



↑ On the ledges of the Goat Trail.

pages of *National Geographic*. After the Buffalo was designated the country's first national river in 1978, she was forced to move at the age of 87. Today, visitors can see the dwelling that documents her pioneer lifestyle.

Soon after leaving Granny's cabin, hikers will reach Sneeds Creek, a pleasant open area that boasts excellent camping possibilities. From this point it is possible to intersect with various other pathways in the Ponca Wilderness, including the Old River Trail, Sneeds Creek Trail, and Hemmed-in Hollow Trail. The latter pathway heads north for a couple of kilometers to reach one of the region's most impressive natural wonders, Hemmed-in-Hollow Falls, the tallest cascade in Arkansas (see opposite page).

From the Falls back to the Centerpoint Trailhead is 8.7 km (5.4 mi.), most of which is uphill. However, the challenge of the gradient is mitigated by lingering thoughts of dazzling bluffs, storied homesteads, and plunging waterfalls. Irrespective of the length of one's journey,

Buffalo River country is a place that inspires thoughts of return visits. Its irresistible mixture of nature and history leaves visitors in little doubt as to why it is commonly referred to as the jewel of Arkansas's Ozark Mountains.



## GOOD TO KNOW

### START/FINISH

📍 Out-and-back from the Centerpoint Trailhead north of Ponca, Arkansas.

### SEASON

Year-round

### CONDITIONS

A well maintained, easy-to-follow path, but caution should be exercised when moving along the ledges.

### ACCOMMODATION

Camping is possible near the junction of the Centerpoint and Goat Trails. For those that extend their hikes to the Buffalo River, there are also good campsites available near Sneed's Creek.

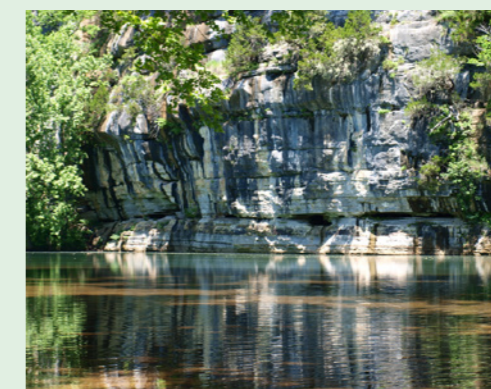
## HELPFUL HINTS

**SCENIC CASCADE** Further on from Big Bluff is the highest waterfall between the Rocky and the Appalachian mountains, a cascade in the Hemmed-in-Hollow valley. The 64-m-high (209-ft.) falls on the Buffalo National River is best seen at the end of winter or the beginning of spring, when the rainfall is at its highest.

## BACKGROUND

**RIVER SOURCES** The Ozark Mountains run through three U.S. states: Arkansas, Missouri, and Oklahoma. Their name originates from the French term *aux arcs*, which was used by map makers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries to refer to a particular curve in the Arkansas River.

Also running through the Ozarks in north Arkansas is the Buffalo National River. In 1972, the Buffalo was the first waterway to be deemed a national river. This classification forbids the building of dams or other industrial structures throughout the whole length of the 217-km (135-mi.) river to protect its natural character and surrounding flora and fauna.



## FLORA & FAUNA

**WILDLIFE** Hunted to extinction in the 19th century, elk were reintroduced to the Ozarks between 1981 and 1985 and their numbers continue to thrive. Elks shed their antlers in later winter or early spring, and within days of dropping, they begin to grow back again.

