

Wilderness.net's Mark Trail Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Mark Trail Wilderness in 1991 and it now has a total of 16,616 acres. All of the wilderness is in Georgia and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The logging roads that once ran along the streams, waterfalls, rocky outcroppings, and high peaks that distinguish the Chattahoochee Wildlife Management Area are rapidly returning to their natural state. The mountains (Horsetrough is the highest at 4,045 feet) are covered in second-growth upland and cove hardwoods in excess of 60 years of age. Trout fishing is top-notch, with 65 miles of streams chock-full of rainbow, brook, and brown trout. Some of the headwaters of the Chattahoochee River flow through here. Deer, squirrels, raccoons, grouse, and wild turkeys dominate among the landlubbing residents, with smaller populations of black bears, woodcocks, and doves. Most hikers take the Appalachian Trail (AT), which follows the crest of the Blue Ridge through this area for 14 miles. The two shelters on the AT are Low Gap and Blue Mountain. Jack's Knob Trail enters the Wilderness at Henry Knob and travels south before dividing and joining the AT in two places. Less than an hour's hike on a trail on the east side leads to Horsetrough Falls, which plunges year-round. Hunters and anglers are common sights, and hikers appear almost every day from spring through fall. Just across State Highway 75 lies Tray Mountain Wilderness. Hikers should be aware that encounters with black bears are common in the area. The use of bear proof food storage containers is highly recommended.

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 Mark Trail 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 Mark Trail 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 Mark Trail 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 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 for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Dogs must be leashed in areas where the Wilderness is within a Wildlife Management Area.
- Food and refuse must be stored in bear-resistant containers.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.

STOCK USERS

- Hitching, tethering, and hobbling pack or saddle stock within 50 feet of any water source is

prohibited.

-- Pack or saddle stock may not be hitched or hobbled in a manner that causes damage to live trees, vegetation, or soil.

Contacts

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9975 HIGHWAY 441S
LAKEMONT, GA 30552

Phone: 706-754-6221

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 102-217	December 11, 1991	16,880
Chattahoochee National Forest Protection Act of 1991 - Public law 102-217 (12/11/1991) To designate certain National Forest System lands in the State of Georgia as wilderness, and for other purposes		

— [download 102-217](#)