

**BUFFALO RIVER
SURVEY OF VOTERS**

Study #2273
412 voters from Baxter, Madison, Marion, Newton, and Searcy counties in Arkansas
Margin of error: ±4.8 percentage points

Selzer & Company
September 11-13, 2023
Weighted by age and county

Percentages may not add to 100% due to rounding.

A. Are you currently registered to vote in [NAME OF COUNTY FROM SAMPLE] County, Arkansas?

100	Yes	Continue
-	No	Terminate
-	Refused/not sure	Terminate

1. I'd like to begin with your overall satisfaction with your experience living in this part of northwest Arkansas. Would you say you are very satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied?

Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very satisfied	Mostly satisfied	Mostly dissatisfied	Very dissatisfied	Not sure
89	9	51	38	5	3	2

2. I want to ask about some specific elements of life in your area. For each, please tell me if you are very satisfied, mostly satisfied, mostly dissatisfied, or very dissatisfied. **(Read list. Rotate.)**

	Satisfied	Dissatisfied	Very Satisfied	Mostly Satisfied	Mostly Dissatisfied	Very Dissatisfied	Not Sure
A. Outdoor recreation opportunities like parks	88	10	55	33	8	2	3
B. Trails for walking	85	6	45	40	4	2	10
C. Trails for bicycling	61	18	24	37	14	4	21
D. The natural beauty of the area	99	1	83	16	1	1	-
E. Property tax rates	70	26	25	45	14	12	4
F. Enough retail and service businesses to serve the community	72	27	25	48	20	7	1
G. Restaurants and lodging to serve residents and visitors	74	24	28	46	20	4	3
H. Access to the Buffalo River for boating and other water sports	86	5	46	40	4	1	9
I. Access to the Buffalo River for fishing	84	6	48	36	4	1	10
J. Access to the Buffalo River for hunting	65	11	29	36	6	4	24
K. The overall health of the Buffalo River	81	9	35	46	5	4	10

3. Do you tend to think the best days for the Buffalo River are [ahead] or [in the past]? **(Alternate which option is read first.)**

Ahead	In the past	Not sure
50	41	9

4. How important is the Buffalo River to you and your family’s everyday life—very important, fairly important, just somewhat important, or not important?

Very/fairly important	Just somewhat/not important	Very important	Fairly important	Just somewhat important	Not important	Not sure
45	54	25	21	33	21	-

5. Currently, the Buffalo River has a designation as a national river, but it is not designated as a national park and preserve. As a national river, the Buffalo River is currently protected from industrial uses and other things that would change the natural character of the river or disrupt the plants and animals that live in or near the river.

Were you aware or not aware that the Buffalo River currently has this designation as a national river?

Aware	Not aware	Not sure
74	26	-

6. Do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea for the river and the public land around it to become a national park and preserve?

Good idea	Bad idea	Not sure
61	32	7

(Alternate asking Q.7 and Q.8 first every other interview.)

7. I’m going to mention some things that would change if the Buffalo River and the public land around it were declared a national park and preserve. For each, please tell me if this is something that would be very attractive to you, nice to have but not that important, or not needed. **(Read list. Rotate.)**

	Very attractive	Nice but not that important	Not needed	Not sure
A. Improved roads that access the river	49	31	19	-
B. Paved parking lots near trails, campsites, and boat ramps	33	39	27	1
C. New public restrooms	57	29	13	1
D. New walking and hiking trails and improvements to existing trails	46	35	18	1
E. More opportunities for local businesses to serve the increased numbers of people who want to enjoy the river	47	34	18	-
F. More management to retain the natural habitat of native trees, plants, and wildlife	61	20	19	-

8. I'm going to mention some things that would **not** change if the Buffalo River and the public land around it were declared a national park and preserve. For each, please tell me if it is very important, fairly important, or not that important. **(Read list. Rotate.)**

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not that Important	Not sure
A. No private land would be taken to create the national park and preserve	82	12	5	-
B. The current hunting rules would apply the same as they do now	63	20	14	3
C. There would be no new taxes for residents to pay to support the national park and preserve	75	14	10	1
D. Rules to protect the waterway from pollution and industrial uses would apply the same as they do now	84	10	6	1
E. Local businesses, such as outfitters and river guides, would be grandfathered into any new rules affecting commercial businesses	65	20	13	1

(Alternate asking Q.9 and Q.10 first every other interview.)

9. Now, I'm going to mention some reasons to think a change to create the Buffalo River National Park & Preserve would be a **good** thing. For each, please tell me if this is an excellent reason to make this change, a good reason, or not a good reason. **(Read list. Rotate.)**

	Excellent	Good	Not good	Not sure
A. A national park and preserve designation would provide needed amenities to keep the area beautiful as more people visit one of Arkansas's gems	45	35	19	1
B. Some say people are loving the Buffalo River to death. With the oversight that would come with a national park and preserve designation, the natural beauty of the area and the culture of the people who live here would be protected	43	38	19	1
C. Heavier use of current unpaved roads is causing erosion into the river, so the area would benefit from expert assistance to keep the river clean	45	35	19	-
D. As a national park and preserve, the Buffalo River could be a greater economic engine to the counties it flows through, which would be good for business	37	40	22	-
E. The number of visitors to the area has already increased, and there are not enough rangers to watch out for the water and the land. A national park and preserve designation would bring new resources to better manage the area	46	32	23	-
F. The national park and preserve would bring more positive attention to this area of Arkansas	33	36	29	1
G. The best way to preserve access to hunting is by a national park and preserve designation	22	40	35	3

10. Now, I'm going to mention some reasons to think a change to create the Buffalo River National Park & Preserve would be a **bad** thing. For each, please tell me if this is an excellent reason to oppose this change, a good reason, or not a good reason. **(Read list. Rotate.)**

	Excellent	Good	Not good	Not sure
A. It would be best to just leave things as they are now	25	35	38	2
B. This sounds like big government	20	21	59	1
C. There are already too many visitors, so this would just make it worse	15	25	58	2
D. A national park and preserve designation would bring businesses to the surrounding area that are too commercial or touristy, changing the character of the Buffalo River	20	29	49	2
E. The Park Service might institute more fees and permits so the river is used responsibly	19	35	44	2
F. Paving roads and installing new signage will change the character of the Buffalo River so it feels less rustic	18	35	47	-
G. Additional visitors may mean an increase in demand for alcohol sales, which will be a challenge for dry counties in the area	14	26	59	2

11a. Now that you've thought about it a bit more, do you think it would be a good idea or a bad idea for the river and the public land around it to become a national park and preserve?

	Good idea	Bad idea	Not sure
	63	34	3
Q.6	61	32	7

11b. Would you say you think this is a bad idea all around, or something you might like if it did not affect you personally? **(Based on those who said "Bad idea" in Q.11a; n=143.)**

	Bad idea all around	Might like if not affected personally	Not sure
	88	9	3
Based on all (n=412)	30	3	1

12. How long have you lived in [NAME OF COUNTY]—less than two years, three to five years, six to 10 years, 11 to 20 years, or more than 20 years?

Less than two years	3-5 years	6-10 years	11-20 years	More than 20 years	Not sure
7	12	12	20	49	1

13. Did you happen to vote in the elections for members of the U.S. Congress last year?

Yes, voted	No, did not vote	Not sure
81	17	2

14. If there were a vote in Congress to designate the river as the Buffalo River National Park & Preserve, would you want your member of Congress to vote for or against it?

Vote for	Vote against	Not sure
64	33	3

These final questions are asked just to see what cross-section of Arkansas voters we are interviewing.

100a. **(If not in sample, ask:) What is your age? (RECORD ACTUAL AGE AND CODE WITH APPROPRIATE AGE GROUP. IF RESPONDENT REFUSES, OFFER AGE GROUPS.)**

b. **CODE PROPER CATEGORY:**

8	Under 25
10	25 to 34
12	35 to 44
11	45 to 54
9	55 to 59
12	60 to 64
39	65 and over
-	Refused/not sure

101. What is the last grade of school you completed?

32	High school graduate or less
23	Some college
14	Associate's (two-year) degree
19	Bachelor's (four-year) degree
11	Postgraduate work or degree
1	Refused/not sure

102. Do you have at least one child under age 18 living in your household?

24	Yes
76	No
1	Refused/not sure

103. In politics as of today, do you consider yourself a Republican, Democrat, or independent?

47	Republican
12	Democrat
35	Independent
1	Other (VOL)
5	Refused/not sure

104. Is your total annual household income before taxes above or below \$50,000 per year?

Above **ASK b**
 Below **ASK c**

b. Is it above or below \$70,000 per year?	38 Above (\$70,000+)
	14 Below (\$50,000-\$69,999)
c. Is it above or below \$30,000 per year?	18 Above (\$30,000-\$49,999)
	19 Below (<\$30,000)
	12 Refused/not sure

105. What is your current employment status—do you work full-time, part-time, or are you not working? **(If not working, ask:)** Are you retired, a homemaker, a student, or are you temporarily unemployed and looking for work?

- 42 Employed full-time
- 9 Employed part-time
- 38 Retired
- 3 Homemaker
- 1 Student
- 3 Temporarily unemployed
- 4 Refused/not sure

106a. With what racial or ethnic group do you identify most—White, Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American, or some other group?

106b. **(If not Hispanic, ask:)** Are you from a Latino, Hispanic, or Spanish-speaking background? **(If yes, code AC=3 in b. Then reclassify all into c.)**

- 86 White
- Black
- 4 Hispanic
- Asian
- 4 Native American
- 1 Other
- 1 Multi-racial (VOL)
- 5 Refused/not sure

107a. If a researcher were to contact you, would you be willing to talk more about your responses to this survey, or would you prefer not?

- 40 Yes, willing to talk more
- 60 No, prefer not

- b. If yes, ask first name: _____
- c. Verify phone number: _____
- d. Email address _____

108a. Respondent sex:

(If not in sample, ask:) What is your gender or sex? **(Let respondent volunteer.)**

- 51 Male
- 48 Female
- 1 Other (specify:)

109. **County from sample**

- 47 Baxter
- 17 Madison
- 17 Marion
- 9 Newton
- 9 Searcy