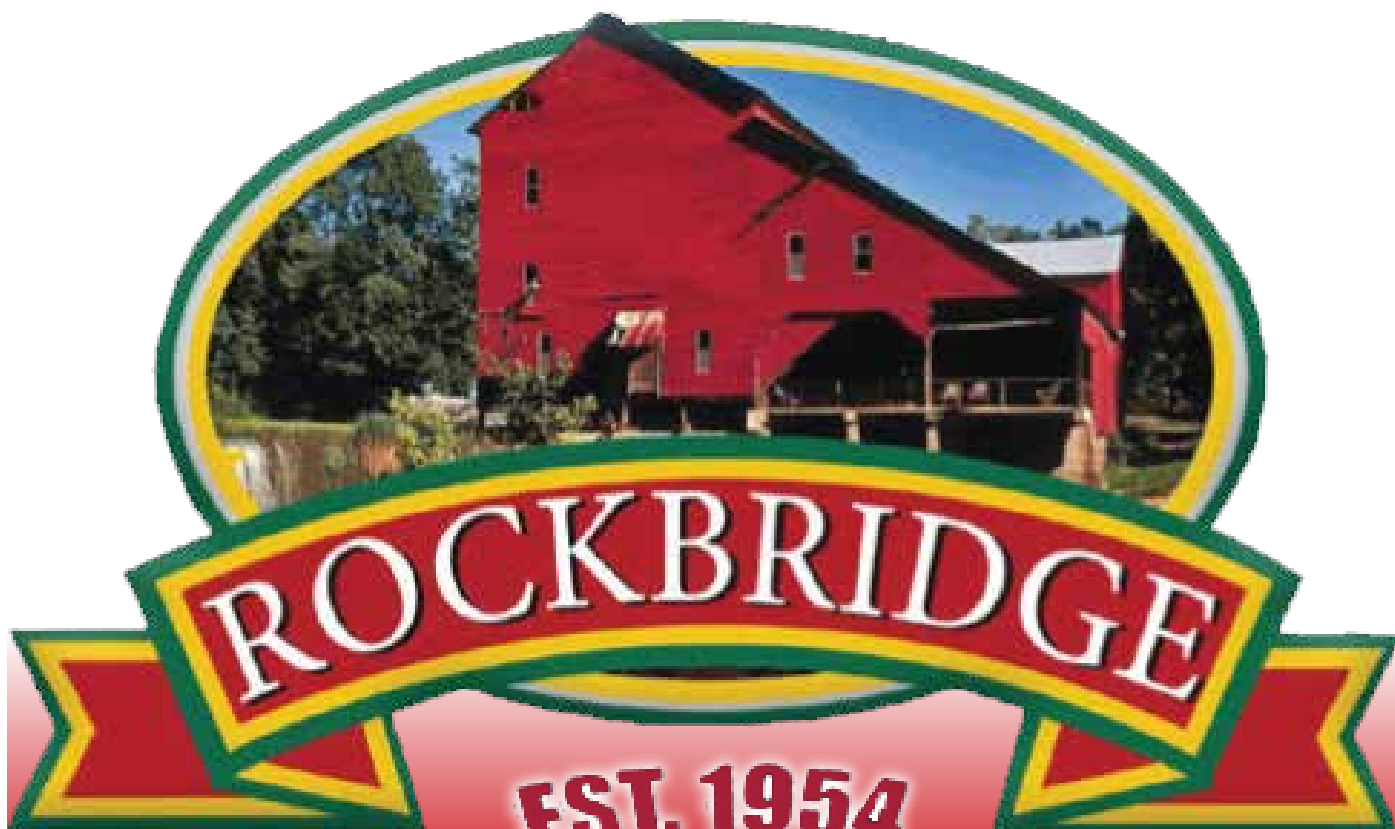
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Whether you are looking for everyday ordinary or extraordinary first class, we offer it all. Rockbridge has something for everyone! Standard and deluxe rooms, king and queen suites, restored farm houses and top of the line condos.



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Enjoy premium beverages in the unbelievable atmosphere of an 1800's grist mill. With many of the antique pieces still in place, this is an amazing place to relax.



Hiking

Natural hiking trails follow the ridges and valleys of the property. Hike the abandoned logging trails and explore the forgotten quarry.



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PLACES TO STAY

Ozark County has lodging for just about anyone – lake goers, river floaters, small-town charming and get-away-from-it-allers. Rockbridge Rainbow Trout Ranch, which sits in a beautiful remote setting with an on-site historic grist mill-turned bar, full service restaurant, fishing and hunting opportunities and more, has many unique options.



Twin Cedar Lodge

A relaxing river getaway in the Ozarks

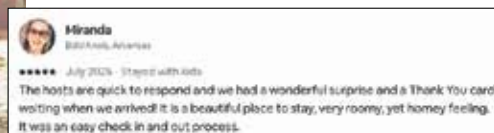
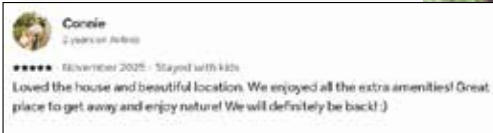
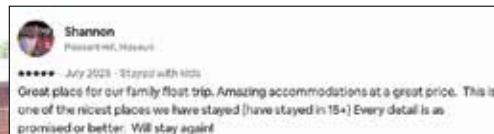
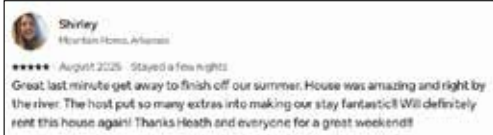
Welcome to your peaceful escape in the Ozarks! Nestled in a quiet country setting just half a mile from the beautiful North Fork River, this spacious two-story log cabin is the perfect retreat for families & friends.



Scan QR code or
go to airbnb.com/I/63pIRbH0



- 3 bedrooms; sleeps 8-10
- 2 full bathrooms
- 2 living areas
- Smart TVs
- Memory foam mattresses
- Fully equipped kitchen
- Laundry room
- Large front porch
- Plenty of parking
- Pool table
- Back patio
- Handicap accessible
- Propane grill
- Firepit with complementary bundle of wood



Bull Shoals Lake

Big Creek Resort

2247 County Road 644, Theodosia
417-372-7430
bigcreekresort.biz

Big Creek Resort on Bull Shoals Lake is located on the Big Creek arm of the lake and features eight fully-furnished cabins with kitchens, bathrooms, air conditioning, heat and TVs. The cabins were renovated in 2008 and the furniture was custom-built by a local craftsman. The grounds feature a gazebo, fire pit overlooking the lake, playground, laundry and shower house and a small store. See ad, page 20.

Lakewoods Resort

10425 S. State Highway 125, Protem
417-785-4325
www.lakewoods-resort.com;

Lakewoods Resort on Bull Shoals Lake offers 22 modern 1-, 2-, 3- and 4-bedroom cabins for guests of varying group sizes. Some cabins have a view of Bull Shoals Lake, while others are situated next to the resort's pool. The resort also offers a swimming pool with shaded areas, and a pavilion for large groups. Those staying at Lakewoods Resort can rent pontoon, fishing and paddle boats at the resort and take advantage of the 24-stall covered and lighted steel dock with electrical outlets. See ad, page 21.

Pontiac Anchor Down Resort

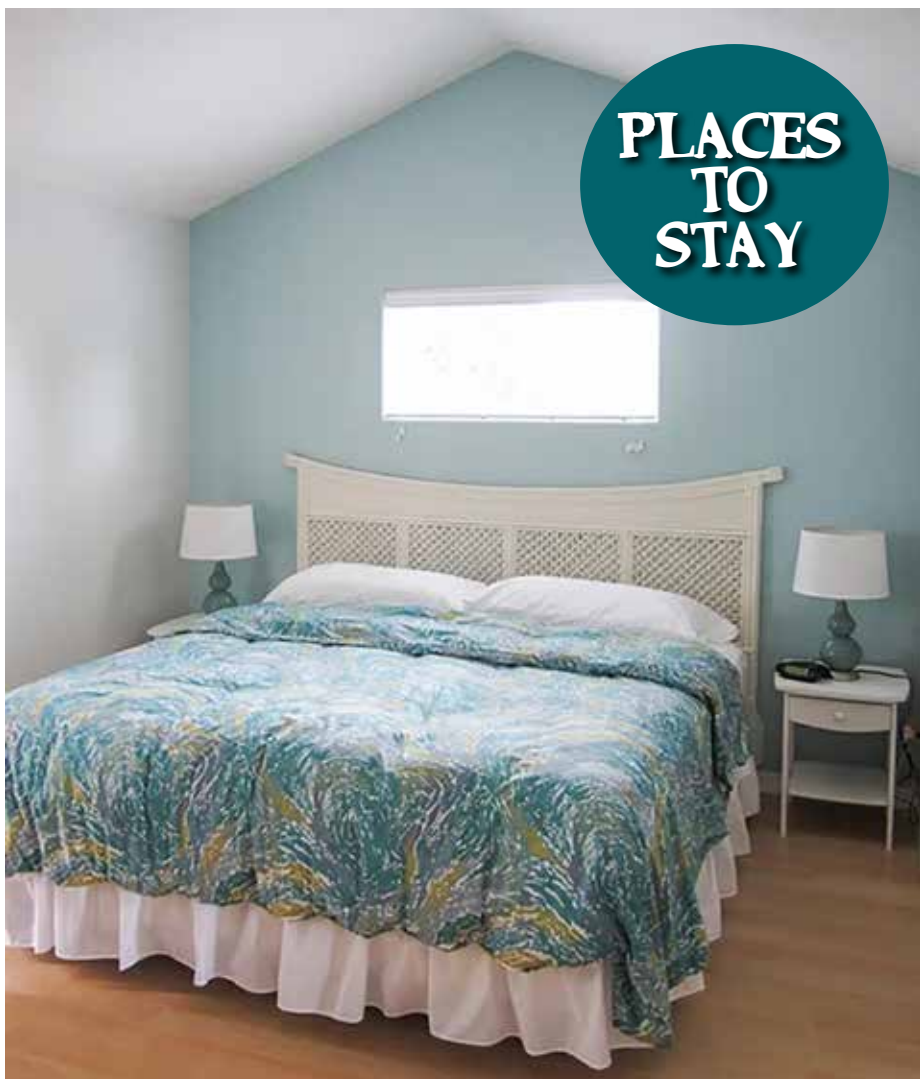
County Road 609, Pontiac
417-543-4352
pontiacanchordownresort.com

Pontiac Anchor Down Resort offers seven recently remodeled rooms which can accommodate two to six guests each. All the rooms have been remodeled with new appliances, furniture and TVs. Each unit comes fully supplied with a coffee pot, toaster, dishes, silverware, pots and pans and linens. The resort also has a grill, deck and fire pit area open to guests, along with boat parking. This resort is located less than a mile from the Pontiac Cove Marina, Just Jackie's restaurant and Lake Bums BrewCo. See ad, page 20.

Pontiac Cove Marina

W Highway, Pontiac
417-679-3676
www.pontiaccove.com;

Pontiac Cove Marina, located in Pontiac Cove on Bull Shoals Lake, features lodging options at Lake Harbour Resort and the Red Barn Lodge & Loft. Pontiac Cove Marina is near Ozark County's only craft brewery, Lake Bums BrewCo, located just



Lake Harbour Resort is located on Pontiac Cove Road and is within walking distance to the marina, campground, Just Jackie's restaurant, the Red Barn Lodge & Loft, Indian Point Lodge and the Gray Barn Guesthouse, and Lake Bums BrewCo.

across the highway from the marina and resort grounds within walking distance. Just Jackie's, a full-service restaurant, is also located on the resort grounds. See ad, page 21.

Lake Harbour Resort is a modern building near Bull Shoals Lake with units decorated in a modern coastal cottage style. The building features several suites with one king-sized bed or two queen-sized beds, a blow-up bed with bedding (for guests with children), fully-stocked kitchen with full-size appliances, indoor and outdoor dining tables with chairs, flat screen-TV with satellite, free wireless internet, patio downstairs or balcony in upstairs units with a seasonal lake view. A covered pavilion with BBQ grill, hammocks, fire pit with provided wood and horseshoe pits are also available to all guests.

grounds of Lake Bums BrewCo. The lodge sleeps 10, and features four bedrooms (two king beds, one queen bed and two sets of bunk beds), two bathrooms, flat-screen TV, free wireless internet, heat/air conditioning, kitchen, a wrap-around covered porch with outdoor furniture, a BBQ grill and a fire pit with provided wood. The one-bedroom loft features a queen bed, a twin sleeper sofa and one set of bunk beds in a separate "bunk room." The loft also has flat-screen TV, free wireless internet, heat/air conditioning, microwave, coffee maker, mini refrigerator and a fire pit with provided wood.

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Continued to page 31

The Red Barn Lodge & Loft are located on the



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theridgeresort@gmail.com

Price Place
1 mile from Pontiac Marina on Bull Shoals Lake



7 rooms with kitchenettes

Nightly rates from \$95-\$125

2 night minimum stay

3 night minimum stay on holiday weekends

1 night minimum, Oct1-April 30

RV sites, Playground & Swimming Pool



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located on The Ridge Resort property



A place to eat, have fun & be
entertained.

Watch our Facebook page for
our entertainment schedule

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Swirly's Ice Cream &
Waffles also located
on the property,





PLACES TO STAY

The Otter Creek Lodge at Theodosia Marina Resort features 2,000-square feet of space to relax into. With two jacuzzi bathtubs, a direct view of Bull Shoals Lake, large porch and fireplace, this four bedroom stunning lodging option is not one you'll soon forget.

Bull Shoals Lake

Roo-B-Doo Family Resort

41 Roo B Doo Circle, Pontiac
417-679-4174
roobdoofamilyresort.com

Roo-B-Doo Family Resort in Pontiac, a resort within walking distance of Pontiac Cove Marina, has a variety of cabins and RV sites available. The resort also features a heated salt water pool on the premises, along with picnic tables and fire rings. See ad, page 22.

Theodosia Marina Resort (TMR)

Off Highway 160, Theodosia
417-273-4444
tmrbullshoals.net

Theodosia Marina Resort on the shore of Bull Shoals Lake offers accommodations for all sized groups including a motel that features two-bedroom units (each with a queen bed), nearby two-bedroom apartments, Cove View cabins that feature two bedrooms with double beds, a 5-bedroom lake house, the four-bedroom Red Cedar Lodge and the 2,000 square foot Otter Creek Lodge which features eight bedrooms. Guests of TMR's lodging and RV park have access to the resort's recre-

ational facilities that include a large in-ground swimming pool, a coin-operated laundry facility, basketball court, lighted tennis court, a banquet room and outside patio and a shower house with restrooms. A full-service restaurant, Cookie's, offers meals seven days a week during the spring, summer and fall. See ad, page 4.

Lakehouse vacation rental

W Highway, Pontiac;
417-679-4292

This fully-furnished vacation rental has three bedrooms and sleeps up to 11 people. It includes a spacious living room with two couches, a recliner and plenty of room for the whole family to stretch out. A TV and DVD player offers guests entertainment when they're not enjoying Bull Shoals Lake, which is a five minute drive away. The home includes a full kitchen, dishwasher, washer and dryer and barbecue grill. Two outside decks are perfect for watching wildlife or sitting and relaxing around a fire pit. See ad, page 21.

Lost Woods Hideaway RV Park

654 County Road 619, Isabella
417-273-4877 or 417-294-5972

The Hideaway RV Park, located just 8 minutes from the Spring Creek boat launch ramp on Bull

Shoals Lake, features 24 sites with electric, water and sewer. A laundry facility is also located on site. There is free wifi and 44-foot by 15-foot concrete pads. Hideaway offers daily, 6-month and yearly rental options. About 5 minutes from the Hideaway Golf Course and Pub, 9 minutes to the small lakeside town of Theodosia and 20 minutes to the county seat of Gainesville, it's a great option for camper owners looking for a nice place to call home for a night - or longer. See ad, page 39.

The Ridge Resort

W Highway, Pontiac;
870-402-0078
theridgeresort@gmail.com

The Ridge Resort gives vacationers a clean, affordable place to stay while enjoying the beautiful Bull Shoals Lake. It features seven different rooms, all furnished with kitchenettes for nightly rates of \$95 to \$125. The resort also offers RV sites, a playground and swimming pool on the grounds, as well as the convenient Hooks Bar and Grill for meals. See ad, page 30.

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Continued to page 33

PAGE 31

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The Twin Cedar Lodge is the perfect family getaway on the North Fork of the White River. Just a few miles from a public access point at Blair Bridge, this lodging option is in a very convenient location.

Norfolk Lake

Bayou Glade RV Park

Bakersfield, Missouri
417-274-3247
bayougladervpark.com

The Bayou Glade RV Park is located in Bakersfield and offers seven quiet, spacious grassy RV sites, full-service hookups with water, electric and sewer. Long-term and short term stays are available. There is a 5 percent discount offered to active military or veterans. See ad, page 26.

North Fork River

Pettit's Canoe Rental

9000 County Road 354, Caulfield
417-284-3290
pettitscanoerental.com

Pettit's Canoe Rental, on the banks of the North Fork of the White River, offers cabins near the North Fork of the White River, in addition to camping on the riverbank. The cabins include "the big cabin," which comfortably sleeps 8 people with four queen beds and includes a fully-equipped kitchen with stove, microwave and refrigerator, pots and pans, large bathroom with shower and tub, towels and bed linens, sitting area with chairs and ottomans, air-conditioning and heat and an outdoor dining area with a fire pit. Other options include the resort's "sleeper cabins," which sleep six people comfortably with three full beds. The sleeper cabins include table and chairs, air conditioning, heat, picnic tables and fire pit. The sleeper cabins are in close proximity to the campground's toilets and showerhouse and is near a walking trail that leads down to the campground and river. See ad, page 12.

Sunburst Ranch

776 County Road 352, Caulfield off H Highway
Caulfield; 417-284-3443
sunburstranchcanoe.com

Sunburst Ranch, on the North Fork of the White River, features more than a mile of riverfront. In addition to camping, Sunburst Ranch offers several full-service cabins, attractively decorated vintage campers - and even a renovated airplane hangar that sleeps up to 16 people. A camp store has supplies and souvenirs; ice and firewood are also available. The resort rents canoes, rafts and kayaks, and provides shuttle service for float trips for its guests. See ad, page 12

Twin Cedar Lodge

County Road 354, Caulfield
Book on Airbnb.com, see QR code, page 28

This peaceful, relaxing river getaway is located just a short distance from the Blair Bridge on the North Fork of the White River. With 3 bedrooms and 2 full bathrooms, 8 to 10 people can sleep comfortably. The lodge features a full-equipped kitchen, laundry room, large front porch and back patio, propane grill, smart TVs, two living areas and more. A fire pit outside is furnished with a bundle of wood, so nights can be spent together around starry skies. For more information or to book this lodge, scan the QR code on page 28.

Small town lodging

Antler Motel

Third Street/Highway 5 North, Gainesville
417-679-4292

The two-story Antler Motel has been a mainstay in Gainesville for decades. The motel features clean and reasonably priced rooms in a convenient location in Gainesville. The Antler Pizza and Package

store stands next door, making mealtime an easy walk away. Groceries, gas and other businesses are all located within a few miles of the motel. See ad, page 8.

Historic Mill

Rockbridge Grist Mill/ Rainbow Trout and Game Ranch

4297 County Road 142, Rockbridge
www.rockbridgeemo.com
417-679-3619

This 2,000-plus acre resort features one of Ozark County's iconic and historic grist mills, making it the perfect setting for a family vacation or relaxing couple's getaway. The resort offers lodging options that range from affordable motel rooms and suites to luxurious multi-bedroom log cabins. Rockbridge's stunning spring-fed Spring Creek offers ample opportunity for all kinds of fishermen. Rockbridge is privately owned so guests do not have to have a Missouri fishing license or a trout stamp to fish there. Guests can also take advantage of the on-site Gun Club for shooting sports and guided whitetail deer and turkey hunts. Two eateries are available on the grounds. The Grist Mill Club, a pub-style bar and restaurant housed in a historic 1800s grist mill, offers guests an open-air dining area for drinks and appetizers from April through October. Those seeking a casual, fine dining experience can find a full menu at the resort's main restaurant. Fisherman can bring their freshly-caught trout to the on-site fish cleaning staff to clean and package or pass on to the restaurant's chef to cook for dinner. See ad, page 25.

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Patio open May 1!



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**REAL BARB-B-QUE
HICKORY SMOKED
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CANEY MOUNTAIN

Conservation
Area

April Britt shared this photo of one of several open vistas available to enjoy at Caney Mountain Conservation Area, north of Gainesville. Guests can reach these vistas by driving to the main headquarter entrance on Highway 181 and continue on the “Main Trail” gravel roadway to the right, taking another right at the top of the hill.

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.

Wildlife watching

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 can be found in good numbers, as can 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 map, page 38.

Bring your 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 fishless ponds

Sweeping and awe-inspiring views

Caney Mountain features three scenic overlooks with picnic tables atop Preston Flats (see map, page 38) that allow visitors to witness Ozark County’s spectacular views. All three spots are marked by “scenic vista” signs. One vista features a view that stretches all the way to Arkansas.

Take a hike - or two.

Two designated hiking trails weave through the center wildlife refuge section of Caney Mountain Conservation Area. The **Spout Spring Trail** 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 on page 38 or at <https://nature.mdc.mo.gov/sites/default/files/downloads/conservation-areas/5202map.pdf>.

Public Hunting.

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.

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 deer and turkey hunting all year with the exception of a few managed hunts that include a muzzle-loader 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.



Caney Mountain Conservation Area is a wonderful place to watch for wildlife. The best time to spot bald eagles, like the ones pictured here in this photo submitted by Andrea Martin, is December through February when the birds are known to overwinter.



Sight it in.

Visitors and residents can sight in weaponry at one of three ranges at Caney Mountain Conservation Area. The archery range features a static range as well as field targets with a tree-stand platform available for use. The rifle and handgun range features target distances of 25-100 yards, and a range restricted to muzzleloaders includes two stations with 50- and 100-yard distances.

Camping.

Pitch a tent or bring an RV to camp at one of the many campsites within the park. They include privies, fire rings and picnic tables.

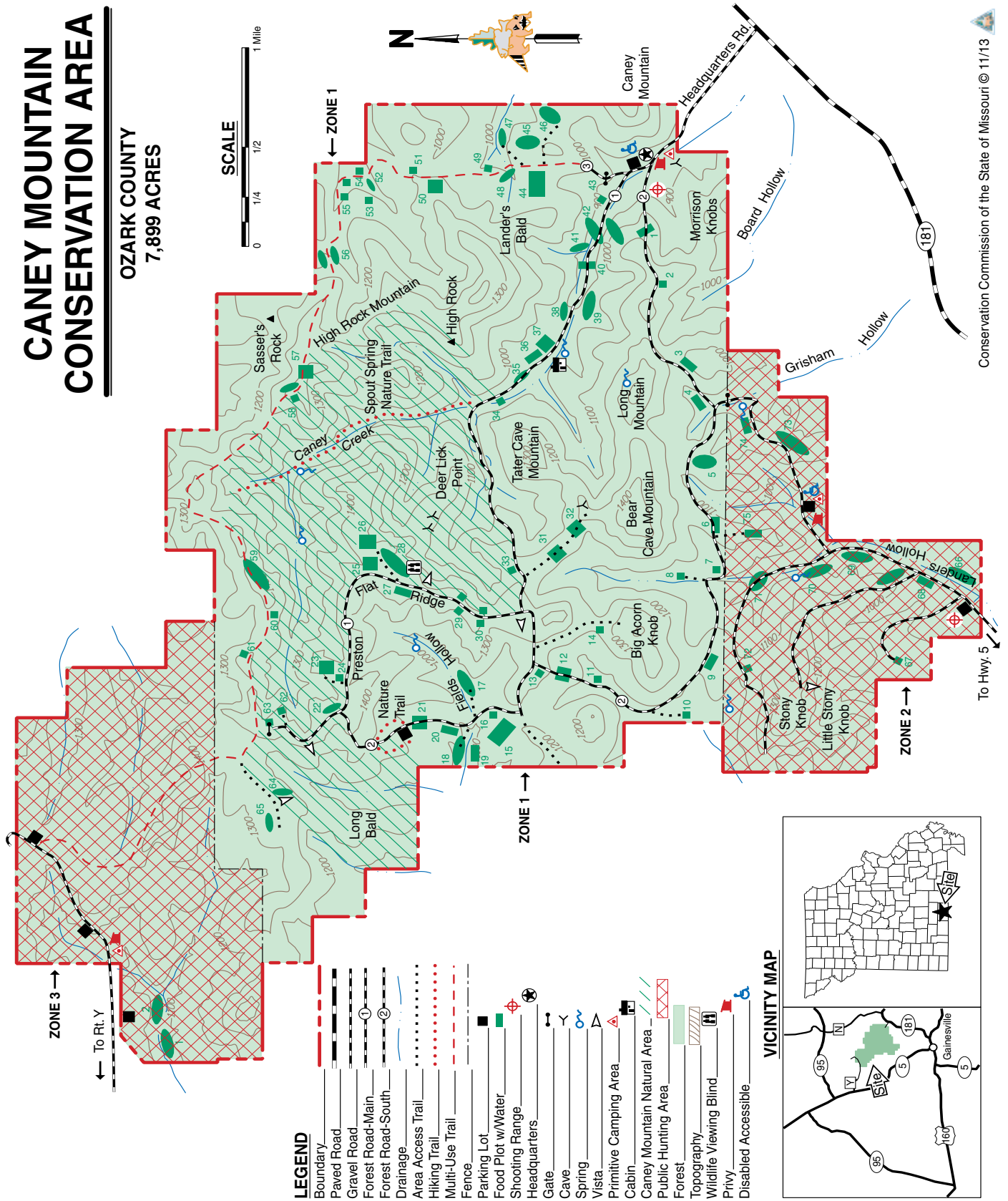
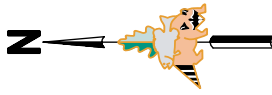
Directions

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.



CANEY MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA

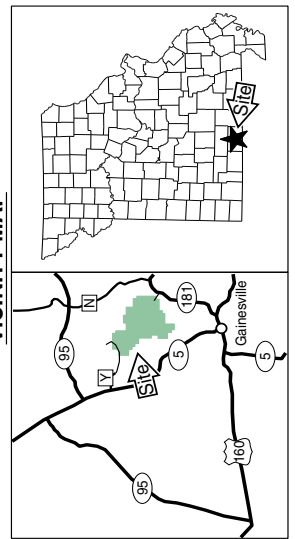
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LEGEND

- Boundary
- Paved Road
- Gravel Road
- Forest Road-Main
- Forest Road-South
- Drainage
- Area Access Trail
- Hiking Trail
- Multi-Use Trail
- Fence
- Parking Lot
- Food Plot w/Water
- Shooting Range
- Headquarters
- Gate
- Cave
- Spring
- Vista
- Primitive Camping Area
- Cabin
- Caney Mountain Natural Area
- Public Hunting Area
- Forest
- Topography
- Wildlife Viewing Blind
- Privy
- Disabled Accessible

VICINITY MAP



Due to little-to-no cell phone reception, and often no visitor display maps at the conservation area, guests are encouraged to bring a map 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>.



There's so much to do at Lost Woods Hideaway.



Scenic 9 Hole, 35 Golf Course
Open to the public year round from sunrise to sunset
Clubhouse open 8 a.m. Tuesday-Sunday.



18 Basket Disc Golf set amidst the woods with water hazards, high targets and Ozark Mountain Views!



4 Pickleball courts and a new activity area:
Bocce Ball, Sand Volleyball, Kids play area + more!



Great fun can be found at the Restaurant + Pub.
From amazing food and drinks to several social events throughout the year!



Hideaway RV Park

24 spaces complete with concrete pads, electric, water & sewer.



Country Apren Bakery

Baked goods. Breakfast 7:30-11 a.m. Thursday, Friday & Saturday



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CONTACT

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GLADE TOP TRAIL

Missouri
Scenic Byway

Glade Top Trail, with its wide sweeping views, is a beautiful place to view the sometimes dramatic, beautiful sunrise and sunsets of the area. Photo by Doug Hawkins.

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

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.

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 a Missouri 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.



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.



Glade Top Trail is the perfect place to see wide open views of the surrounding countryside changing its colors for each season. Misty McKay shared this photo, taken at Glade Top Trail in fall among the fall foliage.



Secret missions.

One way to enjoy and learn about the National Forest is through the Agents of Discovery missions game that can be played on a mobile device like a phone or a tablet. Sometimes the missions can be done virtually from anywhere; but other missions are only available when you are at a particular site. At the time this magazine was printed, the Forest had a mission that could be played when visiting the Glade Top Trail. If you can't make it out to the forest, there is also a healthy forest mission that can be played from anywhere. Agents of Discovery is a mobile game where you have to move to play. You're a secret agent with an animal guide to help you solve challenges in a mission. As you explore outdoor recreation areas, trails, museums and discovery centers, you will unlock the hidden challenges based on your location. Discover nature, science and culture. Instructions for downloading the app and playing the game are provided on the Mark Twain National Forest's website at www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mtnf/learning/kids/?cid=fseprd1055869.



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.

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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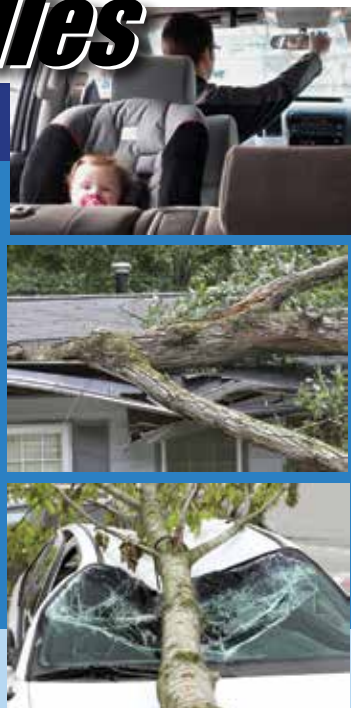
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NOBLETT LAKE

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,
1103 South Jefferson, Ava • 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

Dispersed camping allowed

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.

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 49). 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 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.

Picnic/pavilion

Picnic tables and grills are available on a first come, first serve basis. Vault toilets are available, but there is no drinking water on site. A pavilion can be reserved for \$50 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. Call 1-877-444-6777 or visit recreation.gov to book.

Loop Directions

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.

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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The beautifully scenic Blue Spring is located just a mile roundtrip walk from the North Fork Recreation Area and is well worth the side trip. The vibrant spring is about 30 feet in diameter and averages 7 million gallons of cold, clear-blue water a day. Photo by Lindsay Sellars.

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.

OWNER: Mark Twain National Forest, US Forest Service
CONTACT: Ava/Cassville/Willow Springs Ranger Station, 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.

**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 life-guard, and using the water access is done at one's own risk. A \$2 per vehicle day use fee is charged for those visiting.

Camping.

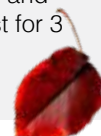
The North Fork Recreation Area offers 20 campsites, each with a picnic table, fire ring, post for a hanging lamp and a tent pad. Drinking water (available May 15 - Oct. 15), vault toilets and garbage receptacles are centrally located. No water or sewer hook-ups for camping trailers are available at this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

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.

Directions

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



Day hikes and backpacking trips

Ridge Runner backpacking 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.



Photo submitted by Stephanie Bade.

Devil's Backbone Wilderness 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.

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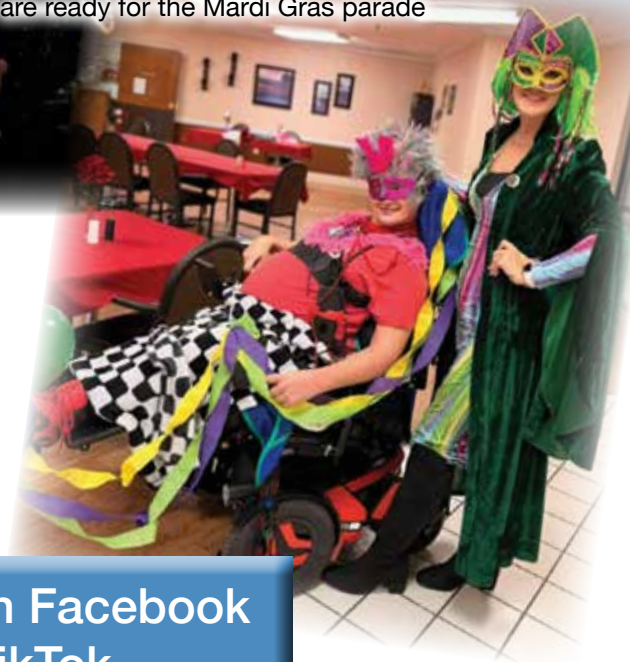
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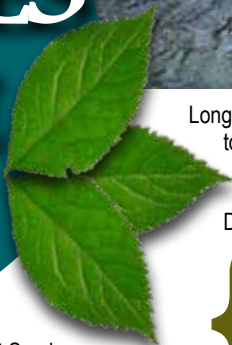
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HERCULES GLADE Wilderness



Long Creek Falls is an impressive display of the power of water on a dolomite creekbottom. The 10- to 12-foot drops create beautiful waterfalls. During the wetter months, many visitors can't resist hopping into Long Creek for a refreshing dip. Hikers can access the falls from routes beginning at any of the three trailheads. Photo by David Crane.

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

Hike. Hercules Glade features 32 miles of maintained trails to explore by foot or on horseback. It features steep areas, stream crossings, sparse trail markings and elevations ranging from 600 to 1,200 feet. Hikers should bring a map and compass or a GPS unit.

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 those who love the outdoors.

Dispersed camping.

Dispersed camping is allowed in the Hercules Glade Wilderness Area. There are several campsites along the creek near the falls that offer a flat area to pitch a tent with stacked stone fire pits.



Directions

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 north onto Forest Road 566 and go approximately 4 miles. Only parking is available at this location.

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PIGEON CREEK

Trails
and Park



Pigeon Creek allows the public access to Norfolk Lake and sits halfway between Gainesville and Mountain Home, Arkansas.



A grove of cypress trees off the side of the roadway near the lake access makes a fascinating place to visit.

Cypress

Multi-use Trails.

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.

Corps run.

The Pigeon Creek National Recreation Trail area 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.

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.

Fishing.

Boat/
Swim

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.



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 trailhead is on the west (right) side of Highway 201, opposite the boat ramp side, when coming from Missouri. There is a small parking lot where hikers or bikers can leave their vehicles.

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.



BRYANT CREEK State Park

Bryant Creek State Park is a beautiful place to hike in all seasons. Photo by Missouri State Park system.

Located near Rockbridge, Bryant Creek State Park is home to impressively large oaks and shortleaf pines spanning rugged, steeply dissected river hills that front the stream for which it's named. With over 2,900 acres, the park features many natural attributes including 2 miles of Bryant Creek frontage.

OWNER: Missouri State Parks
ACERAGE: 2,917 acres
CONTACT: Park office, 417-334-4704
GPS COORDINATES: 36°49'07"N 92°25'20"W
OPEN: Sunrise to sunset, year-round
WEB: <https://mostateparks.com/park/bryant-creek-state-park>

Trails.

Two hiking trails wind through the northern end of park, the 4.5 mile Pike Hollow Trail and the more accessible .6-mile Pinewoods Trail, allowing users to see Missouri's only species of native pine, and picnic tables provide visitors a place to relax and take in their surroundings.

Unique.

Four tributary hollows go through uncut forest and sandstone outcrops, providing lots of character and scenic views. The park's remote location, bountiful flora and fauna, and pristine creek make it a great place to experience the wonders of the Ozarks.

This view of Bryant Creek can be seen from the Pike Hollow Trail trail at Bryant Creek State Park. Photo by Jan VanSchuyver, Gentryville.





BRYANT CREEK State Park



Among the natural elements seen on the Pike Hollow Trail are various rock and stone features including overhangs that produce small waterfalls during wet weather periods. Missouri State Parks photo.

Accessibility.

Guests with mobility issues can now more easily enjoy Bryant Creek State Park thanks to an electronic track chair on site. The track chair provides access to Pinewoods Trail and the overlook and is available for use June 1 through Oct. 31, Thursday through Saturday. Produced by the Action Trackchair company, the chair is an electric all-terrain wheelchair that offers guests with mobility challenges the opportunity to partake in outdoor activities. With a track chair, guests can explore trails and visit parts of Missouri state parks or historic sites that are not suitable for regular wheelchairs.

These sturdier, more rugged chairs use tank-like tracks instead of wheels to allow guests to traverse some of the rougher, uneven trails found in Missouri state parks. All-terrain track chairs can navigate through snow, water, mud, sand and other rough conditions.

Using the track chair is free. Reservations must be made at least two days in advance by calling 417-683-2520. Also, a friend or family member 18 years or older must go along to help, because park representatives are not always available or able to help users transfer to or from the chair. Due to battery life, the chair can be reserved for two hours at a time.



Mo Dept. of Natural Resources photo

HIKING

Trails

Hike the trails or get off the beaten path! Most public areas also allow hikers to explore areas off designated trails and paths. It's wise to bring a map if hiking off-trail.

SPOUT SPRING NATURE TRAIL

Caney Mountain Conservation Area, See page 36

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.

PIGEON CREEK TRAIL SYSTEM

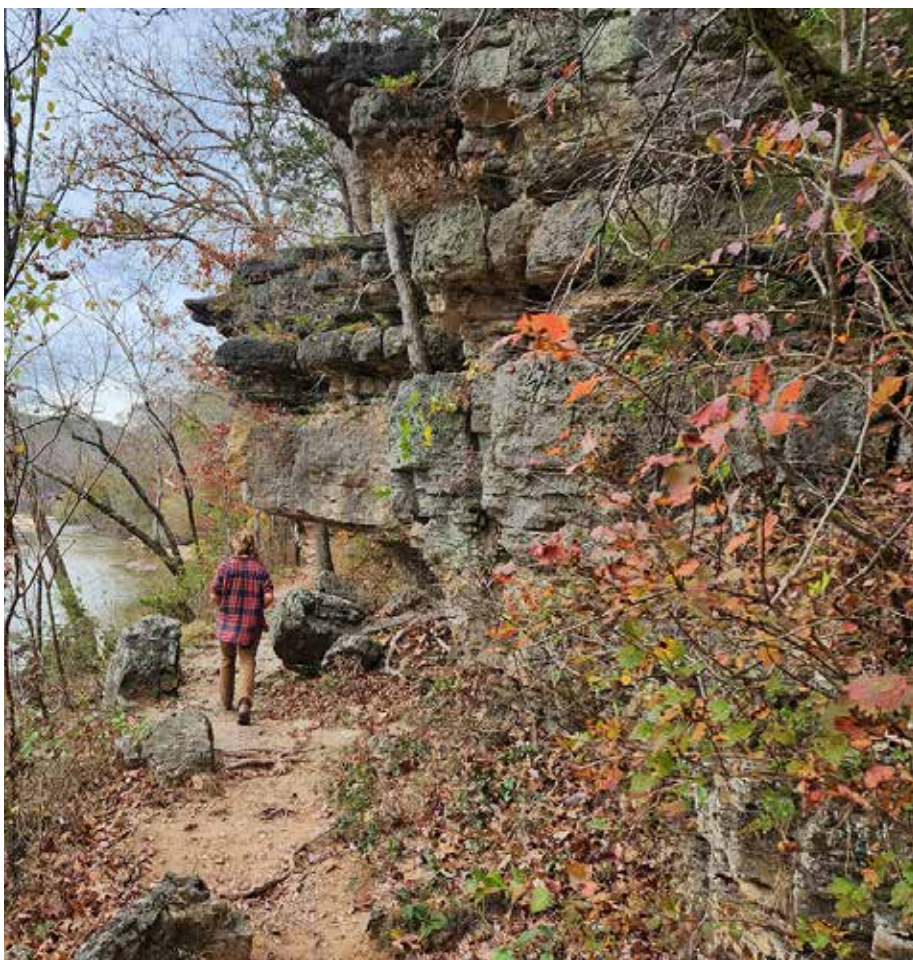
Pigeon Creek Park, see page 57

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 Norfork at Pigeon Creek Park in Arkansas. A stacked loop system provides a wide variety of different trail-length options, which can be linked to-



Chelsea Ayers shared this photo of Ridley Funderburg taking the short Blue Spring Trail, which runs alongside the North Fork of the White River at the North Fork Recreation Area. See details below.

gether 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 Norfork bridge. The trailhead access is on the right (west) side of the highway, and the recreation area is on the left (east) side.

BLUE SPRING TRAIL

North Fork Recreation Area, see page 48

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.

Continued to page 62

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As you drive to the trailhead, you'll likely be taken on a journey of beautiful rustic elegance, family farms and rolling, forest-covered hillsides. Photo submitted by Janet Johnson.

DEVIL'S BACKBONE LOOP

North Fork Recreation Area, page 49

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.

RIDGE RUNNER TRAIL

North Fork Recreation Area, page 49

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

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.

Continued to page 64

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HIKING

Trails

NOBLETT LAKE LOOP

Noblett Lake Recreation Area, page 45

Distance and configuration: 8-mile loop

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

Map: www.ozarktrail.com/northfork

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.

COY BALD LOOP

Hercules Glade Wilderness, page 53

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.

PIKE HOLLOW TRAIL

Bryant Creek State Park, page 58

Distance and configuration: 4.5 mile loop.

Facilities: Parking lot, picnic tables, pit toilets.

Description: The Pike Hollow Trail, a 4.5-mile "rugged" trail, is expected to take four and a half hours to complete. It takes hikers along long ledges of Roubidoux sandstone. The outcrops form intriguing, weather-worn shapes. Bryant Creek State

Park is heavily forested, deeply carved and sharply incised. With 940 kinds of plants, the park preserves more wild-flowers, shrubs, trees and other vascular plant species than any area of Missouri yet studied, encompassing within these 3,000 acres nearly one-third of Missouri's total known flora. More species of lichen have been discovered at Bryant Creek than in all but one other Missouri State Park. Nearly 70 kinds of forest, woodland and shrubland birds are known to nest in the park, and many more pass through during spring and fall migrations.

Directions: From Gainesville, travel north on Highway 181 for 7 miles. Turn left onto N Highway in Zanol, and continue for 12 more miles.

PINEWOODS TRAIL

Bryant Creek State Park, page 58

Distance and configuration: .6-mile loop.

Facilities: Parking lot, picnic tables, pit toilets.

Description: Pinewoods Trail leisurely leads visitors through the narrow ridgetop covered in native pine, just to the edge of the rugged drop off to the sandstone geography below. This 0.6-mile trail is a great way to see Missouri's only native Shortleaf Pine.

Directions: From Gainesville, travel north on Highway 181 for 7 miles. Turn left onto N Highway in Zanol, and continue for 12 more miles.



Bryant Creek State Park has trail maps and area information posted on boards at the park.



Photo submitted by April Britt



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Public hunting:

Caney Mountain Conservation Area includes 6,599 acres of public hunting (see pages 36-37), 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).

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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 36 for more information about Caney Mountain.

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A vintage-style advertisement for Stockmens Bank. The top half features a large, stylized illustration of a rural landscape with rolling hills, a green tractor, and a barn. The text "STOCKMENS BANK" is prominently displayed at the top in a large, serif font. Below the illustration, the phone number "417-679-3080" is shown in a decorative banner. At the bottom, the address "25 Elm Street, Suite 2 Gainesville, MO 65655" and a list of service areas are provided. The entire advertisement is framed by a decorative border.

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Historic GRIST MILLS



Hodgson Mill, photo by Aaron Foster

Ozark County has five historic mills still standing, two of which - Dawt and Rockbridge - offer resort amenities. Explore each one, but please be mindful of those located on private property.

Dawt Mill - 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 in a beautiful setting along the bank of the North Fork of the White River. Located northeast of Tecumseh on County Road 318, off Highway 160 via PP Highway, Dawt Mill was the last operating grist mill in Ozark County. Built in 1897, Dawt once was a town with a blacksmith shop, store, church and hotel. The first mill was built on the site in 1892, but later burned. The property has changed hands many times. The present mill was built in 1909 by Alva Hodgson. Following several owners through the years, Dr. and Mrs. Edward Henegar purchased the mill in 1995 and began a major restoration and renovation of the surrounding property. It is now a resort.

Hammond Mill - 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.

Hodgson Mill - 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.

Rockbridge Mill - 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 2,000 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, hiking trails, a gun club and, in season, guided turkey and deer hunts. For more information, call 417-679-3619 or visit rockbridgemo.com.

Zanoni Mill - 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 who offers the scenic place as a special event and wedding venue. The mill and nearby general store and post office, long closed, are viewable from nearby Highway 181.

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Photo submitted by Kevin Thomas.

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OZARK COUNTY MILL TOUR

63 miles, approximate drivetime 2.5 hours

Ozark County is home to five historic grist mills (see page 70) 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 Zanolli Hill. Zanolli 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 40), 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 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.

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, roller-coaster roadways of Ozark County and beyond. Endless beauty is waiting just around the bend!



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What you
need to know



Photo by Jessica Smith.

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. Visitors from coast to coast have 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 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.

It might be a home in town with convenient services or that little farm you've always wanted 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:

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com
sierraozark.com
See ad, page 44.

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MOVING HERE?

What you
need to know

John Crane took this picture on the picturesque Spring Creek during a summertime kayak trip.

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/sewer

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 in the electricity section about the importance of contacting the electric co-op providing service to your area before your move-in day).

Sewer service is located in some areas of the designated cities. For information on sewer service, contact Gainesville and Bakersfield cities (number above)

or the Village of Theodosia at 417-273-4830. The majority of residents in Ozark County operate on private septic tanks, lagoons or other sewage devices.

Registering vehicles, drivers:

The License Bureau in Ozark County is located on First Street in Gainesville, just north of the White Oak/Phillips 66 convenience store. Call the license office at 417-679-0280.

Law enforcement

Ozark County Sheriff's Office
County Road 806, Gainesville
417-679-4633

**Missouri State Highway Patrol
Troop G Headquarters**
Willow Springs
417-469-3121

Prosecuting Attorney
Third Street, Gainesville
417-679-4648

Local News

Ozark County Times
Weekly hyper-local community newspaper about Ozark County. South side of Gainesville square PO Box 188, Gainesville, MO 65655
417-679-4641
www.ozarkcountytimes.com
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\$155,000



*Derek was very thorough and quick on our
sale. Excellent communications throughout!
Really a joy to work with, we appreciate
him selling our lake house at Theodosia.
We will hire him again for another real
estate transaction in the near future.*

Katrena

2025

TOP BROKERAGE



2025

TOP AGENT



*This is the second house of ours that [Derek] has
sold, and both times we have had the house
under contract in under two weeks. This
time, in 16 hours we had the house under
contract and everything went very smooth
every step of the way. Thank you!*

Leslie & Jenny Hayes



FESTIVALS AND FUN

Area events

Fireworks displays

July 4 and Sept. 5, 2026

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 Fourth of July weekend with a show at Theodosia Marina Resort off Highway 160 on Bull Shoals Lake on Saturday, July 4, 2026. The event is usually held the Saturday before the Fourth, unless the holiday falls on a Saturday, as it is this year, when it's held that night. Also being held July 4 is the second annual "Fireworks Over the Square" in Gainesville, when the show is shot off over the downtown area. Viewing is best on and near the square. This event is always held on July 4.

The fun continues Labor Day weekend with fireworks at the Pontiac campground and Pontiac Cove Marina, also on Bull Shoals, set for

The best hometown festival around is Hootin an Hollarin, a celebration of Ozark County's pioneer history and hillbilly ways. The festival starts on the third Thursday each September and runs for three days.

Sept. 5, 2026, this year.

Bakersfest

Held in September

Bakersfest, the annual festival that celebrates everything in 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.

Hootin an Hollarin

Sept. 17-19, 2026

Ozark County's Hootin an Hollarin festival has been drawing families, friends and visitors together on the Gainesville square for more than 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, cornhole, outhouse races, a

quilt show and such silliness as hog-and husband-calling contests that keep the laughter and adrenaline flowing. Through it all, a large outdoor craft fair offers the cleverest handmade items imaginable.

Wonders of Christmas on the square

Friday, Dec. 4, 2026 (tentatively)

The annual Wonders of Christmas event in Gainesville transforms the square into a magical holiday wonderland. The festival is generally held on a Friday night in the first two weeks of December. Vendors selling a wide variety of homemade food, festive drinks and Christmas present options give guests lots to see. A Mr. and Miss Merry Christmas contest, open to area children ages 4-5, usually is held in the gazebo on the northwest side of the square. The annual Jingle Bell Parade is the largest parade in Ozark County next to the annual Hootin an Hollarin parade. The night generally wraps up with Santa and Mrs. Claus visiting with children in the gazebo and the annual lighting of the gazebo's Christmas tree. Search for "Wonders of Christmas" on Facebook or contact Allisa West at 417-543-0407 for information on the event.

**This year's event will likely be held Friday night, Dec. 4, but that date may change if high school basketball games are also scheduled that night.

Bakersfield Christmas

Bakersfield, a Saturday in December

A lot of hardworking volunteers put on a jolly good time each December with a Christmas festival in Bakersfield. The event usually opens with a pancake breakfast with Santa Claus at the Bakersfield School cafeteria, followed by other activities that, in the past, have included a parade, craft fair, Christmas tree lighting and more.

Theodosia Christmas

Saturday, Dec. 5, 2026

The Theodosia Village and others in the community hosts a Christmas tree lighting ceremony, a cookie-baking contest and Christmas parade in December each year. This year, the festivities will be held Dec. 5, 2026. Tune in to the Ozark County Times Facebook page closer to time for more details.

More events

Check out more events on the Ozark County and Theodosia Area Chamber of Commerce's ad on page 84.

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Ozark County's annual events

April 1-4, 2026:
Ozark County Chamber of Commerce
Easter Egg Hunt with drawing at The
Antler - Gainesville

April 25, 2026:
Theodosia Area Chamber
of Commerce Pickle Ball
Tournament

May 2, 2026:
Ozark County Chamber of Com-
merce Golf Tournament

July 4, 2026:
Theodosia Area Chamber
of Commerce 45th Annual
Fireworks Display

July 4, 2026:
Ozark County Fireworks
Display - Gainesville

Aug. 1, 2026:
Ozark Countywide
Yard Sale

Sept. 5, 2026:
Pontiac Fireworks -
Pontiac Cove

Sept. 17-19, 2026:
Hootin an Hollarin -
Gainesville Square

Oct. 31, 2026:
Trunk or Treat -
Gainesville Square

Dec. 4, 2026:
Wonders of Christmas -
Gainesville Square

Dec. 5, 2026:
Theodosia Area Chamber of Com-
merce Christmas Parade

Feb. 27, 2027:
Mardi Gras

*Dates may change. Check websites
for updated event information.*

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PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

Antler Package & Pizza is a great place to get a bite to eat. Wyatt Weldon, right, celebrated his first birthday at the restaurant, choosing its signature pizza over cake. Wyatt is the son of Chance and Kasandra Weldon.



ANTLER PACKAGE & PIZZA

Highway 5 north and Third Street,
Gainesville; 417-679-4598

Famous for its pizza, the Antler also offers burgers, appetizers, wings, salads, low carb options, Saturday night prime rib and more. An open patio offers guests a great outdoor dining space, while the lively dining room is a great spot to catch a meal with friends. The restaurant also has a full bar and attached package store. See ad page 9.

CASH SAVER PANTRY

Highway 160, Theodosia;
417-273-4784

This full-service supermarket in Theodosia is the perfect place to pick up food to cook in your cabin or rental with kitchen. It also includes a deli that sells a variety of sandwich fixings, famous fried chicken and picnic supplies for guests on the go. See the Theodosia Marina Resort ad on page 4.

COOKIE'S RESTAURANT

Off Highway 160, Theodosia;
417-273-4444

tmrbullshoals.net

If you plan to visit the Theodosia area on Bull Shoals Lake, be sure to make a stop at Cookie's restaurant for down home, country cooking. Cookie's is a family style restaurant featuring a menu that has something for everyone: hamburgers and hotdogs for the youngsters (and not so youngsters), salads, soups and sandwiches for the light eaters and pastas, meats and seafoods for the more discriminating palate. Folks love their full breakfast menu, daily and nightly specials, famous fried chicken, prime rib on Friday and Saturday nights, homemade pies and other desserts! The restaurant is located near the Theodosia Marina Resort entrance, just a short distance from Highway 160, with a gorgeous view of Bull Shoals Lake. Cookie's can accommodate large groups in a party room, smaller parties in the dining room and can cater for special occasions. See the Theodosia Marina Resort ad on page 4.

CROSSROADS DRIPS & DIPS

Highways 5 (North) and 160, Gainesville
417-679-4847

This combination coffee shop and ice cream parlor opened in March 2022, and it's been a hot spot ever since. The coffee menu features traditional coffee, Americanos and iced coffees, as well as frappes and hot and cold lattes with flavored syrups in a variety of creative combinations. Lunch specials are offered some days (check their Facebook page for updates), and themed drink specials change monthly. Hand-dipped ice cream cones made with Missouri-owned The Ice Cream Factory ice cream and milkshakes round out the menu. See ad, page 89.

Continued to page 88



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PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

GRANNY'S CREAMERY

163 County Road 904, Theodosia
417-545-1784

www.grannyscreamery.com

Although you can't grab lunch at this local milk barn-to-table farm, you can get some of the freshest local whole raw milk, raw cream and grass-fed beef, just steps from the farm where the cattle were raised. From a family farm that has operated in that location since 1950, customers can rest assured that they're getting "healthy milk from healthy cows the way God intended." Milk, cream and beef can be purchased at the farm or at various drop off locations in the area. Call to inquire where the closest location is for your pick up. See ad page 56.

HITCH 'N' POST

192 State Highway 5, Gainesville
417-679-0555

The Hitch 'N' Post is located on Highway 5, south of Gainesville, near the Missouri - Arkansas line. In addition to a 24-hour fueling station and Beer

If you're looking for a local place to grab a glass - or a flight - of local craft beer, glass of wine, cocktail or other drink - along with delicious food from the "Feeding Frenzy" food truck, check out Lake Bums BrewCo in Pontiac.

Belly's Bar & Grill (see page 86), the Hitch 'N' Post store features a deli with sandwiches and basic groceries. The store is open 7 days a week. See ad, page 96.

HOOKS BAR & GRILL

Price Place, Arkansas
1 mile from Pontiac Cove Marina
870-402-0078

Hooks Bar & Grill, a new restaurant in the Pontiac area, is part of The Ridge Resort and was under construction as this magazine was going to print. Owners Lee and Shannon Motzkus said their menu will include smash burgers, pork steak, salmon, chicken strips and grilled chicken with specials every day. They specialize in homemade sides and desserts and breakfast made from scratch. Watch their Facebook page for hours. See ad page 30.

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 and the famous wings, plus beer, wine and soda. Indoor and outdoor dining areas. Call to confirm

hours. See Pontiac Cove Marina's ad, page 21.

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 including its award-winning Indian Point IPA and Pine Branch porter. The "Feeding Frenzy," on-site food truck, built on a pontoon boat frame, offers weekly meal specials. Those visiting by boat can call to be picked up in the "Brewber" bus. Open year-round. See ad page 89.

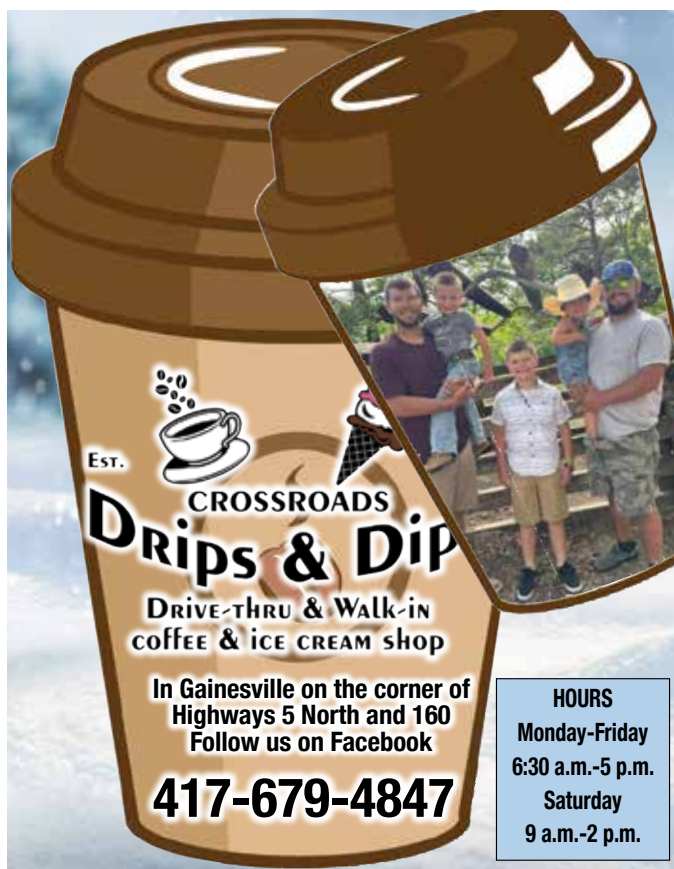
LOST WOODS HIDEAWAY

131 Lost Woods Drive, Theodosia
417-273-4877

lostwoodsgolfcourse.com/restaurant-pub

The Lost Woods Hideaway golf course in Theodosia offers up delicious meals and drinks at its on-site restaurant and pub, which is open to the public. Lunch and dinner menu options feature assorted appetizers, pizza, sandwiches and baskets, wings and kids meals. Soft drinks, sports drinks, alcohol and beer are also offered. See ad, page 39.

Continued to page 90



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PLACES TO EAT & DRINK

PIONEER STORE

5242 Highway 125, Protem
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The Pioneer Store in Protem serves up Hunt Brothers pizza, wings, burgers, deli sandwiches and more in addition to the typical convenience store offerings. The store also offers fresh baked sourdough options from The Pioneer Bread Co., including bread, scones, baked goods and more. While you're there, you can gas up your vehicle or boat, buy worms to fish with, beer, wine, propane, ice, groceries and more. See ad, page 87.

ROCKBRIDGE RAINBOW TROUT RANCH

4297 County Road 142, Rockbridge
417-679-3619, www.rockbridgemo.com

This tucked-away "casual fine-dining" gem that's famous throughout the region is located near the Bryant Creek State Park. Rockbridge Rainbow Trout Ranch is open daily for breakfast, lunch and dinner. 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, fresh trout and plate dinners. Grilled cinnamon rolls are a popular breakfast item. Reservations recommended. See ad on page 25.

ROY'S STORE

21440 State Highway 181, Dora;
417-261-2810

A magnet for hungry locals and river-floating tourists, Roy's Store has it all. The epitome of a country store, guests here can purchase gas, a candy bar, heirloom seeds, craft beer from the widest selection around, feed for their livestock, purchase a kayak, an authentic coon skin cap, handmade knife or enjoy the full service restaurant. 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, Bertie's homemade pies! They're know for miles around. A jam night is held each Tuesday from 6 to 8 p.m. You won't want to miss a stop here. See ad on page 16.



The full service restaurant at Roy's Store in Dora serves up a full menu, along with daily specials like this onion ring burger and fries. While you're there, make sure to grab a slice of Bertie's homemade pie, stocked regularly in the cooler.

TAKE 5

714 State Highway 5 South, Gainesville
417-679-0275

Take 5 restaurant and bar offers pizzas, tacos, pulled pork sandwiches, chicken wings, nachos and much more. The facility boasts a large covered patio, pool tables, and has karaoke or live music on Fridays and Saturdays. See ad on page 89.

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, daily specials, on-site smoked ribs and rotisserie chicken and more. Breakfast, lunch or supper choices are available for takeout in this full service supermarket. See ad on page 34.



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An aerial photograph of three green barns with red roofs, arranged in a row. The barns are situated on a grassy field. The text "TRIPLE TREASURES MARKETPLACE" is overlaid in large, bold, white letters with a black outline at the top. Below it, the text "2nd Saturday in May and October • 10 a.m.-4 p.m." is written in a smaller, italicized font.

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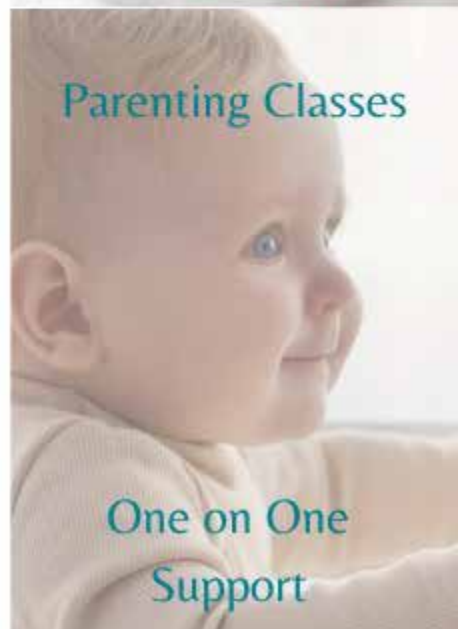


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Photo submitted by Emree Hardison

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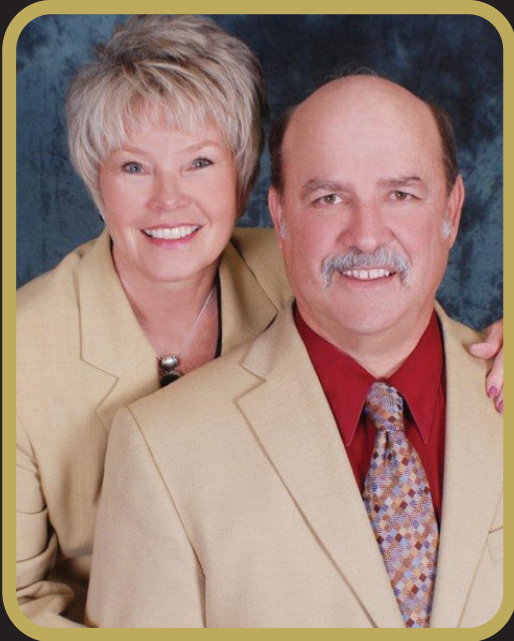


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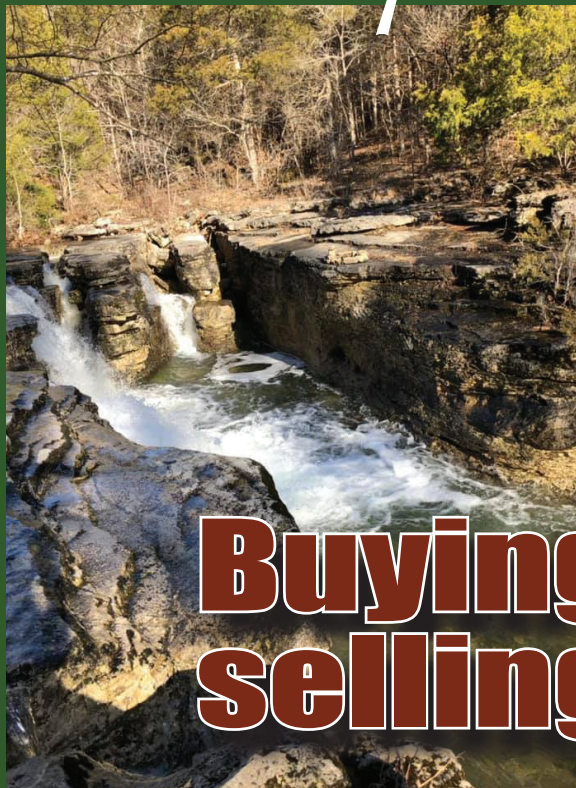


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