

Ranger Explorer Activity Guide

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park



THE WILD SIDE OF SHENANDOAH

For Ages 13+

Discover Your Wilderness

Take a walk on the wild side! Explore what wilderness means to you and the world.

Did you know. . .

- 🦋 The United States was the first country in the world to designate land as wilderness.
- 🦋 In 1964 America's leaders recognized the importance of wild lands by passing a law called the Wilderness Act.
- 🦋 The Wilderness Act created a system of wilderness areas across the United States called the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- 🦋 Wilderness areas have the strongest, most permanent conservation protection possible.
- 🦋 40% of Shenandoah National Park is wilderness — one of the largest wilderness areas in the eastern United States.

Wilderness areas must be kept natural and wild, yet people are encouraged to experience and enjoy wilderness. In wilderness people can enjoy truly natural surroundings and test their outdoor skills because modern development and motorized equipment are prohibited. Wilderness provides habitat for wild animals and environmental benefits, such as clean water, for humans.

Come explore Shenandoah's wilderness!

In these Ranger Explorer activities, the word "wilderness" always refers to lands that are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System which have special legal protection from human development.





This program will take approximately 4 - 6 hours to complete, including a hike into Shenandoah's wilderness.



**Activity #1
What is Wilderness?**

This activity can be done anywhere.
❖ Discover what wilderness means to you and others.



**Activity #5
Where the Wild Things Are**

This activity is done on a trail in wilderness (choose from list on back cover).
❖ Experience, explore, and observe wilderness.



**Activity #2
Where is Wilderness?**

This activity can be done anywhere.
❖ Learn where you can find wilderness areas.



**Activity #6
What Would You Do?**

This activity can be done anywhere.
❖ Make a decision as a wilderness ranger.



**Activity #3
Get Set to Explore**

This activity is done at a Shenandoah National Park Visitor Center.
❖ Explore wilderness using an interactive computer touch screen exhibit.



**Activity #7
What Did They Say?**

This activity can be done anywhere.
❖ Interview people, then share what you know about wilderness.



**Activity #4
Do You See What I See?**

This activity is done at a Skyline Drive Overlook (choose from list on back cover).
❖ Look into wilderness and describe what you see.

Ready. Set. Explore...

When you have completed this booklet, take it to a Shenandoah National Park Visitor Center, ask a ranger to review your work, and receive your wilderness patch.



Activity #1

What is Wilderness?



Wilderness means different things to different people. What does the word “wilderness” mean to you?

Here is the definition of wilderness in the Wilderness Act passed by the U.S. Congress in 1964:

Wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. . . . an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation. . . with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. . . .*

*In 1964, the word “man” was used to mean both men and women!



Have you ever heard the word “untrammelled”? A trammel is a net used for catching fish. “To trammel” means to catch, hold, restrain. Think about what “untrammelled” means. “Untrammelled” is the essence of the meaning of wilderness.

Is this definition similar to or different from your meaning of wilderness? How?



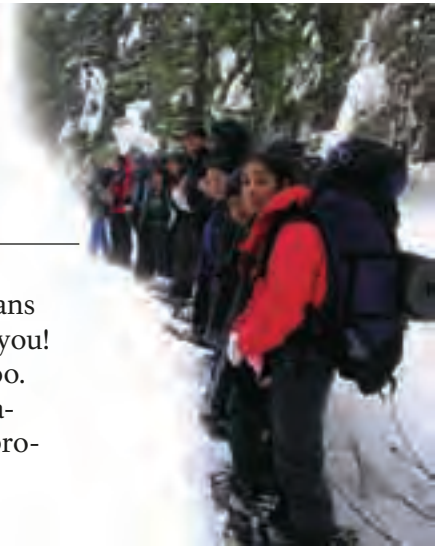
Basically, according to the Wilderness Act, wilderness is an area that is natural and wild, where people do not put new roads or buildings. People going to wilderness can get away from cities and crowds of people. Wilderness is home to plants and animals, people only visit.



Activity #1

What is Wilderness?

continued



Wilderness areas are Federal public land, which means that it belongs to the American people — including you! Shenandoah National Park is Federal public land, too. Many National Parks have wild lands, but not all National Parks are wilderness. Wilderness adds extra protection to National Park lands.

When President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act on September 3, 1964, he stated:

If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it.

Here is the first sentence of the Wilderness Act. It states the need for protecting wild lands as wilderness.

*In order to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization**, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States and its possessions, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition, it is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.*

(**Mechanization: machinery, especially replacing humans or animals.)

Basically, Americans felt the need to set land aside that would not turn into towns, shopping malls, or playgrounds. They thought that wilderness would benefit people then and in the future, too.

Is it important to you that wild lands are protected as wilderness? Why or why not?



For a complete copy of the Wilderness Act, go to <http://www.wilderness.net/index.cfm?fuse=NWPS&sec=legisAct>

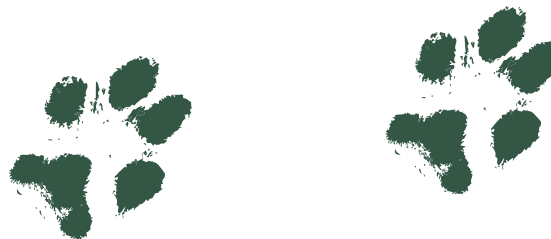




Activity #1

What is Wilderness?

continued



Read the following quotations. Think about how these people felt about wilderness.



“Wilderness is a damp and dreary place where all manner of wild beasts dash about uncooked!”
– anonymous, 1600

“A wilderness-condition is . . . a condition of straits, wants, deep distresses, and most deadly dangers.”
– Thomas Brooks, 1675

“Looking [ahead] only a few years, what a [spectacular scene] presents itself! Wilderness, once the chosen residence of solitude and savageness, converted into populous cities, smiling villages, beautiful farms and plantations!”
– Ohio newspaper, 1817

“It is imperative to maintain portions of the wilderness untouched so that a tree will rot where it falls, a waterfall will pour its curve without generating electricity, a trumpeter swan may float on uncontaminated water -- and moderns may at least see what their ancestors knew in their nerves and blood.”
– Bernard De Voto, 1947

“We are a great people because we have been successful in developing and using our marvelous natural resources; but, also, we Americans are the people we are largely because we have had the influence of the wilderness on our lives.”
– Representative John P. Saylor, 1956

“We have a profound, a fundamental need for areas of wilderness -- a need that is not only recreational but spiritual, educational, scientific, essential to a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, and our place in all Nature.”
– Howard Zahniser, 1963

“To truly define wilderness, you have to experience it. You have to live and breathe it. If I had to put into words the definition of wilderness it would be a place you can find yourself and truly see your strengths and weaknesses.”
– Staci, WildLink student, 2007



Stephen Mather Wilderness, WA



Do you agree with any of these quotations? If so, why?

Look at the date of the quotations.

How has the perspective on wilderness changed over the past 400 years? Why do you think it has changed?



Activity #2

Where is Wilderness?



Look at the National Wilderness Preservation System map to answer the following questions.

Write down the color used to represent wilderness areas managed by these Federal agencies:



According to this map, how many acres of wilderness are in the U.S.? _____

An acre is about the size of a football field. The United States is 2.3 billion acres!

About 5% of the United States is wilderness. Does that seem like a lot or a little to you?
 a lot a little

U.S. Forest Service's color: _____

National Park Service's color: _____

Bureau of Land Management's color: _____

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's color: _____



U.S. Forest Service



National Park Service



Bureau of Land Management



U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service

Which state has the largest wilderness area? _____

Is there a wilderness area in your state? If so, what is it called? If there is more than one, write down the one closest to your home. _____

The National Wilderness Preservation System continues to grow as the U.S. Congress continues to designate public land as wilderness.

Is there a wilderness area designated in the year you were born? If so, what is its name and where is it? (If there is more than one, write them all down.)

Record the following information:

Name of area: _____

State: _____

Size (in acres): _____

Why did you choose this wilderness area?



Badlands Wilderness, SD

Choose a wilderness area you would like to visit.



Gaylord A. Nelson Wilderness, WI



Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness, MN



Activity #2

Where is Wilderness?

continued



Now look at the map of Shenandoah National Park on the back cover of this booklet.



Why do you think wilderness in Shenandoah is in different sections?
(Hint: think about why there is a long thin line through the middle of Shenandoah that is not wilderness.)



You will not find modern roads and buildings in wilderness. However, in Shenandoah wilderness you may find evidence of old roads, buildings, and farms. You may find stone walls, broken pottery, standing stone chimneys, an apple tree, cemeteries, or rusty car frames with trees growing up through them. You may even find an arrowhead. These are signs that people used to live in what is now Shenandoah Wilderness. This history is protected for you and other people to explore. New roads, parking lots, and campgrounds will not be built on top of these artifacts.



Does knowing that there used to be cars, houses, and cows in Shenandoah National Park change your perspective on Shenandoah's wilderness? Do you think it should be wilderness? Why or why not?



“Shenandoah is one of the great promises of the Wilderness Act, that we can dedicate formerly [used] areas where the primeval scene can be restored by natural forces, so that we can have a truly National Wilderness Preservation System”

— Senator Frank Church, 1972



Activity #3

Get Set to Explore



Go to one of the Visitor Centers in Shenandoah National Park.



- ❖ Dickey Ridge Visitor Center (mile 4.6)
- ❖ Byrd Visitor Center (milepost 51)

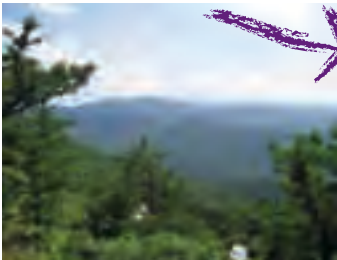
Find the interactive Wilderness Computer Exhibit, "The Spirit of Wilderness," in the Visitor Center. Explore the exhibit.

In the Trailblazers section, read about one person who influenced wilderness in the United States.

Who did you pick and why was that person important to wilderness preservation?

Get Ready for Exploring Outdoors

Choose an overlook and a trail from the Shenandoah Wilderness section, or from the list on the back cover of this guide.



One overlook you will stop at that has a view of wilderness (for activity 4). Which overlook did you choose?

One trail you will hike that enters wilderness (for activity 5 — you do not have to hike the entire trail). Which trail did you choose?

- ❖ Before you go hiking, talk with a park ranger at a Shenandoah National Park Visitor Center.
- ❖ Ask at the desk for a map of your trail. Ask the ranger to mark the wilderness boundary on the map. Or find the wilderness boundary on a Potomac Appalachian Trail Club map at the desk and mark the boundary on your trail map.
- ❖ Make sure that you are fully prepared for your hike— have a map, wear appropriate footwear and clothing, bring plenty of water, snacks, and any other supplies you will need.
- ❖ Ask the ranger if there are any special conditions on the trail you plan to hike.



If you are unable to hike a trail into wilderness, consider doing the same activities on the Limberlost Trail (milepost 43). While this trail does not go into designated wilderness, there is still opportunity to contemplate and learn about wilderness.



Activity #4

Do You See What I See?



At your overlook, go to the edge of the pavement and look out at the view.

Draw a picture or describe in words what you see.



How does the area look different from the area where you live?
How does it look the same?

Look at your map of Shenandoah National Park to help you figure out where the boundaries are for the park and the wilderness.

You will see land protected as Shenandoah National Park. You will probably also see land outside of the national park that is developed with farms, buildings, roads, and towns. Can you tell where the boundary of Shenandoah National Park is?

It is difficult to tell exactly where the wilderness boundary is if the land next to wilderness is protected as a national park. Yet wilderness lands have the highest level of protection of all public lands. Wilderness can sometimes be identified by what you do not see rather than what you do see.

List four things that you would NOT see in Shenandoah wilderness.



1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Wilderness protects more than just land, trees, and quiet places. Wilderness protects things that people can enjoy outside of wilderness too, such as views and clean water. Can you think of other things wilderness protects? Write down a few of your ideas.



Activity #5

Where the Wild Things Are



Get ready to hike the trail you chose in Activity 3!



Sounds and Sights At the Trailhead



You do not have to hike the entire trail! Hike at least far enough to spend some time in wilderness. Make sure you have everything you need for the hike (map, water, snacks, good shoes, etc.)!

“Sounds and Sights” directions:

Sit down in a safe location near the beginning of the trail.

Sit still with your eyes closed for a few minutes. Listen closely to the sounds around you. Open your eyes and write down all of the sounds that you heard.

Now look around you for a few minutes and write down what you see.

Sounds I Hear

Objects I See Made By Humans

Natural Objects I See

Observe: On The Trail

As you walk along the trail, observe what is around you. Can you tell when you are in wilderness? If so, how? If not, why not?

Observe: In the Wilderness

Once you know you are in wilderness, stop for a break. Find a place next to the trail to sit. (Sit off of the trail so that other hikers do not have to walk around you.)

Sounds and Sights In the Wilderness



Sit still with your eyes closed for a few minutes. Listen closely to the sounds around you. Open your eyes and write down all of the sounds that you heard.

Now look around you for a few minutes and write down what you see.

Sounds I Hear

Objects I See Made By Humans

Natural Objects I See

Think about the difference between your lists from “At the Trailhead” and from “In The Wilderness”?



Activity #5

Where the Wild Things Are continued



Do one of the
following:
do this:



1. Postcard from the Wilderness.

How would you describe your wilderness experience to someone else?

Write a postcard to someone not with you about your wilderness experience.
Write your message here:

or this:



2. Wilderness Postcard Front

Draw a picture or write a poem for the front of your postcard.



Activity #5

Where the Wild Things Are continued



What Do You Think?



Is it important to you that wild lands are protected as wilderness? Why or why not?

Look at your answer to this same question in Activity 1. Has your answer changed now that you have experienced wilderness? Why or why not?

When you hike in wilderness, do your best to leave no trace of your visit. Follow the “Leave No Trace” principles:

- ❖ Plan Ahead and Prepare
- ❖ Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
- ❖ Dispose of Waste Properly
- ❖ Leave What You Find
- ❖ Minimize Campfire Impacts
- ❖ Respect Wildlife
- ❖ Be Considerate of Other Visitors

For more information on how to minimize your impact on the outdoors, visit www.lnt.org

“To know wilderness is to know a profound humility, to recognize one’s littleness, to sense dependence and interdependence, indebtedness, and responsibility.”

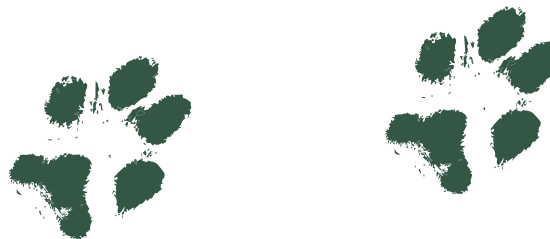
– Howard Zahniser





Activity #6

What Would You Do?



Put yourself in the role of a wilderness ranger. Think about how you can protect wilderness and keep hikers safe. Read this real-life story:

In February 1998, an extensive ice storm caused many trees to fall across roads and trails. Shenandoah National Park was closed for several weeks. Many people come to the park to hike in the spring. Storm debris on the trails may make hiking difficult and trails hard to find. Hikers may have to climb over logs and may need to leave the trail to hike around downed trees. Conditions may be unsafe for hikers. If hikers are not careful, hiking off trail could result in trampled vegetation, damage to trail edges, and compaction of soil.

Even with full staff and many volunteers, the trails in wilderness could not be completely cleared using traditional tools before spring. A proposal has been made to clear the storm-damaged trails using chain saws within the designated wilderness.

**Think about this question:
What would you do?**



Should Shenandoah National Park use traditional tools or motorized equipment to clear the trails that received major damage from ice storms within designated wilderness? Read the additional information on the next page and then choose one of the wilderness ranger options on the following page.



Traditional tools require only human energy, not motors. Examples of traditional tools are hand saws, axes, pulley systems, and rakes. Motorized equipment and mechanized transportation, such as chainsaws, leaf blowers, weed whackers, ATVs, trucks, and helicopters would not typically be used in wilderness.

One way to preserve the natural and wild aspect of wilderness while letting people hike in wilderness is to use traditional tools when maintaining trails. Traditional tools are quiet and do not use fossil fuels. Using traditional tools preserves the qualities of wilderness, such as solitude and naturalness. These tools are considered the “minimum necessary” to keep trails open for hikers.





Activity #6

What Would You Do?

continued



Read and compare these Acts, Policies and Plans and think about the story you just read on page 12:



Wilderness Act, 1964

The Wilderness Act states that wilderness areas “shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character”

The Wilderness Act also explains that certain things can not be done in wilderness: “. . . except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area) there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.”

National Park Service Management Policies, 2006

Chapter 6.3.5 Wilderness Management, Minimum Requirement:

“All management decisions affecting wilderness must be consistent with the minimum requirement concept. . . . When determining minimum requirement, the potential disruption of wilderness character and resources will be considered before, and given significantly more weight than, economic efficiency and convenience. If a compromise of wilderness resources or character is unavoidable, only those actions that preserve wilderness character and/or have localized, short-term adverse impacts will be acceptable.”

Chapter 8.2.5.1 Use of Parks, Visitor Safety:

“While recognizing that there are limitations on its capability to totally eliminate all hazards, the [National Park Service] will seek to provide a safe and healthful environment for visitors and employees.”

Shenandoah National Park Backcountry and Wilderness Plan, 1998

“Chainsaws and other motorized equipment are prohibited in wilderness except as approved by Superintendent.”

“Clearing should be done at least once each year in early spring to remove winter storm damage.”





Activity #6

What Would You Do?

continued



You are the ranger.
Pick an option:

Option A:

Clear trails only in wilderness with traditional hand tools as time and funding allow. Notify visitors of trail conditions in an attempt to decrease safety concerns and damage to the resource.

Option B:

Use chain saws on trails in wilderness at selected times in order to clear trails with minimal noise disturbance for visitors and wildlife.

Option C:

Inventory all trails and determine action for trails on a case-by-case basis. Select trails with known high visitor use for opening with power tools and evaluate lesser-used trails for opening with traditional hand tools.

Option D:

Allow unrestricted use of chain saws on all trails in wilderness immediately until trails are fully cleared of storm damage.

For the wilderness ranger's final decision, look at "Final Decision" on bottom of this page.



What is your final decision? Why?



Final Decision:
The Superintendent of Shenandoah National Park approved a limited use of chainsaws in wilderness during a short period that ended before the large number of hikers arrived in the spring. The rationale for the decision was that clearing trails was necessary to avoid lost or injured visitors and damage to the wilderness resources. Clearing trails could not be done using traditional handtools during the time that was available before the visitors would arrive. The "window" of permitted chainsaw activity was short and ended before most visitors arrived the week of spring break. The park conducted a massive Incident Command System effort to put the maximum number of people on the clearing effort so it could be accomplished during the short window. More than 100 volunteers from a partner organization, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, participated in clearing storm debris from trails.
If you chose Option B, your decision matches the real-life decision.

7

Activity #7

What Did They Say?



Today, studies show that over 50% of Americans support wilderness. Yet other studies show that fewer than 10% of Americans know about designated wilderness.

Why do you think that is?



Is it important for people to know about wilderness? If so, why?



Wilderness is public land (it belongs to all Americans), so if Americans are going to make decisions about their land, they need to know about wilderness.

Did you know about wilderness before doing these activities?

Yes No

Have these activities changed your perspective on wilderness? If so, how?

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Activity #7

What Did They Say?

continued



Ask at least one person permission to interview them and explain what you are doing.

Now you can teach other people about wilderness.

Ask these questions.

Questions:

Write down their answers.



1. What does wilderness mean to you?



2. Do you think of Shenandoah National Park as wilderness? Why or why not?

Have the person sign their name.



Signature:

Share with them some of the things about wilderness that you feel are the most important.

From their answers, do you think the person knew about wilderness before you talked with them?

Yes

No

What were the important things about wilderness that you shared?

If you interview more people, use another sheet of paper and follow the same steps.

You can do this activity again with friends and family when you are home. Try it at school, too!

“Only by encouraging wonder in others and explaining to millions of people its true meaning, can we ever be sure of preserving any wilderness on our planet.”

-- Sigurd Olson

Take the Challenge!



Learn more!

- ❖ Explore the website www.wilderness.net.
 - Look at a current map of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
 - Learn about a specific wilderness area.
 - Join a blog about wilderness.
- ❖ Meet students exploring wilderness on the website www.wilderness.net/wildlink
 - Read the journals of high school students on wilderness expeditions.
- ❖ Learn how you can help protect wilderness and other public lands by looking at the website www.lnt.org. Expand your outdoor skills and ethics.

Explore!

- ❖ Go outside near your home. Explore the outdoors and practice Leave No Trace skills.
- ❖ Learn more about wilderness near your home. Plan a visit to that wilderness.
- ❖ Contact a wilderness area or area of public land near your home.

Get involved!

- ❖ Find out if there are any conservation or wilderness preservation groups near you.
 - Learn more about what they do.



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior
Shenandoah National Park

Ranger Explorer Certificate

*has completed all of the requirements for becoming a Shenandoah National Park Explorer Ranger
and pledges to protect all national parks for future generations.*

Park Ranger

Date



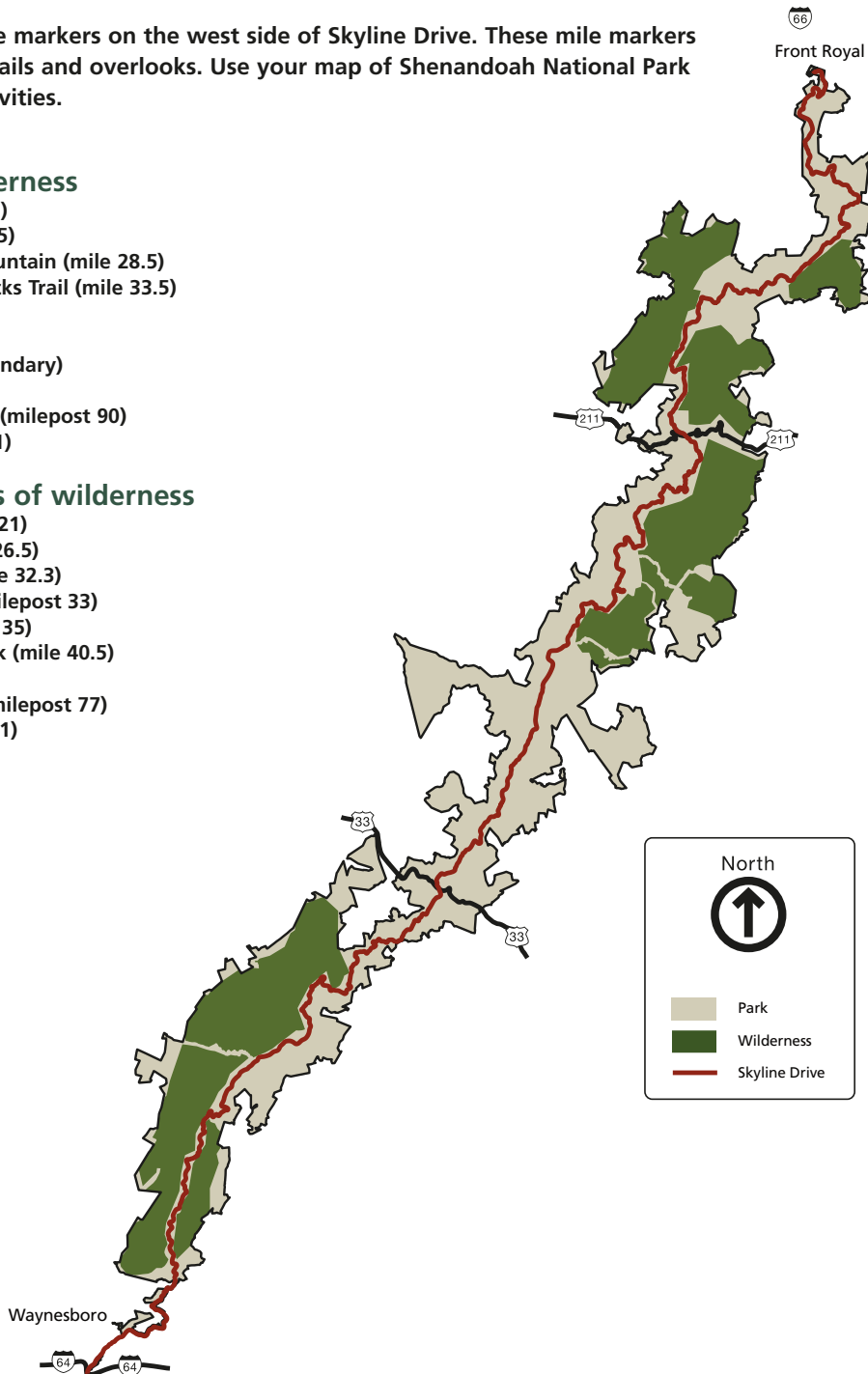
You will find concrete mile markers on the west side of Skyline Drive. These mile markers will help you locate the trails and overlooks. Use your map of Shenandoah National Park to help you plan your activities.

Trails that enter wilderness

- Overall Run Trail (milepost 22)
- Thornton River Trail (mile 25.5)
- Appalachian Trail to Pass Mountain (mile 28.5)
- Hazel Mountain to White Rocks Trail (mile 33.5)
- Cedar Run Trail (mile 45.5)
- Rose River Loop (mile 49.2)
- Old Rag Ridge Trail (park boundary)
- Big Run Loop Trail (mile 81.2)
- Riprap Trail to Chimney Rock (milepost 90)
- Turk Mountain Trail (mile 94.1)

Overlooks with views of wilderness

- Hogback Overlook (milepost 21)
- Jeremys Run Overlook (mile 26.5)
- Tunnel Parking Overlook (mile 32.3)
- Hazel Mountain Overlook (milepost 33)
- Pinnacles Overlook (milepost 35)
- Thorofare Mountain Overlook (mile 40.5)
- Old Rag View (mile 46.5)
- Brown Mountain Overlook (milepost 77)
- Big Run Overlook (milepost 81)
- Riprap Overlook (mile 91.5)



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