

BUFFALO NATIONAL RIVER

ARKANSAS

South Central Fire Learning Network

4,000 acres



LANDSCAPE PARTNERS

Arkansas Game and Fish
Commission

National Park Service

Rocky Mountain Elk
Foundation

The Nature Conservancy –
Arkansas

USDA Forest Service

LANDSCAPE GOALS

The goals of the Erbie-Pruitt project are to preserve native plant communities, restore species and habitat diversity and reduce the accumulation of hazardous fuel levels.

Trees cut for railroad ties were once slid into the river at Tie Slide on the Buffalo River

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THIS LANDSCAPE ENCOMPASSES the stretch of the Buffalo River between the Erbie and Pruitt access points, and lies within the boundaries of Buffalo National River managed by the National Park Service. The terrain is varied, with ridges rising up to 500 feet above the level of the river, and vegetation consisting of an oak-hickory woodland mosaic interspersed with cedar glade, post oak savanna, short leaf pine, river riparian, open fields and historic landscape areas. About 20 percent of the landscape falls into Fire Regime Condition Class (FRCC) 3, meaning that it is highly departed from its historic condition.

Partners have invested resources to develop a project focused on ecological restoration and the maintenance of cultural landscapes. Priorities include a review of scientific research, identification and filling of data gaps, and collaboration. The team is developing vegetation maps and assessing historic data that will guide an adaptive management strategy. Participation in the Fire Learning Network has allowed the team to refine its work and build a common vision with its partners in restoration, and provides opportunities to share and synthesize data and information.

Fire has now been reintroduced to approximately 4,000 acres on a four-year return interval. In the coming year, mechanical treatments will be applied to about 140 acres, and prescribed fire to about 2,000 acres, including 1,680 acres of woodland, 80 acres of native grassland and 300 acres of open fields. As treatments return the vegetation composition to more natural conditions the fire return interval will be extended, to mimic natural processes.

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