



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Mark Twain
National
Forest



Greer Spring and Trail

Welcome to Greer Spring



With an average flow of 220 million gallons per day, Greer Spring is the second largest spring in Missouri.

Emerging from two openings, the spring flows from the mouth of Greer Spring Cave and boils up from the rugged bed of the spring branch.

Flowing down a rock-filled canyon for one mile, the spring branch more than doubles the flow of the Eleven Point River.

The one-mile trail to the spring travels through a mixture of hardwoods and pines. The overstory of trees includes several varieties of oaks, shortleaf pine, hickory, maples, basswood, hackberry, and black gum. Under this larger tree canopy are flowering dogwood, redbud, sassafras, persimmon, hazelnut, and red cedar, among others. There are also a variety of wild flowers and ferns, including yellow lady-slipper, three-lobed violet, walking fern, jack-in the-pulpit, buttercup, and wild geranium. Oh yes - watch out for poison ivy along the trail.

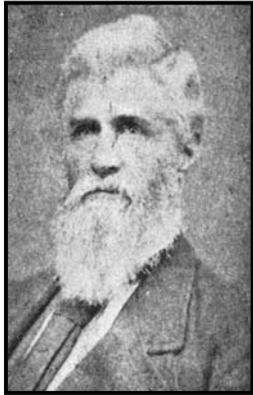
Greer Spring is located just west of State Highway 19 approximately 18 miles south of Winona, Missouri or 8.5 miles north of Alton, Missouri (See maps on page three). Watch for the sign and parking lot along the west side of Highway 19. The trail to the spring is 0.9 miles long and descends at a grade of 5 feet every 100 feet to an overlook of Greer Spring. The average round trip takes 1.5 hours. Several benches are located along the trail. No drinking water is available.

History

Although Greer Spring appears to be natural and undisturbed, it has a long and colorful history. Trees in this area have been harvested in the past for timber. As a result, a portion of the forested area we enjoy today shows the forest's ability to renew itself.

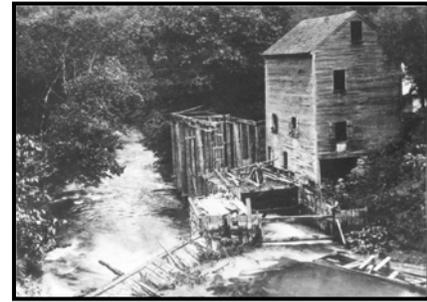
Greer Spring was homesteaded by Thomas Simpson in 1854. John Greer and his son, Samuel Greer, for whom the spring is named, purchased the spring in 1859. In 1860

Samuel Greer built a gristmill, which was powered by the water from the spring. This was the first commercial use of the spring.



**Captain
Samuel Greer**

Samuel Greer served in the Civil War, volunteering first in the State Militia, and later in the Confederate Army. Following the war, Greer returned home to find his mill burned and most of his livestock driven off by bush-whackers and roaming guerrillas. He rebuilt the mill and milling resumed immediately after reconstruction.



Around 1870, Greer enlarged the operation, constructing a dam at the spring, installing a turbine waterwheel, and building a three-story mill building. The mill had machinery for grinding corn, sawing lumber, ginning cotton, and carding wool. He also trained oxen to haul cartloads of material up and down the steep slope above the spring without a driver.

As more people settled in the area there was an increasing demand for flour, lumber, and other milled products. In 1883 the dam was rebuilt and construction started on a new roller mill located on the ridge above the spring. Work on the new mill was stopped for a month in March, 1884, when Lewis Greer, Samuel's son, was hit by a falling timber and fell to his death onto the rocks below the dam.

Materials and equipment from the old mill were used in the construction of the new roller mill. The new mill used a unique cable system for transferring the power from the turbine wheel at the spring to bring power to the new mill on the ridge. As more farmers came, there was a need for more facilities. A camp house and corrals were constructed, along with a well.

In 1899, when Samuel Greer was 71 years old, he sold his interests in the mill. The mill continued in operation under various ownerships until the early 1920's, when it was permanently closed.

Louis E. Dennig purchased the land containing the mill and spring in 1922. The Dennig family owned the land for the next seventy years. In 1987, the Dennig family proposed selling the Greer Spring area to the Anheuser-Busch Company, of St. Louis, Missouri.

Anheuser-Busch planned to build a plant and bottle spring water. Because of public concern, Anheuser-Busch decided not to purchase the property. Instead they provided a grant for any non-profit organization that would purchase the spring and maintain it in its natural state.

Leo Drey, of St. Louis, purchased Greer Spring and the surrounding land and held the property until Congress passed legislation allowing the Forest Service to purchase the area.

Leo Drey also pledged money toward the purchase of the property. This, along with the grant from Anheuser-Busch, to the River Network, allowed the U.S. Forest Service to acquire Greer Spring and the surrounding area in 1993.

The Cave and the water

More like the emergence of an underground river, the water feeding Greer Spring comes from many losing streams and sinkholes found to the west and north-west of the spring. Successful dye tracings have shown that the recharge area for the spring's water encompasses 330 square miles of land. Water is obtained from as far away as 35 miles (near the town of Willow Springs). The spring's two outlets, the upper portion from the cave, and the lower boil has been explored on a very limited basis. Extreme currents have prevented scientific divers from exploring far into these orifices. Many caves contain diverse and rare forms of cave life. Residents of Greer Spring Cave include a population of Salem cave crayfish, an undescribed species of amphipod, helemyzid flies, and cave crickets. Due to hazards presented by strong currents, slippery footing, and possible damage to cave life, entry into the cave is discouraged. Also drinking the spring water is not recommended as studies have shown that spring water is not well filtered in the Ozark region.

Recreation



Greer Spring may be unsurpassed in the beauty of its wilderness setting. In order to protect the scenic beauty of the area, rules and regulations have been developed for the spring and surrounding lands. Please help us to keep Greer Spring as natural for not only today, but also for future generations. These rules and regulations follow:

The following acts or omissions are prohibited in the area within 150 yards of the Greer Spring parking area, trail or spring branch on the Mark Twain National Forest.

1. Hunting or fishing. It is prohibited to hunt, trap or fish in the Greer Spring Branch from its source to its confluence with the Eleven Point River. 36 CFR 261.58v
2. Possessing or operating a motorboat. For the purpose of this order, it is prohibited to possess or operate any boat, canoe, kayak, raft, inflatable tube or other floatable device. 36 CFR 261.58n
3. Being in the area after sundown or before sunrise. 36 CFR 261.58l

4. Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire, campfire, or stove fire.
36 CFR 261.52a
5. Possessing or storing any food or refuse. For the purpose of this order it is prohibited to possess bottles, cans, or other disposable items or products except within the parking area. 36 CFR 261.58cc
6. Use by any type of traffic or mode of transport prohibited by the order. This includes bicycles, ATVs, saddle or pack animals on the Greer Spring Trail.
36 CFR 261.55c
7. Forest development trails. Shortcutting a switchback in a trail. 36 CFR 261.55d

In addition, swimming, wading, floating is prohibited in the spring and spring branch. Pets must be kept on a leash at all times. We also ask that you do not smoke on the trail and at the spring.



Greer Mill in 1937

No Trespassing

As part of the purchase agreement with the Dennig Family, 110 acres are reserved for the Dennig family's use until the year 2013. This area includes all the buildings currently standing on the property and their use until the year 2013. This area includes all the buildings currently standing on the property including the mill. Please respect their rights and do not trespass into their area

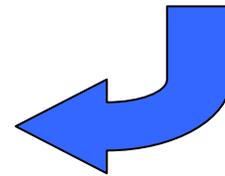
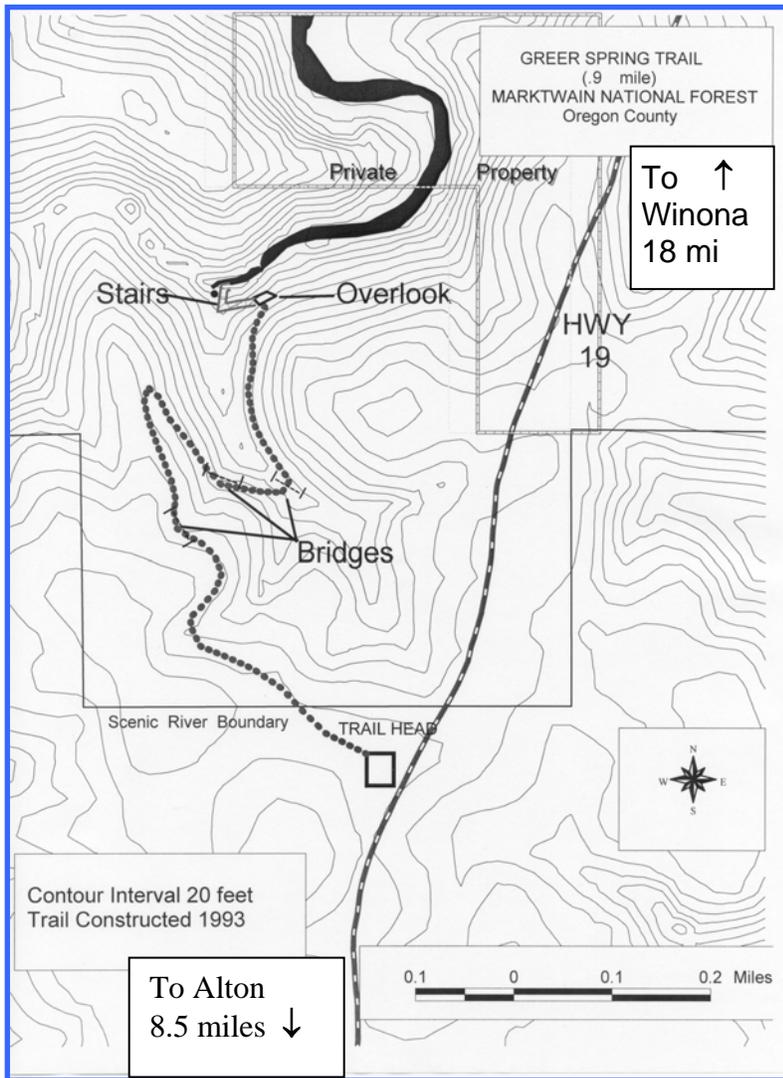
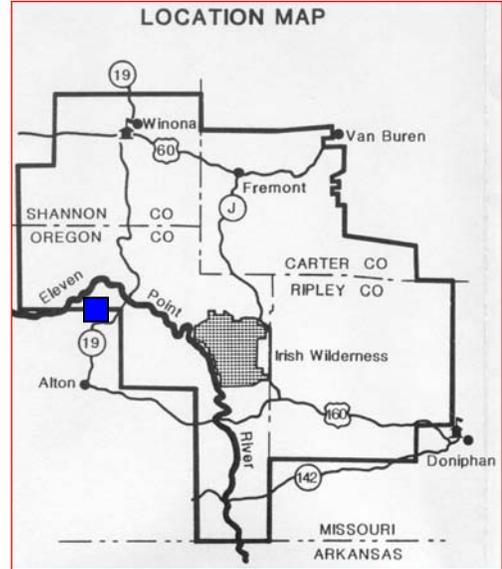


← Brochure as originally published in August 1993. This document was then modified and enhanced for Internet use.

Eleven Point Ranger District



State of Missouri - USA



← Trail Map to Greer Spring From Highway 19

Spring Facts

- Greer Spring is the second largest spring in Missouri (The largest spring is Big Spring on the Current River a short distance from the city of Van Buren).
- Average Daily flow - 222 million gallons.
- Maximum Flow Recorded on Dec. 4th, 1982 - 614 million gallons.
- Temperature of the water coming from the spring averages at 55 - 56 degrees F.
- Greer Spring supplies approximately 60% of the flow of the Eleven Point River below the spring branch. It is located 66 feet higher than the Eleven Point River, 1½ miles to the south of the river.
- 2795 acres surrounding the spring are part of the Eleven Point National Scenic River corridor.
- The additional 4098 acres purchased with the spring are a special management area.



For additional information, please contact us at:

Mark Twain National Forest
Doniphan/Eleven Point Ranger District

RR 1 Box 1908 1104 Walnut
(Highway 19 North) Or Doniphan, Missouri 63935
Winona, Missouri 65588 (573) 996-2153
(573) 325-4233

www.fs.fed.us/r9/marktwain

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