

# Wilderness.net's Bald River Gorge Wilderness Fact Sheet

## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Bald River Gorge Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 3,791 acres. All of the wilderness is in Tennessee and is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

Bald River is a small wild trout stream flowing cold and clear northward through the middle of the steep-sided Bald River Gorge and hence down the middle of this Wilderness. The Wilderness ends just before the river plunges dramatically over a 90-foot waterfall, Bald River Falls, and into the Tellico River. Southern Appalachian hardwoods, pine, dog hobble, and other flora cloak the mountain slopes above the river, home to black bears, deer, wild turkeys, and wild hogs. Fall turns the area into a quilt of color. Summer wildflowers are plentiful. The Bald River Trail climbs steeply from the Bald River Falls parking lot on the northern edge of the Wilderness, descends past a series of waterfalls and along an old logging railway bed, then rises to follow the side of the gorge. Alternating between riverbank and gorge rim, the trail eventually passes through thick stands of laurel and rhododendron before climbing briefly to the Cantrell Parking Area on the southern boundary. The distance is less than six miles, the hiking fairly easy, and campsites exist in several sheltered spots. Two additional trails provide shorter hikes. Human use is heavy. Anglers are limited to fly-fishing and must have a special fishing permit.

## 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 Bald 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 Bald 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 Bald 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 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.

## Contacts

**Tellico Ranger District**  
250 RANGER STATION RD  
TELLICO PLAINS, TN 37385

Phone: 423-253-8400

## 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 98-578	October 30, 1984	3,887

Tennessee Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-578 (10/30/1984) To designate certain lands in the Cherokee National Forest, Tennessee, as wilderness areas, and to allow management of certain lands for other purposes than wilderness

 [download 98-578](#)