

DEVILS BACKBONE WILDERNESS

Welcome to Devils Backbone Wilderness, a part of the Willow Springs Ranger District of the Mark Twain National Forest. This Wilderness, taking its name from a long narrow ridge known to the early settlers as Devils Backbone, is a unique blend of Missouri Ozark flora and fauna, characterized by rugged topography, springs and the North Fork River. With 6,687 acres inside the Wilderness boundary, this is an ideal area for day hiking or overnight backpacking. Three designated trailheads (Raccoon Hollow, McGarr Ridge and Collins Ridge), plus access at the Blue Springs parking area in the North Fork Recreation Area provide entry into the wilderness. Almost thirteen miles of trail are maintained.



Elevations range from 1,020 feet to 680 feet along the North Fork of the White River, a high quality, spring fed Ozark stream. Blue Spring, Amber Spring and McGarr Spring provide water to the river year-round.

The forest is dominated by a variety of oaks, hickory and shortleaf pine. Dogwood, redbud and wild azaleas give the wilderness a wild burst of color in the spring.

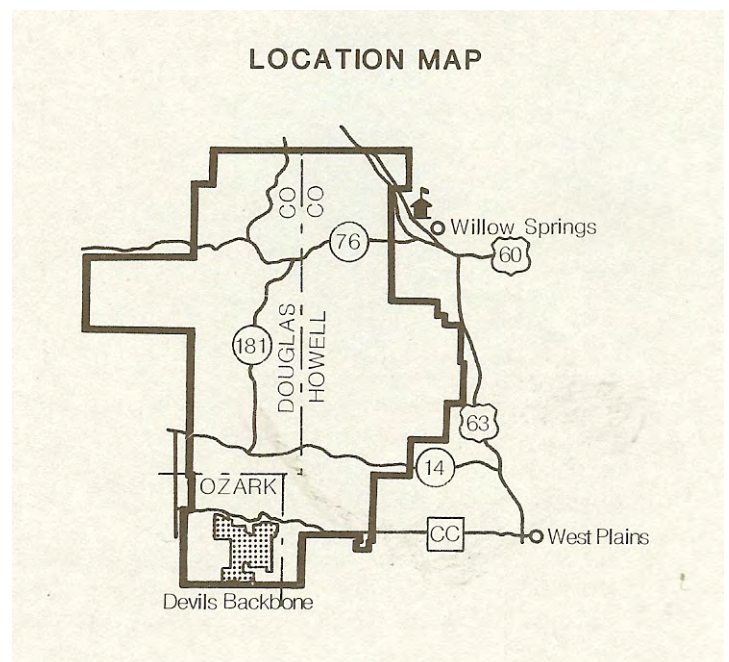
Fall isn't to be outdone when the oaks, sweet gum, and sugar maple put on a show of yellows, oranges and reds. Scattered limestone glades and other openings provide some of the more favorable places to view wildlife. White-tailed deer, gray squirrel, raccoon, coyote, red and gray fox, bobcat and striped skunk are some of the mammals native to the area. Wild turkey, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, bald eagle, turkey vulture, great blue heron, pileated woodpecker and various songbirds can be seen. Among the reptiles common to the area are two poisonous snakes, the copperhead and eastern timber rattler.

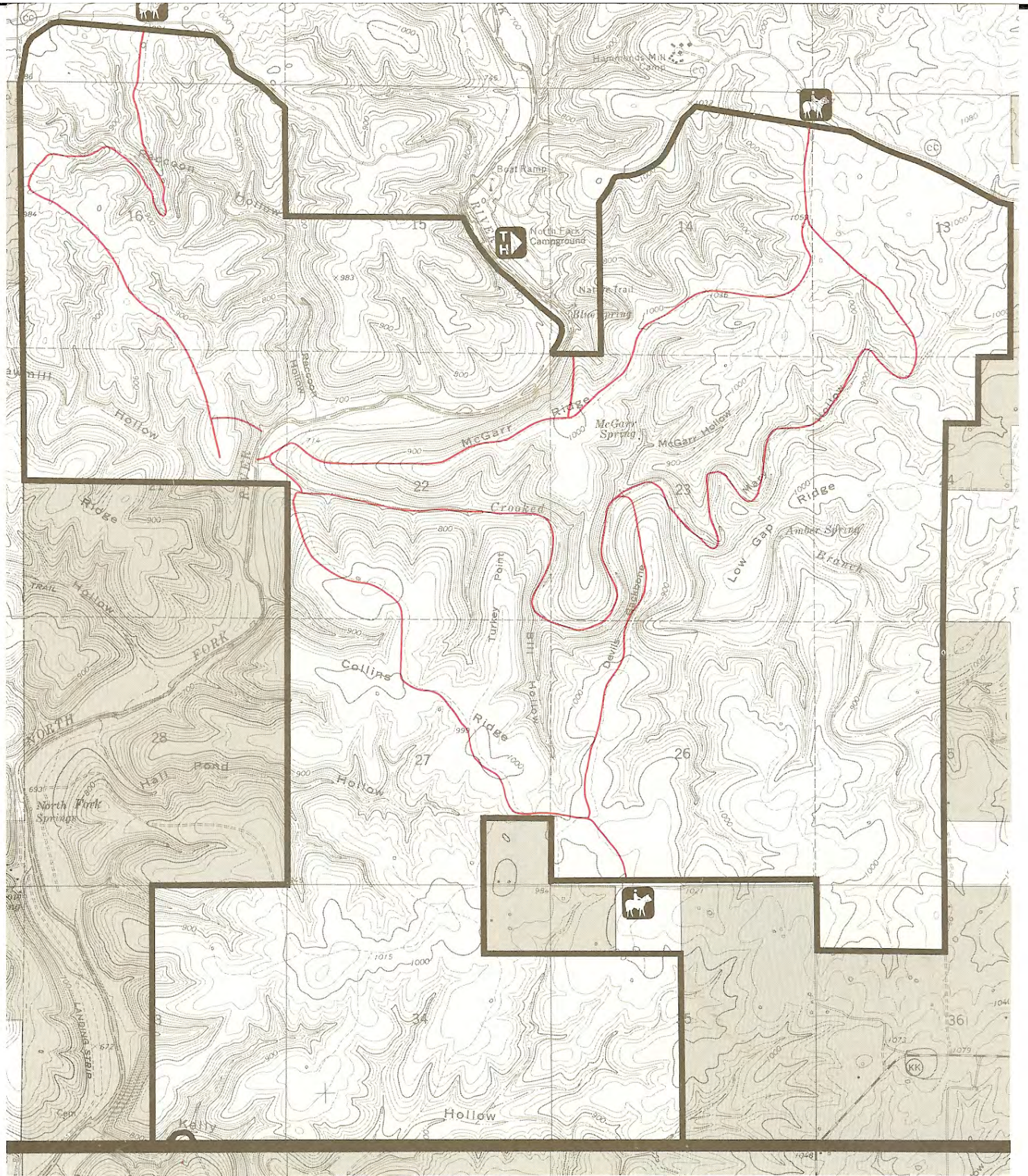
North Fork Recreation Area locally known as Hammond Camp adjoins the north edge of the wilderness and provides quality camping and picnic opportunities. There is a designated canoe launch in this Recreation Area.

While local climate allows outdoor use year-round, fall and spring are the most pleasant, and not surprisingly more people are out on the trails at that time. No permit is required for enjoying the wilderness, however, we do place registration boxes at each of the trailheads, and ask that you take a minute at the beginning of your hike to provide the requested information.

Devils Backbone was designated as a Wilderness in Public Law 96-550, on December 22, 1980, and is managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is one of eight wildernesses in Missouri, seven of which are located on the Mark Twain National Forest.

Devils Backbone is accessible from West Plains via CC Highway, approximately 15 miles west of U.S. Highway 63 junction.





WILDERNESS REGULATIONS AND MANNERS

Wilderness is a natural area affected primarily by the forces of nature with little evidence of man's works - "where- man himself is a visitor who does not remain." Many individuals seek out its peace and solitude, yet it has different meanings and values to different people depending on whether they are backpackers, hunters, photographers, or hikers.

Increasing numbers of Wilderness users may seriously impact the very values they seek. To insure that these values remain intact, please practice good wilderness manners and comply with the following regulations.

Regulations

There are certain human impacts that could damage or destroy the wilderness resource. These practices are not allowed within the Devils Backbone Wilderness.

- Possessing or leaving refuse, debris or litter in an exposed or unsanitary condition;
- Placing in or near a stream, lake, or other water any substance which does or may pollute a stream, lake, or other water;
- Leaving a fire without completely extinguishing it;
- Cutting or defacing live or dead standing trees or other vegetation;
- Possessing or using a motor vehicle, motorboat, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport (including mountain bike and wagon);
- Landing of aircraft, or dropping or picking up any material, supplies or persons by means of aircraft, including helicopters;
- The building of "structures" such as rock fire rings, tables, lean-tos and the like;
- Discharging a firearm or any other implement capable of taking human life or causing injury, in or within 150 yards of an occupied area, or in any manner or place whereby any person or property is exposed to injury or damage as a result of such discharge;
- Firing any tracer bullet or incendiary ammunition.

Missouri Department of Conservation hunting and fishing regulations and license requirements apply.

WILDERNESS MANNERS

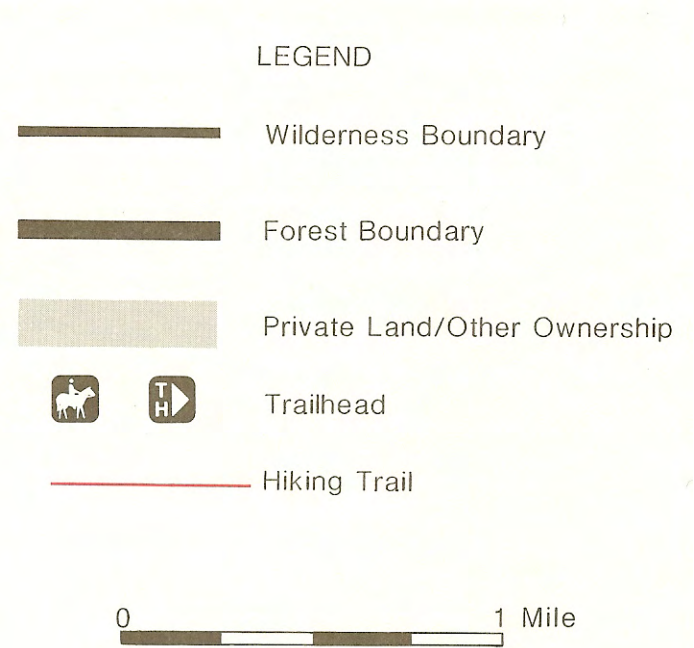
Backpackers should leave no sign of their presence so that the next person can enjoy natural scenes and solitude. You must tread lightly so nature can endure and replenish.

There are self-registration stations at each wilderness trailhead entrance shown on the map. Overnight and day use visitors are requested to register.

Plan your party size, limit size of group to 10 persons or less. This reduces impact on soil and ground cover. Campsites are available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Leave your camp cleaner than you found it. **Pack out what you pack in.** Animals generally dig up what you bury, so don't. Dispose of human waste at least 100 feet from campsites, trails and waterways, by digging a shallow hole and covering it, nature will biologically decompose.

Keep the number of campfires low and small in size. Dead fallen trees add to the natural environment and future shortages may cause complete restrictions. Fire rings are unnatural signs of man and should be avoided. The use of small gas or chemical cooking stoves is recommended. **Use care with open campfires** - make sure they are dead out and their evidence is scattered before leaving



Protect the solitude; seek out campsites that are out of sight and sound of trails and other camps. When sharing an area keep a low profile and maintain the solitude.

Avoid overuse of popular areas, and search out the lesser known attractions.

Be prepared --- have the right equipment and clothing for primitive travel and the season of the year. Carry a good map and compass; practice safety and carry a first aid kit. The universal distress signal is three of anything: shots, shouts, smokes, whistles.

When traveling on a trail, stay on the trail. When traveling cross-country use your map and compass. Use of blazes, ribbons or other trail markers should be avoided; let the next fellow find his own way as you did.

Pack your own shelter, including needed poles and stakes; they are more comfortable than lean-tos.

Remember saddle and pack stock have the right-of-way on trails. Give way to them and avoid conflicts and possible accidents.

Don't tie saddle and pack stock to small trees as the rope rubbing and concentrated animal tramping will injure and eventually kill the vegetation. It's better to hobble or tie a rope between two large trees and use it as a hitch rail. When breaking camp, scatter manure and smooth up the area.

Avoid prolonged stock grazing in one area; it can have a serious impact on vegetation. Bring concentrated supplement stock feed to help reduce this impact.

Picket your stock at least 200 feet away from waterways, trails, or camps.

Devils Backbone Wilderness is surrounded by private property. Please respect the rights and property of private landowners.

GENERAL COMMENTS

The Ozark climate is mild enough to make Wilderness visits feasible throughout the year, as long as visitors bring proper gear. When possible, take advantage of this opportunity and plan your visit outside the peak spring and fall use seasons.

Open water sources within the wilderness are not recommended for drinking.

USGS quadrangle maps can be purchased from the Forest Service or the U.S. Geological Survey. The Wilderness is located on Dora, Siloam Springs, Curell NW, and Pottersville quadrangle maps. Maps of each Ranger District at one half inch to the mile scale may be purchased from the Forest Service.

Wilderness rangers visit trail heads and patrol the interior of the area. They are there to assist you and answer questions. Have a pleasant wilderness experience and remember, leave only footprints and take only photographs and memories.

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To file a complaint, write the Secretary of Agriculture, U. S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, DC 20250, or call 800-245-6340 (voice) or (202) 720-1127 (TDD). USDA is an equal employment opportunity employer.

For Further Information Contact:

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