



GOVERNOR OF MISSOURI

JEFFERSON CITY

65102

February 7, 2014

JEREMIAH W. (JAY) NIXON  
GOVERNOR

P.O. Box 720  
(573) 751-3222

The Honorable Sally Jewell  
U.S. Department of the Interior  
1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

RE: Draft General Management Plan for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways

Dear Secretary Jewell:

I am writing with regard to the National Parks Service's (NPS) proposed General Management Plan for the Ozark National Scenic Riverways, a unit in the NPS created to preserve the Current and Jacks Fork Rivers in Missouri. These spring-fed Ozark rivers have been enjoyed for many years by visitors from throughout the United States, and I support efforts to ensure that they will continue to be enjoyed for decades to come. Proposed Alternative B appears to outline the most reasonable approach to accomplishing this goal, but the NPS must incorporate flexibility into any plan it implements.

Missourians have long supported state parks, and have shown that support by making Missouri one of only four states with a dedicated sales tax to fund parks. With this support, the Missouri state parks system has become one of the top parks systems in the country, winning awards that include Missouri's status as the number one trails state in America. Missourians understand that we hold these valuable resources in trust for future generations, as well as for current use and enjoyment.

It is important to note that without our state's donation of Missouri's first three state parks – Alley Spring, Big Spring and Round Spring – there would be no Ozark National Scenic Riverways. This gift from Missouri to the United States was not universally popular among Missourians then, nor was the process by which lands in the Riverways were acquired. And many of these sentiments remain today, reflected in many of the strong responses to the NPS' proposal. Some of these responses include a call for the transfer of ownership of the Riverways to the State of Missouri. This does not seem the most prudent step in protecting and allowing continued use of the Riverways.

Floating, fishing, hiking, camping, horseback riding, and other such recreation along the Riverways have provided visitors with enjoyable outdoor opportunities. And these activities have a significant positive impact on Missouri's outdoor economy. But some of these activities, in the wrong location or in too heavy a concentration, can pose a threat to the Riverways. Similarly, there are acceptable levels of activity that can accommodate both enjoyment and preservation of these treasures. Alternative B strikes the most appropriate balance between these two, provided that it also

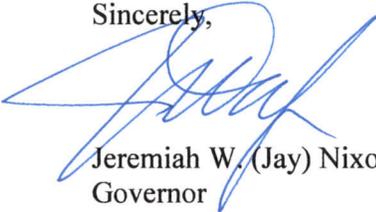
The Honorable Sally Jewell  
February 7, 2014  
Page 2

contains the flexibility that is necessary and appropriate in managing a resource such as the Riverways.

Missouri is an integral partner in the management and preservation of this area. We have seen significant investment in the protection and enjoyment of the Riverways, both by public and private entities. In recent years, the Missouri State Parks system acquired Current River State Park, an 800-acre park located about two miles from Round Spring. We also last year acquired a new park in the area, a 330-acre tract of land on Sinking Creek, which flows into the Current River a few hundred yards downstream from the new park. Missouri State Parks also manages Roger Pryor Pioneer Backcountry, a 60,000-acre privately owned forest that fronts the Current River for 15 miles and features 30 miles of hiking trails. And Montauk State Park, located at the headwaters of the Current River, is a premier trout fishing destination. There can be little doubt, therefore, as to my interest in ensuring that this area of our country provides the same tremendous outdoor opportunities to our children and grandchildren that it has given to us.

Among the alternatives presented, Alternative B provides the best course for continued and future enjoyment of this treasure, provided that you allow for flexibility to give entities and individuals an opportunity to demonstrate that the activities they propose do not pose a risk to the Riverways.

Sincerely,



Jeremiah W. (Jay) Nixon  
Governor