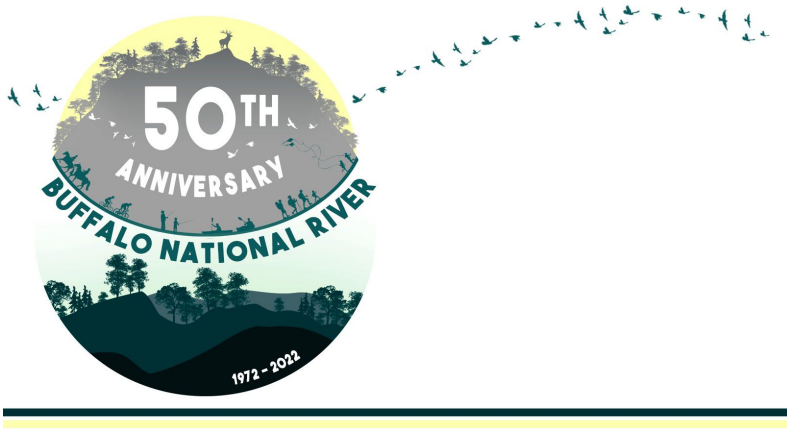
STATE OF ARKANSAS
*House of Representatives*

# Arkansas House Newsletter

**June 16, 2022**

## Celebrating 50 Years of the Buffalo National River




With more than 800,000 visitors a year, the Buffalo National River is one of the leading tourist destinations in Arkansas.
This year, the Buffalo National River celebrates its 50th anniversary as a unit of the National Park Service.

Former Congressman John Paul Hammerschmidt and former Senators J. William Fulbright and John L. McClellan introduced the first Buffalo National River park legislation in 1967. The final park legislation was introduced in 1971, and hearings were held in late 1971. In February 1972, Congress voted to establish the nation's first "national river."

President Richard M. Nixon signed the law to put the river under the protection of the National Park Service 100 years after the establishment of Yellowstone National Park, the first national park.

It is one of the few remaining free-flowing rivers in the lower forty-eight states. It runs through Newton, Searcy, Marion, and Baxter counties.

The Buffalo National River is one of the state's and indeed the nation's premier rivers and is a source of scenic beauty, a unique habitat for local biota, and an agricultural resource to the state as a whole. It is essential that we preserve of this irreplaceable natural and cultural resource for future generations of Arkansans.

In the 2021 Regular Session, the General Assembly passed Act 785 which creates the Buffalo River Conservation Committee to establish measurable objectives and lead partnership projects to benefit water quality and resource management in the Buffalo River Watershed.

The committee is tasked with conducting an annual review of the watershed and making recommendations for updates of the plan to the Governor.

We also passed Act 541 which creates the Buffalo River Community Development special license plate. Fees from the license plate benefit the development corporation.

If you've never floated the Buffalo River, this summer provides a perfect opportunity. The National Park Service is hosting 50th-anniversary celebratory events throughout the year. Visit nps.gov for more information.