Location: Otter Creek Wilderness is located on the Cheat-Potomac Ranger District of the Monongahela National Forest in Tucker and Randolph Counties, West Virginia. For additional information on this area contact the Cheat Ranger District, PO Box 368, Parsons, West Virginia 26287 at (304) 478-2000.

History: The Otter Creek Boom and Lumber Company logged this area from 1891 to 1914. Several areas were also homesteaded either prior to or during this time. In 1917, the U.S. government acquired the majority of the Otter Creek area to protect the watershed. The area was hunted but otherwise virtually ignored until after World War II, when it came to be viewed primarily as a recreation area. It was logged from 1969 to 1972 in areas near Turkey Run, Condon Run, and north of Otter Creek near Big Springs Gap as the second-growth timber started to reach marketable size. In 1975, Congress designated 20,000 acres as the Otter Creek Wilderness. In 2009, Congress added another 698 acres to the Wilderness with the passage of the Wild Monongahela Act.

Ecology: Spruce dominates the higher elevations and gradually gives way to black cherry and yellow birch on the middle and lower slopes. There are also occasional plantations of Norway spruce. Occasional apple trees can be seen near the old logging camps and homesteads. Many areas, particularly stream drainages, are covered with thickets of impenetrable Rhododendron and mountain laurel. Wildlife in the area includes black bear, whitetail deer, wild turkey, grouse, snowshoe hare, cottontail rabbit, and a variety of squirrels. There are many species of birds and reptiles including the poisonous timber rattlesnake. Otter Creek is also home to a small population of brook trout and salamanders.

The gate on McGowan Mountain Road (FR 324) at the boundary with the Fernow Experimental Forest is closed to the public between April 15th and August 15th to reduce disturbance of wildlife.

Trail System:

- **Big Springs Gap - Otter Creek - Moore Run - Turkey Run - FR 791**
- **Mylius - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Otter Creek - Big Springs Gap**
- **Hedrick Camp - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Otter Creek**
- **Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Otter Creek - Yellow Creek - McGowan Mountain - Moore Run**
- **Moore Run - Otter Creek - Yellow Creek - McGowan Mountain - Moore Run**
- **Mylius - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Possession Camp - Otter Creek - Mylius**
- **Hedrick Camp - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Possession Camp - Otter Creek**
- **Big Springs Gap - Otter Creek - Mylius - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain - Otter Creek - Big Springs Gap**
- **Hedrick Camp - Shavers Mountain - Green Mountain**

**Description:** Otter Creek Wilderness is 20,698 acres in size. The Otter Creek Wilderness lies in a bowl formed by Shavers Mountain and McGowan Mountain. Most of the streams flow north into Otter Creek. Vegetation consists of second-growth timber, rhododendron, and a variety of mosses and lichens. Elevations range from 1,800 feet at the mouth of Otter Creek to 3,900 feet on McGowan Mountain.

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For additional information, contact:

Cheat-Potomac Ranger District
P.O. Box 368
Parsons, WV 26287
(304) 478-2000, Ext 0
http://fs.usda.gov/mnf

LARGE PRINT AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

These streams can flash flood during periods of heavy rain, and can leave visitors stranded.