

Wilderness.net's Lewis Fork Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Lewis Fork Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 6,076 acres. All of the wilderness is in Virginia and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Lewis Fork Wilderness lies within the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. It includes Mount Rogers itself which is Virginia's highest point at 5,729 feet. The wilderness is part of what is known as the "Mount Rogers High Country." Vegetation includes northern hardwoods with spruce/fir habitat at the higher elevations. Lewis Fork of Fox Creek contains native trout. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T., FT #1) passes through the northeast portion of Lewis Fork and then weaves in and out of the area along the southern boundary for a total of about 5.5 miles within the wilderness. There is a total of 28 miles of trail within the wilderness and several trails have use restrictions. Trail information is available on National Geographic-Trails Illustrated Maps # 786 (Mount Rogers), # 318 (Mount Rogers High Country). Lewis Fork Wilderness is located in Grayson and Smyth Counties in southwest Virginia. It is managed by the U.S. Forest Service as part of the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

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 Lewis Fork 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 Lewis Fork 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 Lewis Fork 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: Maximum group size is ten (10) people for all Wildernesses on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

Possessing or using a wagon, cart or other vehicle is prohibited in any Wilderness on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

Camping at or within 250 feet of Deep Gap within Lewis Fork Wilderness is prohibited.

Tying or hitching a horse or other saddle or pack animal to trees within 250 feet of Deep Gap within Lewis Fork Wilderness is prohibited.

Building, maintaining, attending or using a fire or campfire within 250 feet of Deep Gap within

Lewis Fork Wilderness is prohibited.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

CAMPING LIMIT: Camping is limited to a maximum of 21 days in a 31 day time period on the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

Contacts

Mt. Rogers National Recreation Area
3714 HIGHWAY 16
MARION, VA 24354
Remarks: Office Hours M-F 8:00 - 4:30

Phone: 276-783-5196

Links to Other Websites

[George Washington & Jefferson National Forests Wilderness Page](#)

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 98-586	October 30, 1984	5,730
Virginia Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-586 (10/30/1984) To designate certain national forest lands in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes		
— download 98-586 - Relevant legislation found on page(s): 1.		
Public Law 100-326	June 7, 1988	72
(No official title, designates Virginia wildernesses) - Public law 100-326 (6/7/1988) To designate certain national forest system lands in the States of Virginia and West Virginia as wilderness areas		
— download 100-326 - Relevant legislation found on page(s): 1.		
Public Law 111-11	March 30, 2009	308

Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 - Public law 111-11 (3/30/2009) An act to designate certain land as components of the National Wilderness Preservation System, to authorize certain programs and activities in the Department of the Interior and the Department of Agriculture, and for other purposes.

— [download 111-11](#) - Relevant legislation found on page(s): 13.