

Bald River Gorge Wilderness Addition

Cherokee National Forest



873 acres, Monroe County, Tennessee

Description



The Bald River Gorge Wilderness Addition, in conjunction with the Upper Bald River proposed wilderness, presents a unique opportunity to protect the entire Bald River watershed. The existing Bald River Gorge Wilderness is 3,271 acres, and was designated in 1984. The existing wilderness protects the lower portion of the Bald River and Bald River Falls, which is a very popular scenic destination. The Bald River Trail is a central feature of the existing wilderness, and is popular with both hikers and trout fisherman. The river holds native Brook Trout, and flyfishing (only) is allowed with a special permit.

The modest 873 acre addition provides an opportunity to protect the headwaters of Maple Branch, Skull Branch, and Ellis Branch. All of the tributary streams flow into the important Bald River trout fishery. A corridor is excluded along the Bald River Road, which provides a popular access route for fishing, hunting, hiking, and a large variety of other recreation activities. The addition also protects critical wildlife habitat, which is essential in order to maintain viable populations of game and non-game wildlife. The network of natural areas including the Bald River Watershed, Citico Creek Wilderness, Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness, and other natural areas in Tennessee and North Carolina is one of the most intact and least

fragmented natural areas outside Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The fact that it is in close proximity to the Smokies and has good landscape connectivity to the Smokies increases its significance. The area is dominated by hardwood forests, and contains outstanding visual character.

Location

The Bald River Gorge addition lays to the southeast of the existing Bald River Gorge Wilderness area in Monroe County, Tennessee, approximately 20 miles southeast of Tellico Plains. Bald River Road (FS Road 126) serves as the southern boundary to this area and Maple Camp Lead Road serves as the eastern and northern boundary.

For more information contact:

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