Wilderness.net's Ellicott Rock Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Ellicott Rock Wilderness in 1975 and it now has a total of 8,274 acres. Georgia contains approximately 2,021 acres. North Carolina contains approximately 3,394 acres. South Carolina contains approximately 2,859 acres. It is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

In 1811, surveyor Andrew Ellicott determined the starting point for the North Carolina-Georgia state line and chiseled an inconspicuous mark on a rock on the east bank of the Chattooga River. Here the mountainous regions of South Carolina, North Carolina, and Georgia converge, and this is where the Ellicott Rock Wilderness straddles the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River. This is the only Wilderness area lying in three states. Rugged terrain, tall peaks, and the Wild and Scenic Chattooga River are the hallmarks of this Wilderness. Offering one of the foremost white-water trips in the eastern United States, the Chattooga floods through the middle of the area, but the wildest water lies below the Wilderness boundary, where boating is not allowed.

The Georgia terrain peaks at 3,672-foot Glade Mountain. Clear perennial trout streams that occasionally drop over small waterfalls scour the numerous steep-walled gorges. Unusual rock formations hover above some of the streams, and several threatened or endangered plants have been identified. Although logging operations intruded in the early 1900s (as evidence attests), today's forest of hardwoods (upland and cove) is more than 80 years old. Deer, squirrels, grouse, and wild turkeys are common sights in the Georgia portion of the Wilderness, along with the more elusive black bear and raccoon. Wild boars wander in from North Carolina now and then. You may see the remains of the old moonshine stills that once brewed their potions here.

Unlike many pristine areas in the western United States (but like many other southeastern Wildernesses), Ellicott Rock has been heavily impacted by humans in the not too distant past. Nevertheless, enough time has passed since the logging operations of yesteryear for impressive second-growth forests, typical of the Appalachian greenbelt, to reclaim Ellicott Rock Wilderness. Today dense stands of white pine and hemlock occupy the lower coves and areas along streams, upland hardwoods thrive on slopes, and scrub oaks and pitch pines grow on dry ridges. The region lies just south of the area that receives the highest rainfall in the eastern United States; expect some wet weather.

In South Carolina the wilderness rises from the river to a high point on Fork Mountain at 3,294 feet. Several trails originate in the South Carolina portion. From the Sloan Bridge Picnic Area on the eastern border, 6.3 miles of the Ellicott Rock Trail will take you down to Ellicott Rock itself. This trail joins the Chattooga River Trail, which follows the South Carolina side of the river south for 4.4 miles to Burrell's Ford Campground. Ellicott Rock stands relatively near millions of Americans, and use of the area is high, but along the river you'll find more solitude.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Ellicott Rock Wilderness.

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

For more information on Leave No Trace, Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.

Area Management

The Ellicott Rock Wilderness is part of the 109 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Ellicott Rock Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Contacts

Andrew Pickens Ranger District
112 ANDREW PICKENS CIRCLE
MOUNTAIN REST, SC 29664
Remarks: Office hours: 8 AM - 4:30 PM

Phone: 864-638-9568

Wayah Ranger District
90 SLOAN RD
FRANKLIN, NC 28734

Phone: 828-524-6441

Links to Other Websites

Sumter National Forest, Ellicott Rock Wilderness

Links on Wilderness.net

National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations (NGOs)
A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

Career and Volunteer Opportunities
A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 93-622	**January 3, 1975**	**3,600**

(Known as the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act) - Public law 93-622 (1/3/1975) To further the purposes of the Wilderness Act by designating certain acquired lands for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to provide for study of certain additional lands for such inclusion, and for other purposes
NOTE: Public law acreage includes GA, NC and SC acreage.

download 93-622

Public Law 98-324	**June 19, 1984**	**3,680**

North Carolina Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-324 (6/19/1984) To designate certain public lands in North Carolina as additions to the National Wilderness Preservation System

download 98-324

Public Law 98-514	**October 19, 1984**	**2,000**

Georgia Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-514 (10/19/1984) To designate certain National Forest System Lands in the State of Georgia as Wilderness, and for other purposes.

download 98-514