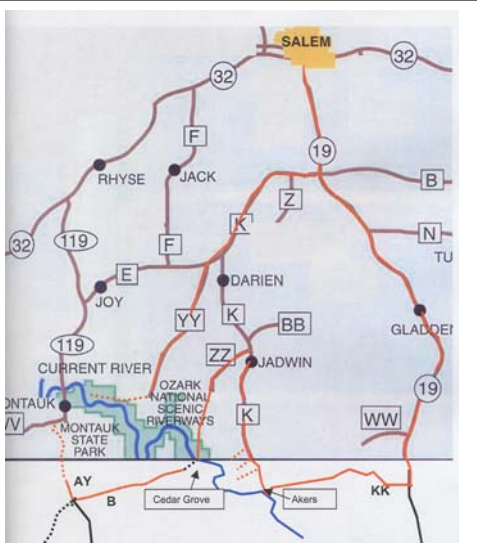


Southwest Auto Tour Rivers

Devils Well, Ozark National Scenic Riverways, Akers Ferry, Current River, Welch Cave and Montauk State Park



MILEAGE

- 0.0** From the junction of Hwy. 32-72 and Hwy. 19, drive south on Hwy. 19.
- 4.4** Junction Hwy. 19, Hwy. B, and Hwy. K. Continue straight on Hwy. 19 even though it says Akers to the right.
- 9.6** **Gladden Creek Bridge** called Standing Rock Bridge by the locals because the rocks appear to be standing on end.
- 11.1** **Gladden, Mo** – No facilities.
- 16.0** **Silver Arrow Canoe Rental** has gas. On the right is **Persimmon Pond**, a natural sinkhole pond.
- 17.1** Entering Shannon County-the county seat is Eminence.
- 18.0** Hwy. KK-Turn right onto Hwy. KK.

Devils Well is a sinkhole over 200 feet deep and partly filled with water. The opening drops about 100 feet to the largest known permanent underground lake in the US. Devils Well actually serves as a reservoir for **Cave Springs**. Water volume is about 22 million gallons/day emerging at Cave Springs about one mile south.

- 20.0** Go left on the road to **Devils Well**. The 1.5 drive to the well is a pretty drive on a gravel road. Keep on the main road until the end. Allow 30 minutes. There is a pit-latrine available. You'll notice a depression in the land and a small walkway. That is the well. When you get to the bottom of the steps, push the light switch. You will not see the lights go on, but continue to the bottom and the well below will be lit. It is covered with grating.
- 23.1** Leaving Devils Well turn left on KK.
- 26.4** Entering **ONSR**



Ozark National Scenic Riverways was designated in 1964 by the US Congress as a National Park. It includes Current and Jacks Fork Rivers – the first rivers in the US to receive national protection. 134 miles of rivers provide year-round canoeing, john-boating and many other recreational activities. It has over 300 recorded caves within the boundaries. The rivers are considered class one and two streams. Current River – the most spring-fed ozark river can be floated any time of year.

24.7 **Jason's Place Campground** and **Larimore's General Store**.

25.0 At the Jct. of Hwy. KK and Hwy. K is

26.9 **Akers Ferry and Canoe Rental**. There is a general store. Park and walk down to the river to see the ferry. Akers was a logging community over 100 years ago. Akers Ferry currently is one of only two active two-car ferries left in the United States. The trip across **Current River** is actually downstream. It became electric in the 50s and operated by a 3 hp motor on the return. **Hwy. K K ends. Turn right from Akers onto K.** The top of the hill is called **Devils Backbone**-the ridge between **Current River** on the left and **Gladden Creek** on the right.

28.5 Turn Left. Go Rt. at the fork. The gravel road is about 0.6 miles to **Welch Cave and Spring** parking. Go right at the fork. Allow about 45 min to 1 hour. The ¾ mile walk to the spring and cave is a little wooly, but well worth it. Over the years, nature has returned the output more directly into the **Current River**.



Welch's Cave and Spring is beautiful and right on the **Current River**. **Welch's Cave and Spring** was settled by Thomas Welch. They built a gristmill and ran a country store beside the blue spring coming from the cave. His son, Current River Welch, and his grandson, Walter Welch of Salem, also lived there. The spring is the 8th largest in MO with an average output of 75 million gallons of water per day.

In 1916, Dr C. H. Diehl bought the 80 acres thinking that a health resort for asthma sufferers could use the mineral laden air from the cave. A rock building was built at the entrance to the cave with tunnels and pipes leading to the patient rooms to allow them to breathe in cool air. Unfortunately, Dr. Diehl's idea was not successful. In 1967, the property was purchased by Ozark National Scenic Riverways.

- 29.8** Leaving **Welch's Spring** road, turn left onto Hwy. K.
- 36.1** **Jadwin, Mo** Post Office
- 36.4** Turn left onto Hwy. ZZ. You will see **Jadwin Canoe Rental** on the right as you turn.
- 40.0** **Whispering Pines Trail Ride**
- 41.0** Returning to **Ozark National Scenic Riverways**.
- 41.4** **Cedar Grove** – Continue across the low water bridge. There are pit-latrines on both sides of the river. A great stop to enjoy **Current River**.
- 41.6** Continue following the road. After you cross over the bridge, you can turn left to access Murray Campground and a nice swimming area and a gravel bar with camping, and picnicking with grills.
- 41.6** Turn right onto Hwy. B (if you go straight there is camping on Big Creek)
- 44.1** Entering Texas County- Houston is the county seat.
- 45.3** Hwy. B and Hwy. AY – Turn right onto Hwy. AY. This road will be undeveloped for about the last 2 miles before Montauk.
- 46.7** **Spencer Saw Mill** – The timber industry has an important industry in the community.
- 47.0** Turn right onto Ashley Creek Road.

47.2 South Ashley Creek

47.3 Bo's Hollow

An auto museum and village. Call for hours to be open. Model A rides are available. 573-548-2429



Photo compliment of Rural Missouri, B McEowen

48.0 North Ashley Creek

49.0 Ashley Creek Rd – Go left onto Dent Co Rd 667.

49.2 Dent Co Rd 667 and Hwy. VV—Turn right.

49.6 Hwy. VV and Hwy. 119 – Turn right.

49.8 Entering **Montauk State Park**. Continue on the main Road.

Montauk State Park is 1353 acres at the junction of Pigeon Creek and Montauk Springs, which form the headwaters of the famed **Current River**. The springs flow an average of 53 million gallons each day—the 11th largest output in Missouri. A popular place for anglers known for fine trout fishing—it formerly housed 4 gristmills. One still stands today, and contains its original machinery. It is available for tours.



Montauk State Park also is host of the **Rose Holland Trout Derby**, a popular event held in October. It has a great restaurant (of course trout is on the menu), and lodging facilities. 800-334-6946 or 573-548-2434

Don't forget to feed the fish!
One of the largest fish hatcheries in the state is operated in the park

50.0 Crossing the **Current River**.

50.3 Montauk Mill – open for tours.

50.5 Turn left to visit Montauk Springs. It is 0.7 miles from the main road. Park and take the path to the small group of springs forming the headwaters of the Current River.

52.0 Turn right out of the parking lot back to the main road.

52.8 Turn left at the main road.

52.9 **Montauk Lodge** has a store with fishing gear and grocery items, snack bar and restaurant.

53.0 Entrance to the main campground in the park. Continue on the main road. As you leave the park, the road becomes gravel. The drive is beautiful and parallels the **Current River**.

54.5 Keep left. To the right is Tan-Vat—another river access. This is the farthest upstream that canoes can put in to the river. The name refers to earlier tanning of animal skins.

55.6 The road to Baptist Access. **Rocky J Ranch Trail Rides** is ¾ mile past Baptist Access on the right, 573-548-3350. **Pinecrest Campground** is also on the right.

61.9 Hwy. YY and Hwy. E. Turn right on Hwy. E

62.5 Hwy. E & Hwy. K – go straight on Hwy. K.

67.6 Hwy. K and Hwy. 19 – turn left on Hwy. 19.

72.6 Hwy. 19 and Hwy. 32 –72.

Welcome back to Salem, Missouri