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.
- 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 roads, streams, and trails.
- Trails are not marked or blazed. Signs are found only at junctions and there are no bridges at stream crossings. Trails can be muddy and wet so be prepared to get your feet wet.
- Maps 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.

LARGE PRINT AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

Location:

From I-79, take Exit 57, follow U.S. 19 south to Rt. 55 east to Rt. 150. From Rt. 156 and follow U.S. 219 north to Rt. 39 west to Rt. 150. Rt. 150, the Highland Scenic Highway, is not snowplowed in winter and may be inaccessible due to snow and ice. 

Weather Considerations:

Elevations range 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 required user conflict and to protect vegetation, soil and water. The trails are maintained for human use only. Please consider other areas such as Cranberry River Area for horse use.

Trail System:

Wilderness trails are maintained with a narrower tread 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 quadrangles covering the Wilderness include: Hillsboro, Lobelia, Webster Springs SE, Webster Springs SW and Woodrow. These are available at the Nature Center and Gauley Ranger Station. Caution is urged when using these maps as trail relocation may cause discrepancies with locations on the maps. Practice Leave No Trace outdoor ethics: do not build a camp within 200 feet of roads, streams and trails.