

Wilderness.net's McCormick Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the McCormick Wilderness in 1987 and it now has a total of 16,925 acres. All of the wilderness is in Michigan and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Three generations of McCormick's, the descendants of Cyrus McCormick, inventor of the reaping machine, held the deed to this area before Gordon McCormick willed the land to the U.S. Forest Service. McCormick Wilderness has recovered from the logging era that ended in the early 1900s. Today, you'll find a mixture of northern hardwoods and lowland conifers interspersed with small patches of towering white pine, Michigan's state tree. Moose have been reintroduced here and are relatively common sights by Michigan standards. Other forest dwellers include black bears, pine martens, otters, minks, foxes, deer, squirrels, and hares. Bird-watchers enjoy loons and woodpeckers as well as thriving populations of many other feathered species. Straddling the divide between Lake Superior and Lake Michigan, a region ranging from nearly level terrain to rocky cliffs. McCormick's water is what draws most visitors, with the Huron, Dead, Peshekee, and the Wild and Scenic Yellow Dog Rivers all have part of their headwaters within the wilderness. Many cascading waterfalls on the Yellow Dog make it unnavigable. The Yellow Dog is one of few Eastern rivers designated "Wild." Eighteen small lakes add sparkle to the landscape. Trout, pike, and bass live here, but only in small numbers due to the less-than-fertile waters. The three-mile White Deer Lake Trail connects County Road 607 to White Deer Lake where the McCormick estate once stood. Remnants of old, unmaintained trails can sometimes be found, but the rest of the Wilderness is fairly rugged, isolated, unspoiled, and relatively difficult to access.

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 McCormick 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 McCormick 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 McCormick 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

- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.
- Do not cut switchbacks.

-- Storing equipment, personal property, or supplies (caching) is prohibited.

Contacts

Kenton Ranger District
4810 E M28
KENTON, MI 49967

Phone: 906-852-3500

Links to Other Websites

[Ottawa National Forest Wilderness Website, McCormick 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 100-184	December 8, 1987	16,850
Michigan Wilderness Act of 1987 - Public law 100-184 (12/8/1987) To designate certain lands in the State of Michigan as wilderness, and for other purposes		

— [download 100-184](#)