

Is Wilderness for YOU?

Wilderness areas have been set aside to preserve primitive character of the land, invoking a spirit of self-reliance in those faced with the challenges nature provides. Before planning a trip, visitors should consider whether a wilderness setting is appropriate to their skills, experience, and expectations. If you do choose to enter the wilderness, some important things to remember:

- Always practice “Leave No Trace” camping and hiking techniques to reduce your impacts. By making it hard for others to see and hear you, you will minimize your impact on other visitors.
- Campfires are discouraged because of the severe impacts they cause. Use a lightweight lantern and cook stove instead. If you do build a fire, follow these important guidelines; choose a site that has already been impacted, keep fires small, use only dead and down wood for fuel, and scatter ashes 100 ft. from campsite.
- To protect your solitude, and that of others, locating your campsite 200 feet or more from trails is a good rule to follow.
- Trash: “Pack it in, pack it out.” Remember, aluminum doesn’t burn. Clean your campsite before you leave. Human waste should be buried 7” - 8” deep at least 200 feet from trails and streams.
- Trails are not marked or blazed. Signs are found only at trail junctions. Stay on designated trails. Do not create new trails. There are no bridges at river or stream crossings. Trails can be muddy and wet so be prepared to get your feet wet.
- A map and compass, and the ability to use them should be considered necessities.
- Plan ahead, have a prepared route. Tell someone of your plans.
- Bring drinking water; otherwise, treat water from streams and springs before drinking to kill harmful pathogens.
- During hunting seasons, hikers are encouraged to wear high visibility clothing.
- Dress for the weather. Be prepared for sudden changes. Wear proper footwear.



For additional information, contact:

Gauley Ranger District
932 North Fork Cherry Road
Richwood, WV 26261
(304) 846-2695, Extension 0

<http://www.fs.fed.us/r9/mnf/>

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Monongahela National Forest
200 Sycamore Street
Elkins, West Virginia 26241
(304) 636-1800 Telephone/TTY

Cranberry Wilderness



Description: The 35, 864 acre Cranberry Wilderness in the Monongahela National Forest is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. It is located in Pocahontas and Webster Counties, West Virginia. The area includes the entire drainage of the Middle Fork of the Williams and the North Fork of the Cranberry Rivers. Elevations range from 2,400 to over 4,600 feet.

Location:

From I-79, take Exit 57, follow U.S. 19 south to Rt. 55 east, to Rt. 150. From I-64, take exit 169 and follow U.S. Rt. 219 north to Rt. 39 west to Rt. 150. Rt. 150, the Highland Scenic Highway, is not snowplowed in winter and is closed to vehicular traffic.

Weather Considerations:

Elevation ranges from 2,400 to 4,600 feet above sea level. Freezing temperatures can occur any time of the year. Snow can be expected from October through April. Forest Roads are not maintained during the winter.

Area Rules:

In addition to applicable forest-wide regulations, these special regulations are in effect in the Cranberry Wilderness.

- Groups over 10 persons are prohibited in the Wilderness
- Pets must be under your control at all times.
- Motor vehicles are restricted to roads and parking areas. Mechanical transportation, such as bicycles, wagons, wheelbarrows and carts are prohibited.
- Horse use is discouraged in the Cranberry Wilderness. Trails were developed to provide minimum requirements for safe visitor use and to protect vegetation, soil and water. The trails are maintained for human use only. Please consider other areas such as Cranberry Backcountry for horse use.
- Visitors entering the Wilderness area are encouraged to register. Although registration is not mandatory we ask you to take a few moments to fill out a registration form at the trailhead or Nature Center. Thank You.

You may enjoy a similar experience with more highly developed trails and camping facilities in the nearby Cranberry and Tea Creek Backcountry areas. Visitors are encouraged to stop at the Nature Center before their trip into the Wilderness. Maps and other valuable information are available to make your trip more safe and enjoyable. Located at the junction of Rt. 150 and 39, the Cranberry Mountain Nature Center is open daily May through October and weekends the remainder of the year except December through March.

EMERGENCY DIAL 911

Trail System:

Wilderness trails are maintained with a narrower tread and pathway than other forest trails. Trails are marked only at junctions and there are no bridges at stream crossings. Visitors should use a map and compass when traveling in the wilderness. USGS topographic quads covering the Wilderness include: Hillsboro, Lobelia, Webster Springs SE, and Woodrow. These are available at the Nature Center and Gauley Ranger Station. Caution is urged when using these maps as trail relocations may cause discrepancies with locations on the maps. Practice Leave No Trace outdoor ethics: do not build a camp within 200 feet of roads and streams.

Ridgetop Trails

Big Beechy, County Line, District Line, Forks of Cranberry, and North-South Trails are all ridgetop trails and similar in character. Their tread is narrow, often rocky or wet, with frequent steep sideslopes. Although an occasional headwater spring may be found, water is generally unavailable.

Big Beechy Trail (TR 207)

Begins in the east about 200 yards up the North Fork Trail from the Trailhead on the Highland Scenic Highway. It proceeds to the top of Sugar Creek Mountain and follows the ridge westward before descending to the Middle Fork of the Williams River where it intersects with the Middle Fork Trail.
Length: 6.5 miles Elevation: 4440' – 2620'

Black Mountain Trail (TR 246)

Connects the Williams River and Big Spruce Scenic Overlooks on the Highland Scenic Highway.
Length: 2 miles Elevation: 4500' – 4400'

County Line Trail (TR 206)

From Three Forks, climbs abruptly to the top of the ridge with some faint views overlooking the Williams River. Following the ridgetop, it intersects with District Line Trail before a steep descent, via many switchbacks, to the Williams River.
Length: 9.5 miles Elevation: 3960' – 2390'

District Line Trail (TR 248)

Is a ridgetop connector between Big Beechy and County Line Trails.
Length: 3.0 miles Elevation: 4420' – 3960'

Forks of Cranberry Trail (TR 245)

Begins on the Scenic Highway, follows a ridgetop westward, and ends up on the South Fork Cranberry River just upstream from the Forks.
Length: 6.0 miles Elevation: 4570' – 3960'

North-South Trail (TR 688)

Follows the ridge dividing the Cranberry and Williams Rivers watersheds. From the Scenic Highway it proceeds west to the Cranberry Campground on the Cranberry River. There are many intersecting trails that make this a popular trail for loop hikes.
Length: 14 miles (6 miles wilderness)
Elevation: 4470' – 2520'

Middle Fork Trail (TR 271)

Follows the Middle Fork of the Williams River. From Three Forks the trail uses an old Forest Service Road that was previously a railroad grade. It intersects with Big Beechy and Laureley Branch trails before fording the stream twice on its climb to the headwaters and terminus on the North Fork Trail.
Length: 9.0 miles Elevation: 4180' -2390'

North Fork Trail (TR 272)

Follows an old Forest Service Road along the North Fork of the Cranberry River over Black Mountain to the Scenic Highway. It begins at the Forks of Cranberry at the Limestone Treatment Plant. There is one ford, and some re-routes where the grade has been washed away.
Length: 7.5 miles Elevation: 4470' – 2520'

Laureley Branch Trail (TR 267)

Fords the Middle Fork before climbing on an old railroad grade to the top of the ridge where it meets North-South Trail.
Length: 3.5 miles Elevation: 3920' – 2830'

Tumbling Rock Trail (TR 214)

Connects North-South Trail with the Cranberry River. It crosses the stream twice and uses parts of an old railroad grade.
Length: 2.5 miles Elevation: 3880' – 3080'

Forks By-Pass Trail (TR 273)

Connects the Forks of Cranberry with the North Fork Trail. Length: 1 mile Elevation: 3550' – 3300'