



OZARKS TRANSPORTATION ORGANIZATION

A METROPOLITAN PLANNING ORGANIZATION

2208 W. CHESTERFIELD BOULEVARD, SUITE 101, SPRINGFIELD, MO 65807
417-865-3047

April 15, 2021

The Honorable Billy Long
United States House of Representatives
2454 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Long:

I would like to request your consideration for congressionally directed funding to the **Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail**. The Ozarks Transportation Organization has identified this trail as an essential regional trail connection. The connection from the Republic High School to the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield will not only provide a transportation connection, but a recreational and educational connection to the history of the Ozarks.

We believe that creating outdoor opportunities helps to attract and retain a qualified work force to the Ozarks. We are working to build 45 miles of new transportation trail by 2045, connecting the region.

The Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail can be constructed within the existing MoDOT right-of-way. This will help to advance the project quickly. In addition, we believe that the NEPA process will go fast, as the trail will be constructed on land that was already disturbed with the construction of State Highway ZZ.

The Ozarks Transportation Organization (the Springfield Area MPO) supports this project as a top priority for the region. The Springfield metropolitan area consists of seven cities and two counties that work together to determine the highest priority needs for the region.

As project sponsor, the OTO is willing to carry out the project with MoDOT and can obligate funding within the expected life of the next surface transportation reauthorization bill and according to the requirements for funding in said bill.

As this project provides an essential regional trail connection, we thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Sara Fields



Regional Trails: Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail

Type of Project: Bicycle/Pedestrian/Trail

Name of the Project: Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail

Location of Project: 4370 RepMO Drive and 6424 W. Farm Road 182, Republic MO 65738, MO-7 Congressional District

Project Sponsor: Ozarks Transportation Organization (Springfield Area MPO)
www.ozarkstransportation.org

Sponsor Point of Contact: Sara Fields, Executive Director 417-865-3042 ext 102.
sfields@ozarkstransporation.org

Project Description: Construct Regional Trail Between Wilson's Creek National Battlefield and Highway M: The Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail would complete a trail connection between the developed portions of the City of Republic (via Shuyler Creek Trail), Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, and the Republic High School. This trail segment would parallel Rt. ZZ within existing MoDOT Right-of-Way. The Battlefield is the site of the first major Civil War Battle fought west of the Mississippi River, and the site of the first Union general killed in action. There are 1,750 acres that have changed little from its historic setting.

Project Benefits include:

- Safe Route to School for students attending Republic High School
- Improved Pedestrian Access to Wilson's Creek National Battlefield
- Another gap filled in long term effort to connect the City of Republic, the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, and the City of Springfield with an off-street bicycle and pedestrian trail

Amount Requested \$2.0 million

Total Project Cost: \$2.5 million

Sources of Funding: 20% project match from local funds raised by Ozark Greenways between 2019 and the present. If award does not fully fund the project, the project will use FHWA formula transportation funds, matched by local tax revenue. OTO is committed to programming the funding to ensure project completion.

Project Phase: Construction

Expected Obligation Date: Within one year of award

Estimated Award Date: October 2022

Estimated Project Completion Date: October 2023

NEPA Category of Action: Categorical Exclusion

Status of Environmental Review: Expected CE2. No Right-of-Way acquisition is needed as trail will be constructed with existing right-of-way. Preliminary environmental work to define need, determine logical termini, and evaluate alternatives completed in the 2017 Regional Bicycle and Pedestrian Trail Investment Study. Planning and Environmental Linkage Study submitted to FHWA March 2021.

Process to Provide for an Opportunity for Public Comment: The OTO Trail Investment Study was completed in 2017 with extensive public input including a project website, online engagement, and open houses. Additional opportunities for public comment will be provided during the design process with an

online and possible in-person open house. During the development of the OTO metropolitan transportation plan, the public was specifically asked for input on needed projects. OTO has a specific website giveusyourinput.org where the public can comment at any time. Social media sites are continuously accepting public input. In addition, input is requested during the development of the annual OTO TIP.

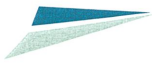
Prior Federal Funding: None

Prior U.S. DOT Discretionary Grant Requests: None

TIP/STIP Status: The project is not currently in the TIP but can be added quickly once funding is approved. Typical TIP approvals can occur in as little as 30 days. The project has been thoroughly discussed and vetted with the OTO Regional Trail Investment Study.

Metropolitan Long-Range Plan: Yes. The project is a top priority project to connect communities and enhance the regional trail system.





Springfield-Branson
NATIONAL AIRPORT

2300 n airport blvd ste 100
springfield missouri 65802
p 417.868.0500 f 417.868.0501

April 16, 2021

The Honorable Billy Long
United States House of Representatives
2454 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Long,

I am writing to express my strong support for the list of Transportation Priorities developed by the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO). We work closely with the OTO as a participant agency and agree that the list represents a regionally agreed to list of transportation priorities. It was developed using a data driven approach that includes public input and community leader discussion. These priorities include:

- US 60 Improvements in the OTO Urban Area
- I-44 Improvements in the OTO Urban Area
- US 65 Improvements in Christian County
- MM Highway in the City of Republic
- Regional Trail Expansion including the Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail and the Chadwick Flyer Trail
- Electric Buses for City Utilities
- Grant Street Pedestrian Underpass

The Airport recognizes the need for a strong integrated multimodal transportation system. This list considers pedestrians, transit, and highway users. Proposed projects come from two counties and seven cities, two transit providers, and a public university. If completed, they will improve safety, accommodate growth, improve congestion, and promote economic develop for our region.

The Springfield-Branson National Airport would like to request your support for Congressionally Directed funds for these important transportation projects. We look forward to your partnership in making these projects a reality.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me if I can be of further assistance.

Respectfully,

Brian C. Weiler, A.A.E.
Director of Aviation



April 5, 2021

The Honorable Billy Long
United States House of Representatives
2454 Rayburn HOB
Washington D.C. 20515

Dear Congressman Long,

I am writing to express support for the Ozarks Transportation Organization's list of Transportation Priorities. We work closely with the Ozarks Transportation Organization (OTO) and agree that the list represents a regionally agreed to list of transportation priorities. The OTO has developed a listing of priorities with a data driven approach that includes public input and community leader discussion.

These priorities include:

- US 60 Improvements in the OTO Urban Area
- I-44 Improvements in the OTO Urban Area
- US 65 Improvements in Christian County
- MM Highway in the City of Republic
- Regional Trail Expansion including the Wilson's Creek Boulevard Trail and the Chadwick Flyer Trail
- Electric Buses for City Utilities
- Grant Street Pedestrian Underpass

This multimodal list considers pedestrians, transit, and highway users. In addition, we have included projects representing two counties and seven cities, two transit providers, and a public university. The list represents projects needed to improve safety, accommodate growth, improve congestion, and promote economic develop.

In addition, each project has been carefully selected based upon the ability to ensure that it can be completed if federal funds were directed to the project.

The City of Republic would like to request your support for Congressionally Directed funds for these important transportation projects. We look forward to your partnership in making these projects a reality.

Thank you for your consideration and please feel free to contact me at 417-732-3111 with any questions.

Sincerely,

David Cameron
City Administrator

cc: Laura Burbridge, City Clerk

Sign In

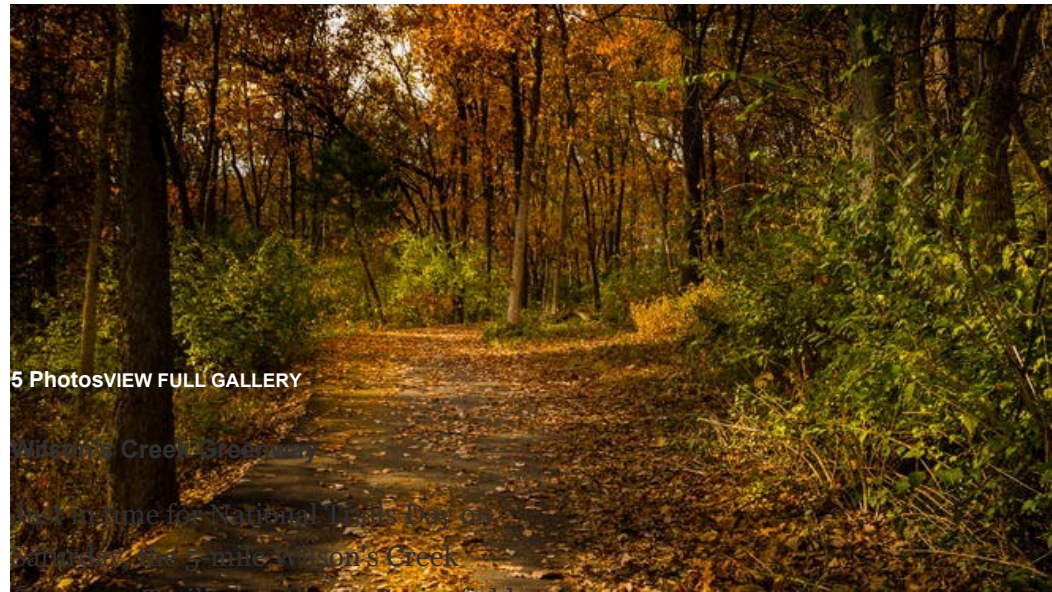
NEWS

Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail in southwest Springfield gets national recognition

Wes Johnson News-Leader

Published 6:28 p.m. CT May 31, 2018 | Updated 2:00 p.m. CT Jun. 1, 2018

View Comments



5 PhotosVIEW FULL GALLERY

Wilson's Creek Greenway

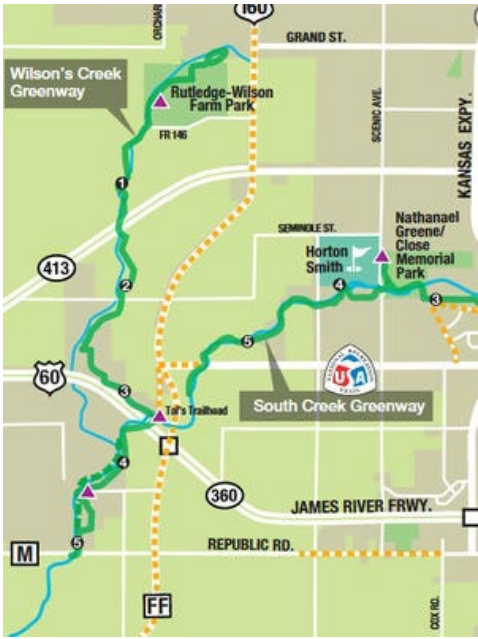
Just in time for National Trails Day on Saturday, the 5-mile Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail in southwest Springfield has been designated a National Recreation Trail.

Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke announced the new trail designation — and 18 others in 17 states — which add more than 370 miles to the national

recreation trails system.

“By designating these new national trails, we acknowledge the efforts of local communities to provide outdoor recreational opportunities that can be enjoyed by everyone,” Zinke said in a news release. “Our network of national trails provides easily accessible places to exercise and connect with nature in both urban and rural areas while boosting tourism and supporting economic opportunities across the country.”

Mary Kromrey, Ozark Greenways executive director, called the National Recreation Trail designation "a great honor."



Wilson's Creek Greenway Runs from Rutledge-Wilson Farm Park south for five miles. *Ozark Greenways*

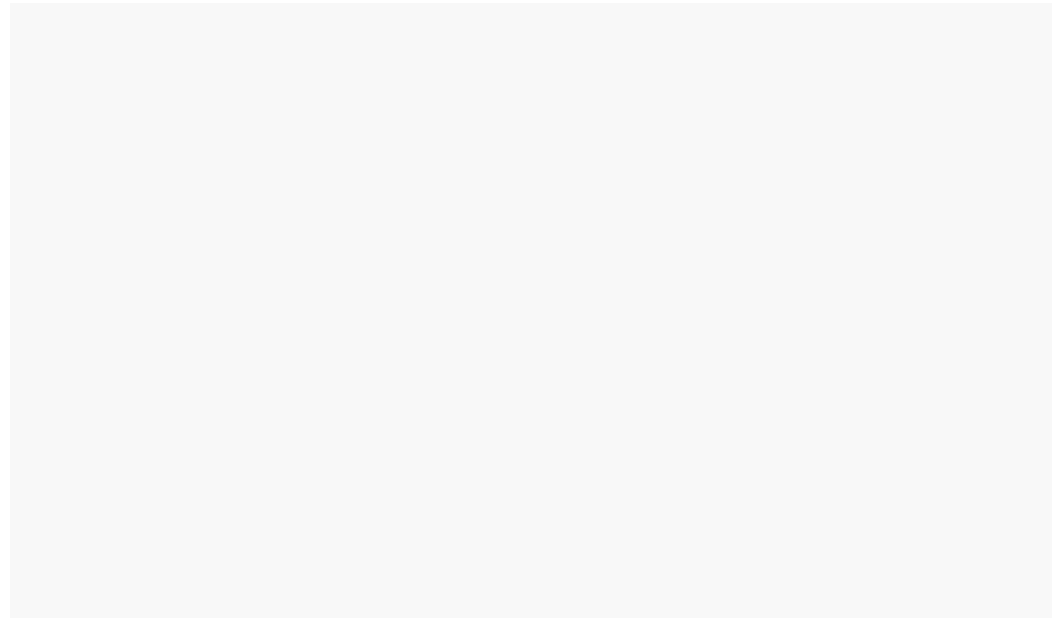


Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail has been named a National Recreation Trail by the Secretary of the Interior. *Ozark Greenways*

"We are super thankful that we get to help folks of all ages and abilities connect to our beautiful outdoors, each other, and the places they want to go," Kromrey said. "Our trail and park system is one of the best, and we hope you head outside on June 2, National Trails Day, to explore Wilson's Creek Greenway."

Parking is available at Tal's Trailhead at 3351 S. Kauffman Road, Rutledge-Wilson

Farm Park at 3825 S. Farm Road 146, Ewing Park Sports Complex at 1400 S. Scenic Ave., as well as access via South Creek Greenway.



The Department of the Interior will provide signs designating the greenway as a National Recreation Trail.

Wilson’s Creek Greenway is the fourth trail in the Ozark Greenways system to earn the National Recreation Trail designation. Galloway Creek Greenway, in east Springfield, became Missouri’s first National Recreation Trail in 2003.

The 35-mile Frisco Highline Trail, connecting Springfield to Bolivar, earned the title in 2004. South Creek Greenway was added to the list in 2006.

The lower portion of Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail was recently in the news when two "swallow holes" opened in the bed of Wilson's Creek, which runs alongside the trail. The holes diverted much of the creek into an underground passage.

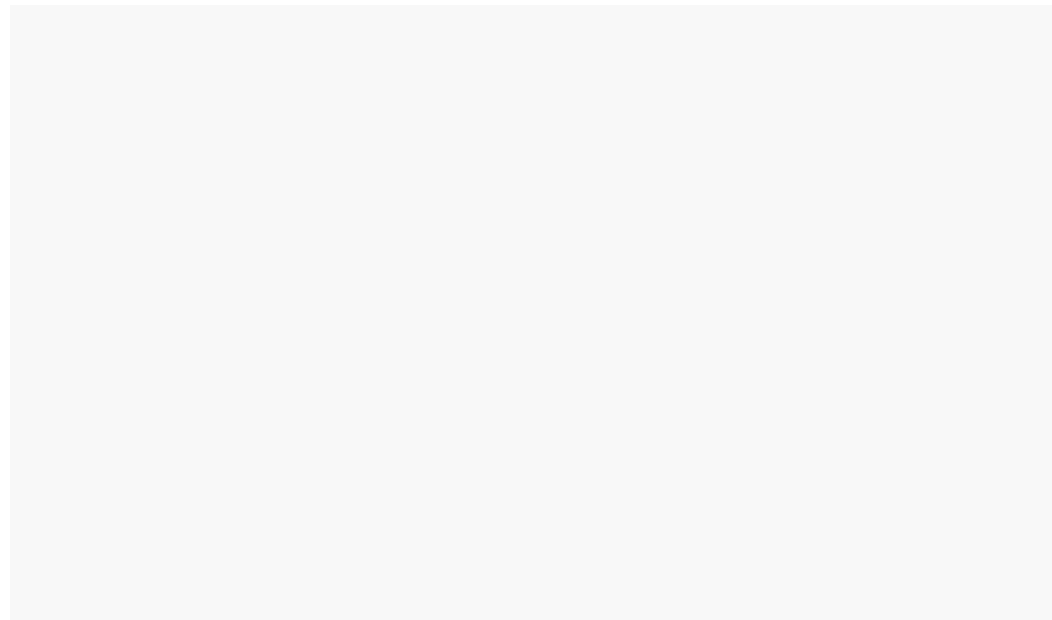
MORE: [Second, larger, swallow hole diverting much of Wilson's Creek underground](#)



Two "swallow holes" appeared in Wilson's Creek earlier this year, adjacent to the nearby Wilson's Creek Greenway Trail.
Andrew Jansen, Andrew Jansen/News-Leader

Zinke's announcement described Wilson’s Creek Greenway this way:

"It is the newest extension of a growing urban trail network in Springfield that is powered by a long list of diverse partners. The trail is a vital connection between neighborhoods, schools, businesses, and shopping areas; it plays a role in boosting social interaction, community pride, and mental health. People of all ages and abilities can access the woods and pastureland of the Ozarks for active transportation, bicycling, walking, running, skating, and wheelchair use."



Trails in the National Recreation Trails system range from less than a mile to 485 miles in length and have been designated on federal, state, municipal and privately owned lands.

MORE: [New greenway trail helps link Ritter Springs, Lost Hill parks](#)

PROFILES

CATCHING UP WITH MARY KROMREY, THE NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF OZARK GREENWAYS

Mary Kromrey has raised \$935,000 and counting since joining Ozark Greenways. We caught up with her as she embarks on her first full year as executive director of the nonprofit that has helped develop some of our favorite 417-land trails and bike routes.

BY ADRIENNE DONICA

Mar 2018

Share:





Photo courtesy Mary Kromrey As Ozark Greenways Inc. executive director, Mary Kromrey pitched in at a work day on South Creek Greenway.

417 Magazine: You worked in health and wellness for 12-plus years prior to joining Ozark Greenways. Why did you make the switch?

Mary Kromrey: I do have a background in health and wellness promotion and management, which had been very focused on programs. Over the years, I was able to realize and see that people need places in which they can be healthy. Programs are great, and they have their place, but if we want folks to move more and to walk more and to bicycle and to get outside and play, then we need safe places for them to do that. I feel that trails and parks are an integral part of the community and a necessity to help keep our residents healthy and happy.

417: So what's your favorite greenway trail?

M.K.: You know, I'm one of those people that every time I hear a song come on the radio, I'm like, "Oh my gosh that's my favorite song." And when I'm on the trail, I'm like, "Oh my gosh, this is my favorite trail." But right now I'm pretty jazzed about our Fulbright Spring Greenway that's up on the north side of town. It used to be called the South Dry Sac Greenway because we are in that

the way over to Truman Elementary. That's probably my favorite one today. Ask me tomorrow, and it'll be different.

417: What are you looking forward to now that you're executive director?

M.K.: I do feel that there is a buzz in the air right now. I feel that 2018, 2019 might be the time in which our community as a whole says, "You know what? This trail network is more [than] a nice jogging path through the woods." And so with that I'm hoping to see some of our key trail gaps filled and us saying, "You know what? Nashville, [Tennessee]; Boise, [Idaho]; Lincoln, [Nebraska]; Omaha, [Nebraska]; northwest Arkansas—all these cities around us are starting to pull ahead because they recognized that a connected trail network is more than a cute jogging path through the woods." And I want to see us surpass them. You know these cities have 20, 30, 40 miles of greenway trails. We're already sitting at over 73 miles. Imagine the possibilities if we had some really good connected loops.

417: Are there any concrete plans for that kind of connected loop?

M.K.: There is not a funded plan. We are currently operating off our city's current comprehensive plan, which is Vision 20/20, and within that there's a chapter for parks, greenways and open spaces. I believe our city leadership and city council realize that our comprehensive plan needs to be updated. So right now is one of those moments where at the board level, we're talking strategy. We have to be sure that we're in those conversations to say, "Hey, let's take this parks, greenways and open spaces plan to the next level and let's look at some connected loops. Let's look at an urban core loop. Let's see how we can get that Galloway Creek Greenway, which is one of our most popular ones, connected over to Wilson's Creek Greenway." If you look at Atlanta and you look at Boise, they're working on various forms of green belts where then you have that outer loop. Things are getting together, but I think it's going to be crucial that within the city's new comprehensive plan that those are called out and that a funding stream that is greater than what Ozark Greenways can raise can be dedicated to go towards that. And I feel that there is good synergy and momentum towards that right now, but technically speaking there's not an official plan for that, and it's not funded. I don't know anybody that would be opposed to that, but there's so many competing interests and needs. We've just got to be sure that we constantly talk about the benefits that trail networks bring for conservation, for healthy communities and that economic vitality piece.



417: Tell us about the conservation work that Ozark Greenways does.

M.K.: We're working by 2020 to place 45 acres around Wilson's Creek into conservation easements.

don't have water, we're kind of up a creek without a paddle. We've also helped do different types of native plant species plantings [and] native tree plantings, which is good for stabilizing creeks, but then it also provides habitat for wildlife.

greatest opportunities. What role does Ozark Greenways play in that future?

M.K.: I feel that Ozark Greenways' time is about to arrive. We have played a huge role in that since our inception back in 1991 because what we do is connect people to the natural beauty of our Ozarks every single day. I feel that we're a hidden gem or one of the best-kept secrets that our community has because getting people outdoors that aren't outdoorsy people, that can be intimidating. But it's a greenway trail, and it's friendly, it's hard-surfaced, it's easy to utilize. You don't have to worry about getting lost, and then when people are out on that trail, they start to notice other things. Maybe they notice the creek that it runs alongside or maybe they notice the birds or the other components of the park and their behaviors and their attitudes start to shift. I would say if folks value their outdoors, support it. Stand up for your outdoors. Fund your outdoors and then get out there and enjoy them.

417: What makes a good greenway?

M.K.: I think a good greenway, from a practical standpoint, is easy to access for people who are both getting there by car or who are choosing to walk and bicycle to it. I really think they need to be hard-surfaced and have minimal grades, that way they are accessible for all ages and all users. And then it needs to—you know, our tag line has been "Connecting people and places"—well it needs to do that. So how do we get residential areas so they can access those greenways easier? What do those connectors look like? Some folks do just want to use [trails] for their exercise or to meet a friend and talk, but then wouldn't it be really cool if you could utilize that trail to go to your favorite restaurant or your favorite coffee shop or pickup just a couple of groceries that you could easily carry?

417: Is there a hidden gem of the trail system?

M.K.: So we've got the Ward Branch Greenway, and we just had another pesky gap filled in that. I don't think folks realize that you can leave from Cox [Medical Center] South, you can go under [Highway] 60, under Republic [Road], under Campbell all on a continuous greenway and pop out there at the base of where The Library Center is and then take that low-traffic volume road up to The Library Center. And I don't think folks realize that we have that great resource to move people under those major roadway systems, which is so much safer for everybody involved. It may not be the most scenic route, but, man, it's super functional.

important?

M.K.: When you're going after some of these larger transportation dollars, you have to have the plans in place and approved by various entities, and so this is a step to get some projects funded. Every community has needs—maybe Willard needs so many feet of sidewalks or maybe Strafford needs a new bridge. Money [from the federal government] gets divided to help that community meet its needs, but there has been talk—and it's been a popular idea—to some years do a regional project. So you can say, "Wow, we did this, and it connected the Wilson's Creek Greenway that is in Springfield to the Wilson's Creek National Battlefield, which is in Republic." That's another part of that buzz and that energy that's happening. And so that's super exciting.

Get Involved with Ozark Greenways

Become a Member:

Become an annual [Ozark Greenways member](#) for as little as \$40 per year. Your money supports the organization's core duties. Get details at ozarkgreenways.org.

Make a Donation:

Spend the day beautifying greenway trails as a volunteer or join one of the organization's planning committees. Visit facebook.com/ogtrailcrew for details.

Hit the Trail:

Enjoy all 73-plus miles of greenway trails and 81 miles of on-street bike routes in 417-land. Find trail maps and more at ozarkgreenways.org/explore.

CONTINUE TO NEXT ARTICLE



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