Wilderness.net's Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness Fact Sheet

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness in 1987 and it now has a total of 16,728 acres. All of the wilderness is in Michigan and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The Wild and Scenic Sturgeon River rushes out of the northern portion of this Wilderness, over the 20-foot volcanic outcropping of Sturgeon Falls, and through a gorge that reaches 300 feet in depth and a mile in width. Throughout this rugged, steep Wilderness, the Sturgeon and Little Silver Rivers and their tributaries have carved falls, rapids, ponds, oxbows, and terraces. Stunning views are possible from the eastern rim of the gorge.

Except for a few naturally bare slopes, most of the land is forested with pine, hemlock, aspen, sugar maple, birch, and basswood. When the leaves of the hardwoods change color in fall, they form a vivid tapestry. On a trek through here you might see deer, bears, mink, otters, beavers, skunks, and foxes. Woodcocks and ruffed grouse are common, and bald eagles and ospreys are seen on occasion. Streams do not produce many trout, and the endangered lake sturgeon finds habitat farther downriver.

There are few established trails in Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness, and a few overgrown logging roads are hard to find and follow. The North Country National Scenic Trail parallels the northern and eastern boundaries for about eight miles. Sturgeon River Campground offers nine sites on the southeastern boundary. In spring and during peak runoff, kayaking and white-water canoeing are challenging, and only recommended for advanced paddlers.

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 Sturgeon River Gorge 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 Sturgeon River Gorge Wilderness is part of the 110 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 Sturgeon River Gorge 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

Storing equipment, personal property or supplies within the wilderness 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, Sturgeon River Gorge 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**	**14,500**

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