

# Welcome to Piney Creek Wilderness

Piney Creek Wilderness was designated in Public Law 96-550, on December 22, 1980, to be managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. It is one of eight such areas in the state, seven of which are in the Mark Twain National Forest. This 8,142-acre Wilderness is located in southwestern Missouri's Barry and Stone Counties on the Cassville Ranger District.

During the late 1800's several railroad companies logged the area extensively. Homesteaders and cattlemen followed the railroad and settled the area until the 1930's. Along the upper ridges, strawberry and tomato crops flourished. During the early 1950's the last family moved from the main Piney Creek drainage, and by 1960 there were no permanent residents within the area now designated Wilderness.

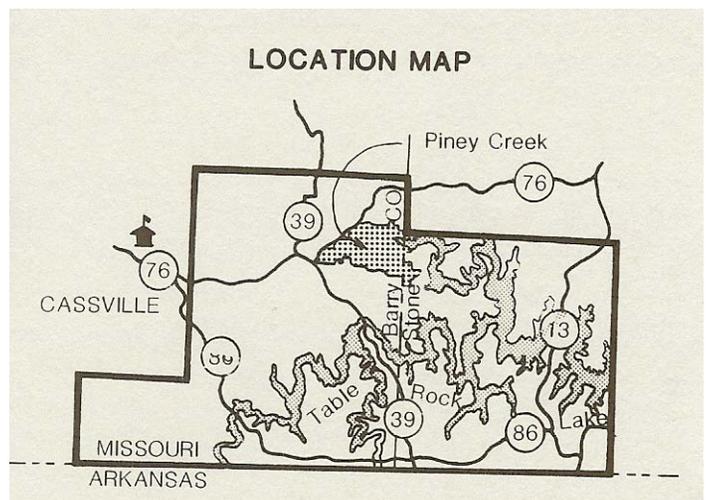
Ridge tops rising more than 400 feet above the hollows and streams dissect the area. Piney Creek, with its numerous small springs, is the principal stream. The entire five-mile long watershed lies within the Wilderness. It empties into the James River Arm of Table Rock Reservoir near the eastern edge of the area.

Oak and hickory trees dominate the upland slopes and ridges. Some native short leaf pine stand out majestically on the steep side slopes and narrow ridge tops. The lower portions of the side drainages and bottomland contain small glade openings and old fields. Surrounding these and within a small riparian zone along Piney Creek, other hardwoods such as sycamore, ash, elm, buckeye and walnut are found. Eastern red cedar grows on the lower slopes and the glades.

Wildlife is typical of the Missouri Ozarks. The white-tailed deer, gray squirrel and raccoon are popular game animals. Common furbearers and predators include the coyote, red and gray foxes, bobcat and striped skunk. The armadillo also resides here. There is an interesting variety of reptiles in the area, including the poisonous copperhead and western pigmy and eastern timber rattlesnakes. The wild turkey is the only game bird with a large population. There are numerous species of non-game birds including the bald eagle, red-tailed hawk, great horned owl, turkey vulture, great blue heron, pileated woodpecker, crow, blue jay, titmouse, and various species of songbirds.

Five maintained trails totaling 12.4 miles traverse the Wilderness. Portions of the trail system utilize old woods roads; other trail sections are constricted.

Piney Creek is accessible from several different directions, Travel west from Branson about 32 miles on Hwy 76. Turn on Lake Road 76-6 about a mile to North trailhead; or from Branson about 36 miles west on Hwy 76, turn southeast onto Lake Road 39-1, 4 miles further to South trailhead.



## 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 Piney Creek 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, or motorized or mechanized equipment;
- 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*

Today, 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 to limit the group to 10 persons or less. This reduces impact on soil and ground cover. Campsites are available on a first come, first-serve 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. Dig a shallow hole and cover, 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-Wilderness has inherent risks, have the right equipment and clothing for primitive travel and 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-ways 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 trampling 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.

Piney Creek 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.

Piney Creek Wilderness is located on the Shell Knob and Cape Fair quadrangle maps. Quadrangle maps may be purchased from the Forest Service or the U.S. Geological Survey. Write or call for current prices or map ordering form.

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

**For Further Information Contact:** Ava/Cassville/WiliowSprings Ranger District

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