

Welcome to Rockpile Mountain Wilderness

The 4,238 acre Rockpile Mountain Wilderness takes its name from an ancient circle of granite rock, piled by some earlier man on top of the mountain. Located in Madison County on the Fredericktown Ranger District, southeast of Bell Mountain and southwest of Fredericktown, Missouri, the wilderness is within the St. Francois Mountains, with elevations ranging from 1,305 to 520 feet. The area is primarily a broken ridge, having steep rocky slopes running from Little Grass Mountain on the north to the National Forest boundary four miles to the south.

The entire area is heavily forested with oak, hickory, pine, red cedar, and miscellaneous hardwood species. A virgin forest consisting of large basswood, butternut, Kentucky coffee tree, walnut, sugar maple, white and red oak is sheltered in one narrow gorge, making it an ideal outdoor biological laboratory.

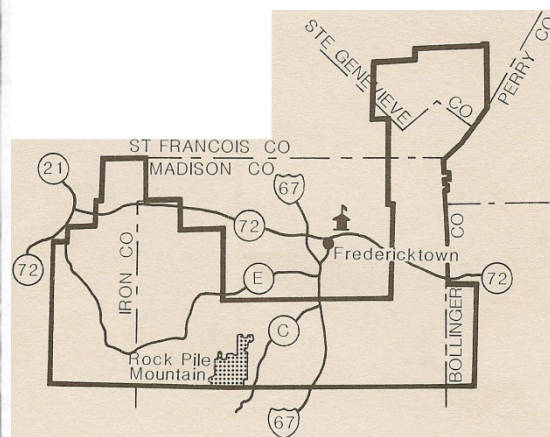
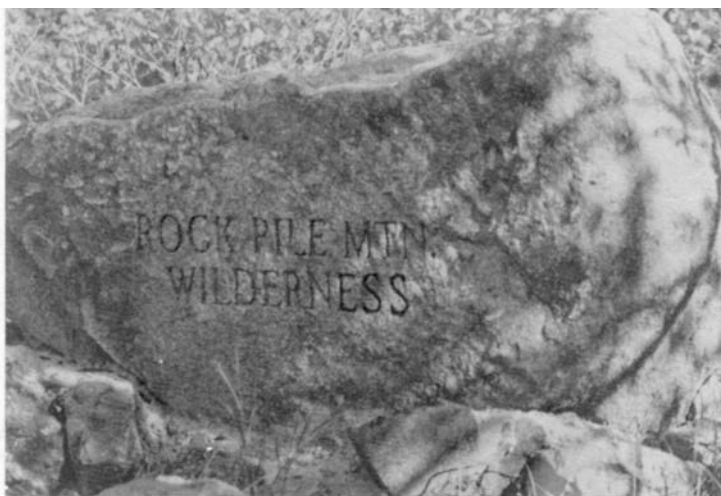
Scenic attractions include Rockpile Mountain itself, the steep limestone bluffs, rock formations, and caves along the St. Francis River. The narrow gorges or "shut-ins" with rushing cascades during periods of runoff and the scattered granite glades add variety to the wilderness landscape, as well as unique plant and animal communities.

The area has no significant natural permanent water except for the St. Francis River, which touches the wilderness along the southwest corner. The intermittent drainages, flow only in times of surplus rainfall. Runoff becomes a torrent in some of the small streams following heavy rains because of the rapid runoff from the steep areas of exposed rock. A few springs exist in the area. Five wildlife ponds constructed prior to Wilderness designation still provide a manmade source of year-round water for wildlife.

Wildlife within the area is typical of the Missouri Ozarks. Big game consists of white-tailed deer and wild turkey. Small game animals include squirrels, rabbits, and various other fur bearers. The different habitats encourage a variety of birds ranging from large birds such as hawks, owls, turkey vultures, and pileated woodpeckers to the smaller songbirds. Turtles, lizards, and snakes are found throughout the area, but timber rattlers and copperheads are the only venomous snakes.

Rockpile Mountain, designated by Public Law 96-550, on December 22, 1980 and managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964, is one of eight Wildernesses in Missouri, seven of which are located on the Mark Twain National Forest. From the trailhead there is a 2 mile section of maintained trail. The rest of the area is accessed by old woods roads or cross-country hiking.

The area is accessible from Fredericktown via Highway 67 south to County Road C, then about 10 miles on C to County road 406. Follow 406 to Forest Road 2124.



USGS Quadrangle maps can be obtained from the Forest Service or the U.S. Geological Survey. The wilderness is located on the Rockpile Mountain Quadrangle Map. Visitor Maps of the Salem, Potosi and Fredericktown Ranger Districts are available at any District Ranger Office.

Wilderness rangers occasionally 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.

Wilderness Regulations and Manners

Wilderness is a special area designated and set aside by Congress as an 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 their background and whether they are backpackers, hunters, photographers, or hikers.

Wilderness is primitive; trails are not well marked and there are no bridges at creek crossings. Meeting nature on its own terms involves inherent risks.

Increasing numbers of Wilderness users may seriously impact the very values they seek. To ensure that these values remain intact, please practice good wilderness manners and comply with the following regulations. Continue the legacy: make sure that others will not see evidence of your visit.

Wilderness Regulations

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

- Camping within 100' of trails, streams, or other occupied campsites;
- Littering or leaving refuse, in an exposed or unsanitary condition;
- Placing a substance in or near a stream that may pollute the stream;
- Leaving a fire without completely extinguishing it;
- Cutting or defacing live or dead standing trees or other vegetation;
- Possessing or using a motor vehicle, motor boat, motorized equipment, or mechanical transport (including mountain bikes and wagons);
- Landing an aircraft, dropping or picking up materials, supplies or persons by means of aircraft, including helicopters;
- Building of "structures" such as rock fire rings, lean-tos etc.;
- 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;
- Tying stock directly to trees;
- No more than 10 individuals shall travel or camp together as one group.

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. Camp at least 100 feet away from the trail or water sources.

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 person find their own way as you did.

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

Remember that saddle and pack stock have the right - of - way on trails. Step surely off the trail on the downhill side. 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 or kill the vegetation. It's better to use hobbles 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 supplemental stock feed to help reduce this impact.

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

Reduce the Spread of non-native, invasive plants by removing weed seeds from your animals and gear before arriving on the forest, and assuring that stock aren't eating these weeds within 48 hours of their arrival on the forest.

Keep all dogs on-leash or under control.

Be aware of natural hazards that may occur within the Wilderness, and take precaution to maintain your safety. Flash flooding may occur during and after rainstorms; trees and limbs may fall with even moderate winds.

Rockpile Mountain 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.

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For Further Information Contact:

Potosi/Fredericktown Ranger District
10019 W. State Hwy 8
Potosi, MO 63664
(573) 438-5427

or

Forest Supervisor
Mark Twain National Forest
401 Fairgrounds Road
Rolla, MO.
(573) 364-4621

Web Address – [Mark Twain National Forest Home Page](#) or [Wilderness Home Page](#)





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LEGEND

-  Wilderness Boundary
-  Forest Boundary
-  Private Land/Other Ownership
-  Hiking Trail



Trailhead

