

Wilderness.net's James River Face Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the James River Face Wilderness in 1975 and it now has a total of 8,907 acres. All of the wilderness is in Virginia and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The first designated wilderness in Virginia (1975), James River Face is bounded on the northeast by the James River and on the south by Petites Gap Road (gravel, FS #35). Immediately south of FR #35 lies Thunder Ridge Wilderness. James River Face reaches a high point of 3,073 feet on Highcock Knob near the southern boundary, and a low point of about 650 feet near the river. Vegetation is dominated by a typical Appalachian hardwood forest. The Devil's Marbleyard, a unique quartzite boulder field, lies within this wilderness. James River Face is a Class 1 airshed.

The James River Face Wilderness contains about 32 miles of trails. The Appalachian National Scenic Trail (A.T., FT #1) meanders through the wilderness for about 11 miles. Trails information is available on National Geographic-Trails Illustrated Map #789 (Lexington-Blue Ridge Mts).

James River Face Wilderness is located in Bedford and Rockbridge Counties in west central Virginia. It is managed by the U.S. Forest Service as a part of the Glenwood-Pedlar Ranger Districts of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests.

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 James River Face 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 James River Face Wilderness is part of the 111 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 James River Face 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

- Group size is limited to no more than 10 people per party.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.
- Campfires and grills are prohibited within 1,000 feet of the A.T. James River Foot Bridge.
- Possessing any alcoholic beverage within 1,000 feet of the A.T. James River Foot Bridge is prohibited.

-- Climbing, or being upon any part of the A.T. James River Foot Bridge, abutments, or piers except the boarded walkway is prohibited.

-- As with all designated Wilderness areas, mechanical transportation (including wagons, game carts, bicycles, and other vehicles) is prohibited.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Maximum length of stay is 21 days within any 31-day period anywhere in this Wilderness; except that maximum length of stay is 3 days within any 30-day period at, or within 300 feet of, the Matts Creek Shelter on the Appalachian National Scenic Trail; and camping is prohibited within 1.000 feet of the Appalachian Trail James River Foot Bridge.

Contacts

Glenwood/Pedlar Ranger District

Phone: 540-291-2188

27 Ranger Lane

NATURAL BRIDGE STATION, VA 24579

Remarks: Office hours 8:00 - 4:30 M-F

Links to Other Websites

[George Washington & Jefferson National Forests 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 93-622	January 3, 1975	8,800

(Known as the Eastern Wilderness Areas Act) - Public law 93-622 (1/3/1975) To further the purposes of the Wilderness Act by designating certain acquired lands for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to provide for study of certain additional lands for such inclusion, and for other purposes

 [download 93-622](#)

Public Law 98-586

October 30, 1984

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Virginia Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-586 (10/30/1984) To designate certain national forest lands in the State of Virginia, and for other purposes

 [download 98-586](#)