

# University of Minnesota Duluth - Rec Sports Outdoor Program

## Discover the Ozarks: Backpack the Buffalo National River Trail, Arkansas

Warmth, beauty, and fun are all a part of this late winter getaway to the Buffalo National River (part of the National Park System). Start the trip on the upper reaches of the Buffalo with 500 foot bluffs as we pass by small rapids, old homesteads, and wildlife. Backpack to hidden waterfalls, cemeteries, caves, and relic farms beckon as we explore.

### HERE'S WHAT TO EXPECT:

We will begin our journey here in Duluth and travel together as a group to the put-in on the Buffalo River in Ponca, AR. While on the Buffalo, the group will backpack and explore the rich human history and natural history. This is an introductory trip with several elevation changes along the way. Anticipate backpacking on the average about 10 miles per day. This will allow for various stops to hike and relax. Evenings will be spent at camping in the woods, telling stories around the campfire, and sleeping in tents.

### WHEN:

Pre-Trip Meeting: Tuesday, March 2, 2010, 5pm SpHC 153  
Trip Departure: 4pm Friday, March 12, 2010  
Trip Returns: 2pm Sunday, March 21, 2010

### PREPARATION:

- *Equipment* – attached is an equipment list that includes what we provide and what you need to obtain. **Follow this closely**, it is based upon extensive experience. Plan on weather that could range from the mid-60's to the 40's and rainy (though it could be higher or lower depending upon weather systems at that time).
- *Fitness & skills* – this trip is an introductory level trip in which most anyone can participate. It is recommended that do some training before the trip begins, and that you are fit enough that you could be physically active for numerous full days. This training is just walking around with a loaded backpack on uneven terrain. There will be time for breaks and relaxation, but we will need to keep moving daily.
- *Health & Liability Form* – complete these forms and return them no later than the scheduled pre-trip meeting.

### THE OUTDOOR PROGRAM PROVIDES:

All group gear, quality paddling equipment, food while on the trail, transportation, and expert instruction.

### COST:

UMD Students: \$465/ Others: \$725  
Registration Deadline: Noon on Friday, February 26  
Sign up early to ensure you get a spot on the trip!

### TRANSPORTATION:

We will be travelling the 800 miles to the river in a University van. If you would like to meet us at our starting point, we can make arrangements.



### GOALS:

- Have fun with other people who like the outdoors
- Discover or practice backpacking skills on a spectacular river
- Explore a beautiful and rich environment

### RESOURCES:

There is a lot to learn about the Buffalo – the more you know, the more you can enjoy the area. Check out the Buffalo National River at <http://www.nps.gov/buff/>

### GENERAL INFO:

Phone: (218)726-7128  
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**The Real Classroom is Outside...Get Into It!**

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## Discover the Ozarks: Canoe the Buffalo National River

# Itinerary

This itinerary is designed to be flexible based on many factors that include: weather, water levels, skill levels, and interests. Listed are highlights of what will be seen and done.

### Tuesday, March 2, 5:00pm

Mandatory Pre-Trip Meeting in Sports and Health Center 153 Conference Room. Introductions, group expectations, itinerary, safety, physical preparation, limitations, equipment, meals, and final payment due at this meeting.

### Friday, March 12, 4pm

Depart from the front of the Sports and Health Center on the U.M.D. campus. Drive to Arkansas with gas stops, dinner, and breakfast along the way. Each person pays for their own meals. Sleep in the van (so bring a pillow).

### Saturday, March 13 9am

Arrive at Lost Valley Park. This will be a day of hiking and cave exploring in the park as well as organizing gear and working on backpacking skills on a part of the trail. This will be the time to transition from van travelling to hiking. Camp at Lost Valley.

### Sunday, March 14

Break camp and depart for the trail. Travel to Pruitt to begin our adventure along the Buffalo River Trail. We will spend the day enjoying spectacular views of the river and visiting old cemeteries. After 10 miles of backpacking we will find a campsite just off the trail.

### Monday, March 15

Backpack and explore along the way.

Will spend the first part of the day on the Buffalo River Trail getting a chance to see some Elk before crossing the river into the Ponca Wilderness area. We will continue our way along the Old River Trail to the Chimney Rock Trail and finally to Centerpoint Trail where we will spend the night along the trail (about 10 miles).

### Tuesday, March 16

Spend the morning at Big Bluff enjoying an amazing view of the river and then hike to Jim Bluff where we will set up camp for the night (1.5 miles). We will then spend the rest of the day exploring much of the Ponca Wilderness Area. We will also walk back in time and explore old houses and school buildings., day with a hike up Jackie Hollow to check out amazing ice formations, and end the day by exploring Hemmed-In Hollow.

### Wednesday, March 17

Its back to backpacking along the beach trail down to Erbie where we will once again walk back in time and explore the historical site of Erbie before moving on to the Erbie campground (12 miles).

### Thursday, March 18

It will be back to the river once again as we return once again to the Buffalo River Trail. Another farmstead and cemetery will be passed and after another 10 miles of backpacking we will find a cozy spot to sleep.

### Friday, March 19

If we are up for an adventure we will take a side trip down Indian Creek Trail back to the Buffalo River Trail, catch a few last glimpses of the river and camp at Steel Creek (10 miles)

### Saturday, March 20

Finishing backpacking the Buffalo River Trail down to Ponca Landing where we will end our trip and. By 8pm depart for Duluth.

### Sunday, March 21

Arrive back in Duluth by 2pm - put gear away as a group.

#### INTERESTING INFO:

- The Buffalo River is in the Ozark Mountains
- The river was preserved as the last free-flowing (no dams) river in Arkansas in 1972.
- To help preserve the river, we will practice minimum impact camping.
- The cliffs and caves found around the river are a result of the erosion of ancient sea-bed rocks.
- Many of the hiking trails are relic trails of days gone by – everything from horse trails to wagon trails.
- The spring migration of birds will be in full force when we are on the Buffalo – birds heading north are passing through.
- Even though we will be in snake country, it is unlikely that we will have the opportunity to see them – still a bit too cold.
- The cave that we will explore in Lost Valley is spectacular – narrow passages lead to a large room with a waterfall coming from overhead.
- There are no portages on this river – all rapids are fairly simple with, at most, basic maneuvering needed.

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# Equipment List

On this trip the weather may vary from warm and sunny with a high of 65 degrees to cold, rainy, and windy and in the 40 degree range. Plan your clothing items so they can be worn over each other in layers. During the coldest possible weather, you may be wearing nearly all of your layers. Pack equipment in small duffel bags or stuff sacs. Bring a smaller day pack for easy access articles. The majority of your personal gear will be kept in Duluth Packs (lined with heavy duty garbage bags).

### WE FURNISH:

- Maps
- Folding saw
- Cook kit
- Food & menus
- Toilet paper/Trowel
- Tents
- Camp stoves/fuel
- Cooking utensil kit
- Matches
- First-aid kit
- Utility ropes
- Water filters
- Tarps

### YOU NEED TO BRING:

- Sleeping pad (closed cell or self-inflating)
- Sleeping bag (to 20<sup>o</sup>) in stuff sac w/plastic liners
- Broad brimmed hat for sun protection
- Unbreakable eating utensils (plate, cup, bowl, fork, spoon)
- Backpack (4500 cub in. or larger)
- Wool or fleece winter hat
- 1 pair light shoes
- 1 pair hiking shoes or boots
- 2 pair loose fitting pants
- Lightweight wool or fleece shirt
- Wool or fleece shirt/sweater
- Spring/fall weight jacket
- 3 cotton t-shirts
- 4 pair wool socks
- Long underwear (not cotton)
- Spare prescription glasses
- 1 quart water bottle
- Soap/shampoo/hygiene kit
- Sunscreen and hand lotion
- Flashlight or Headlamp w/ fresh batteries
- Pillow and food money for van
- Gloves or mittens
- Wind breaker/paddling jacket
- 2 piece rain suit
- Belt
- Pocket knife
- Small towel
- 2 pair shorts
- Underwear
- Sunglasses
- Safety strap for glasses
- Toothbrush/paste
- Bandana
- Band-aids and moleskin

### RENTAL:

If you don't have some of the major items, you can rent from the Rec Sports Outdoor Program Rental Center at a 10% discount from normal rates.

### EQUIPMENT TIPS:

- Fleece and wool are great insulators – they even work when wet.
- Quality rain gear really helps you enjoy inclement weather. Get something good.
- Long underwear should be a synthetic material, not cotton. If you don't have any, most outdoor stores have appropriate supplies.
- Wool socks work best because they are durable and warm.

### EXTRAS YOU CAN BRING:

Personal tent or tarp for sleeping on sand/gravel beaches, camera, journal, pencil/pen, book to read, field guides, personal river guide book, map, compass, and gloves to protect your hands from blisters while paddling. Camera will need to be in a durable, waterproof container.

### DO NOT BRING:

- MP3 Players (except for van ride)
- Valuables
- Recreational drugs or alcohol

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