

Wilderness.net's Clifty Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Clifty Wilderness in 1985 and it now has a total of 12,371 acres. All of the wilderness is in Kentucky and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Clifty Wilderness is a rugged area characterized by miles of high cliffs, steep valleys, numerous sandstone arches, rock shelters and boulder-strewn creeks. This Wilderness is located within the scenic Red River Gorge Geological Area, where cliffs tower 200 feet above the mature hemlocks, hardwoods and rhododendron thickets. This unusual geology has created an environment for abundant wildlife and more than 750 flowering plants. An added feature of this Wilderness is the Red River, a National Wild and Scenic River that bisects the Wilderness. Backpacking, primitive camping, canoeing, fishing and hunting are popular activities in Clifty Wilderness.

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 Clifty 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 Clifty 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 Clifty 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

-- Campfires and stoves are prohibited within 100 feet of the base of any cliff or the back of a rock shelter.

-- Food and refuse must be stored in bear-resistant containers or suspended at least 10 feet off the ground and 4 feet from the supporting tree when unattended.

-- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste unless it is disposed of in a bear-resistant trash receptacle provided by the Forest Service.

-- Do not burn or bury food, refuse, or other bear attractants.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- A recreation permit is required for camping. Permits may be purchased at Forest Service offices or local vendors in the Red River Gorge.

-- Camping is prohibited within 300 feet of any trail.

-- Camping is prohibited within 100 feet of the base of any cliff or back of any rock shelter.

Wilderness Permit System

A wilderness permit system has been implemented for this wilderness. This involves a mandatory permit, which does not limit use. Wilderness permit systems are implemented to collect information on use levels and patterns and as an education and information tool. People interested in visiting the Clifty Wilderness should contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more information about this permit system, which may vary by location or time of the year.

Fees

The following user fee system(s) have been implemented for this wilderness: OVERNIGHT CAMPING. Fees are most often used to offset the operating costs of a permit system or to help fund management activities such as trail maintenance. Contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information on this fee system.

Contacts

Gladie Cultural and Environmental Learning Center

3451 SKY BRIDGE ROAD
KY 715

STANTON, KY 40380

Remarks: Office hours: 9:00-5:30, 7 days, March-November

Phone: 606-663-8100

Email: mailroom_r8_daniel_boone@fs.fed.us

Cumberland Ranger District

2375 KY 801 SOUTH
MOREHEAD, KY 40351

Phone: 606-784-6428

Daniel Boone National Forest

1700 BYPASS ROAD
WINCHESTER, KY 40391

Remarks: Office Hours 8:00-4:30 M-F Eastern Time

Phone: 859-745-3100

Links to Other Websites

[Daniel Boone National Forest, Clifty 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 99-197 | December 23, 1985 | 13,300 |
| Kentucky Wilderness Act of 1985 - Public law 99-197 (12/23/1985) To designate certain national forest system lands in the state of Kentucky for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to release other forest lands for multiple use management, and for other purposes | | |

 [download 99-197](#)