

# FINLEY *FF* FARMS

& THE OZARK MILL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 30, 2021

## **Historic Riverside Bridge Finds New Home at Finley Farms**

*Iconic century-old bridge links community and the past*



**Ozark, Mo. (March 30, 2021)** – Finley Farms today celebrated the raising of the historic Riverside Bridge in Ozark, Missouri, where the infamous “Chadwick Flyer” railroad once crossed the Finley River. Once at risk of being destroyed due to repeated flood damage, the structure was saved thanks to a grassroots effort from committed local citizens. Afterward, the iconic bridge was fully restored and relocated by Johnny Morris, noted conservationist and founder of Bass Pro Shops, along with Johnny’s daughter Megan Stack, who serves as the visionary for the Finley Farms project. The revitalized bridge will soon complement farm-to-table inspired dining options and event spaces at The Ozark Mill while connecting the community to the outdoors and Ozarks history.

“The Riverside Bridge holds so much history for the City of Ozark and the Ozarks region,” said Megan Stack. “Finley Farms is a historic preservation project grounded in a celebration of

community and craftsmanship, and relocating this iconic bridge is a fantastic symbol for what we aim to achieve here. We're grateful for the hard work and passion of the community members who worked to preserve the Riverside Bridge so today could become a reality."

The Riverside Bridge will now serve as a foot bridge across the Finley River, providing access between The Mill and nearby Chapel and serving as a one-of-a-kind outdoor event venue.

"We envision many special events and intimate dinners taking place over the river on the Riverside bridge," Stack said. "When not in use for a special event, the community can enjoy the bridge, which serves as a connector to the many wonderful local trails that we are blessed to have here in the Ozarks."

### **Riverside Bridge's Rich History**

The one-lane, 274-foot bridge was built in 1909 after a record-setting flood washed away a wooden wagon bridge next to The Ozark Mill. Originally, the Riverside Bridge spanned the Finley River where the McCracken Road Bridge is today. In 1924, the structure was deemed too small for traffic demands, and it was moved 1.5 miles upstream near Ozark's beloved, now-closed, Riverside Inn. Due to repeated flood damage, Riverside Bridge closed for repairs in 2010 only to experience a devastating flood in 2015 that severely damaged the structure and forced its permanent closure. During this period of uncertainty, the Save Riverside Bridge Initiative worked tirelessly to ensure the historic structure would avoid demolition, eventually earning the bridge's eligibility for the National Register of Historic Places.

In 2018, after a bidding process for new use and ownership, a selection committee made up of the State Historic Preservation Offices, Ozarks Special County Roads District and Christian County awarded the bridge to the Morris family as it would remain completely intact and close to its original home. After disassembling Riverside Bridge in 2019, Nabholz Corporation and Great River Engineering worked together to restore the structure, a process that took more than 6 months. The bridge is now restored to its once former glory and will remain a rich part of Ozark's history. Rightfully placed at the epicenter of the town, locals, and those visiting the area, will now be able to revel in its history for years to come.

Restoration efforts continue on The Ozark Mill, the focal point of Finley Farms. The Workshop, a community-focused coffee shop and craft space, opened in November 2019.

For more information, visit [finleyfarmsmo.com](http://finleyfarmsmo.com) or [facebook.com/finleyfarmsmo](https://facebook.com/finleyfarmsmo).

###

**About Finley Farms**

[Finley Farms](#) is restoring and reimagining the historic Ozark Mill property to create a sprawling gathering place featuring restaurants, vibrant event venues, hands-on experiences, an urban farm and more. A family passion project—generations of the Morris family have had connections to Ozark, the Finley River and the milling industry. Originally built in 1833, the Ozark Mill serves as the heart of the property. Inside, The Mill restaurant, The Garrison speakeasy and museum tell the seldom heard stories of the Ozarks way of life through culinary craftsmanship and educational experiences. Beyond The Mill, property highlights include The Chapel, the historic Riverside Bridge, a coffee shop and an urban farm.

**Media Contact:**

Dayle Duggins

Marketing Manager

417-230-6463

[dayle@finleyfarmsmo.com](mailto:dayle@finleyfarmsmo.com)