

Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness Addition

Cherokee National Forest



1,973 acres, Monroe County, Tennessee

Description

Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Addition is an important enhancement to the Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock and Citico Creek Wilderness areas, at 33,620 acres one of the largest areas of designated national forest wilderness in the southeast.

This wilderness complex is also a companion conservation area for Great Smoky Mountains National Park. The two conservation areas lie less than 2 miles apart as the crow flies, and the two areas supplement each other, from a biological standpoint, by providing significant habitat for bear and other wildlife who regularly travel between the two areas. The wilderness addition brings these two conservation areas even closer together and helps establish a connection across the Little Tennessee River Gorge. The addition also connects to the Tapoco Lands in the Little Tennessee Gorge that the Forest Service and Park Service are acquiring from Alcoa.



The addition, along with the existing wilderness and the Tapoco lands encompass some of the best black bear habitat in the Cherokee National Forest and helps to assure a habitat corridor for bear and other wildlife to travel between the Cherokee National Forest and Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This close connection between the two conservation areas also increases the potential for species adaptation under climate change.

This roadless area is a popular destination for both hikers and horseback riders. The Benton MacKaye Trail passes through this 1,973 acre addition, and remnant old growth forest occurs on some of the steep terrain. Although the area recommended for protection is relatively small, the elevation ranges from 3100' along the ridge, to 1100' at the Little Tennessee River, encompassing a wide variety of habitats. This addition was recommended for wilderness designation in the 2004 Forest Plan and is currently managed as a Wilderness Study Area.

Location

The Joyce Kilmer Slickrock wilderness addition is just south of Great Smoky Mountains National Park across the Little Tennessee River Gorge. Views of the park are available in the winter. The Joyce Kilmer Slickrock Wilderness in the Nantahala National Forest is due east. To the south lays the Citico Creek Wilderness. The area also serves as the headwaters for Tallassee Creek, First Creek, and Goat Creek, all of which drain into the Little Tennessee River.

For more information contact:

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