

The Ozark National Scenic “Karstways”

*R. Scott House
Ozark National Scenic Riverways*

Abstract

The Ozark National Scenic Riverways (National Park Service) was created in 1964 ostensibly to preserve 134 miles of the free-flowing Current and Jacks Fork Rivers. But the stated purpose of the enabling legislation included the preservation of springs and caves. Today some of the largest springs in the National Park System and over 300 caves lie within the Ozark National Scenic Riverways. Due to the priority of managing the river resources, management of the cave and karst resources has not always been consistent or funded. Nonetheless, standards for management have evolved over the years. A cave management plan (and subsequent cave management team) in cooperation with donated services have created a management system that seems to be working (although much room for improvement exists). An overview of the resources and the history of management will be discussed.