

# Wilderness.net's Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness Fact Sheet



## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness in 1975 and it now has a total of 17,394 acres. North Carolina contains approximately 13,562 acres. Tennessee contains approximately 3,832 acres. It is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

Joyce Kilmer acquired some fame as a journalist, serving on the staff of the New York Times from 1913 to 1918, but most people remember him as the author of the poem "Trees" ("I think that I shall never see/A poem lovely as a tree"). He died in action in World War I. The 3,800 acres of North Carolina's

Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest--perhaps the single most impressive growth of eastern virgin forest in the United States, with many trees hundreds of years old--is a part of Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness and borders Citico Creek Wilderness. Except for its northwestern section preserving the northwestern corner of Nantahala National Forest, this Wilderness is in North Carolina.

Spared the keen edge of the ax when bankruptcy closed the local logging company in 1890, this Wilderness contains some magnificent old-growth forest, where oaks, hemlocks, and tulip poplars have reached six feet in diameter. The forest also includes yellow pine, sycamore, basswood, dogwood, beech, and oak, with a wild understory of shrubs, vines, ferns, mosses, lichens, liverworts, and herbaceous plants. Wildflowers bloom in spring sunshine but fade when the trees leaf out, darkening the forest floor.

Six trailheads provide access to more than 60 miles of trail (in the entire Wilderness), which typically follow ridge tops or drop into the shady drainages. Camping is permitted anywhere in the Wilderness, but not at adjacent trail heads. Overnight parking is permitted at all trailheads except at the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Loop and Picnic Area.

The Stiff Knee Trail (3.4 miles) follows Little Slickrock Creek across the Tennessee portion to a junction with the Slickrock Creek Trail (13.3 miles), longer and more beautiful than any trail in the entire Wilderness. You can see some of the best of the old growth along the Joyce Kilmer National Recreation Trail, a 1.2-mile path ambling through the Joyce Kilmer Memorial Forest.

## 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 Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock 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 Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock 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 Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock 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.

## Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

## ALL VISITORS

Group size is limited to 10 people

Dogs must be on leash or under control

## OVERNIGHT VISITORS

Campsites must be at least 100 feet from streams

Maximum length of stay is 14 continuous days

## STOCK USERS

No stock animals allowed

## Contacts

**Cheoah Ranger District**  
1133 MASSEY BRANCH RD  
ROBBINSVILLE, NC 28771

Phone: 828-479-6431

Phone: 423-476-9700

**Cherokee National Forest**  
2800 OCOEE ST N  
CLEVELAND, TN 37312

## Links to Other Websites

[Air Resource Management Data for the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness](#)

[National Forests in North Carolina](#)

## 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)
<b>Public Law 93-622</b>	<b>January 3, 1975</b>	<b>15,000</b>

(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 TN and NC acreage.

—: [download 93-622](#)

**Public Law 98-324**

**June 19, 1984**

**2,980**

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](#)