

Wilderness.net's Allegheny Islands Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Allegheny Islands Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 372 acres. All of the wilderness is in Pennsylvania and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Northwestern Pennsylvania's Allegheny Islands Wilderness is, at just 372 acres, one of the country's smallest wilderness areas. It's nevertheless a fascinating and ecologically precious one. The

wilderness, established in 1984 and managed by the U.S. Service, is located on seven islands scattered along a 56-mile stretch of the Allegheny River, between the Buckaloons Recreation Area and the town of Tionesta.

Terrain The islands of the Wilderness—Crull's, Thompson's, Baker, Courson, King, R. Thompson's, and No-Name—were formed by the alluvial action of the Allegheny. Built of sand, mud, and clay originating in the Allegheny Mountains, they owe their size, shape, and changeable character to the river's restless patterns of deposition and erosion.

At 96 acres, Crull's Island is the largest in the Allegheny Islands Wilderness; No-Name, by contrast, is just 10 acres in size.

Major tributaries along this length of the Allegheny include Anders Run, Clark Run, Thompson Run, Tidioute Creek, East Hickory Creek, and Little Hickory Run.

Ecology The Allegheny Islands Wilderness preserves outstanding groves of old-growth bottomland forest, although ecosystems here are in multiple successional states due to the regular influence of flooding, storms, and other disturbance agents. Typical hardwoods include American sycamore, silver maple, green ash, slippery elm, shagbark hickory, butternut, hawthorn, and willows. Some of the trees are impressively large: Within the Wilderness is Pennsylvania's (current) champion sycamore, a 148-foot-tall specimen.

Birdlife is prolific and varied within the Wilderness and adjoining portions of the river. Keep an eye peeled for great blue and green herons, kingfishers, turkey vultures, ospreys, bald eagles, and numerous varieties of waterfowl. The waters are important habitat for the Allegheny's globally significant population of freshwater mussels.

Notes This area was historically frequented by a number of American Indian cultures, particularly the Iroquoian Seneca. During the Revolutionary War, Thompson Island was the site of a fight between allied British/Iroquois forces and American soldiers under the command of Col. Daniel Brodhead.

No designated trails exist in the Wilderness, but the river-bottom woods are fairly easy to explore

cross-country during early spring, before understory vegetation thickens. Canoeists and kayakers have much to explore: The portion of the Allegheny in the Wilderness belongs to an 87-mile “Recreational” stretch classified in the National Wild & Scenic Rivers System.

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 Allegheny Islands 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 Allegheny Islands 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 Allegheny Islands 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

- Overnight visitors cannot occupy any single location longer than 14 days in a 30 days period.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.

Contacts

Bradford Ranger District
29 US FOREST SERVICE DR
BRADFORD, PA 16701

Phone: 814-363-6000

Links to Other Websites

[Allegheny National Forest 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	Acres Change (in acres)
Public Law 98-585	October 30, 1984	368

Pennsylvania Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-585 (10/30/1984) To designate certain areas in the Allegheny National Forest as Wilderness and recreation areas

 [download 98-585](#)