



Beaver Creek Wilderness Trails

Stearns Ranger District • Daniel Boone National Forest • Kentucky



What is Wilderness?

Not all forests are wilderness. A Wilderness is a special area that has been set aside by congress for preservation as a natural area for present and future generations.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 designated the nation's first wilderness areas. The Daniel Boone National Forest manages two wilderness areas, Clifty Wilderness and Beaver Creek Wilderness.

The Wilderness Act defines wilderness as areas that:

- Are affected primarily by the forces of nature, where man is a visitor who does not remain.
- Possess outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
- Are undeveloped, federally owned, and generally over 5,000 acres in size.
- Are protected and managed so as to allow natural ecological processes to operate freely.
- May contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.
- Are formally designated by Congress as wilderness.

Visiting a Wilderness

Wilderness areas are primitive in nature. The rugged natural environment challenges visitors to be self reliant and requires excellent outdoor skills. Modern facilities such as toilets, drinking water, shelters or campgrounds are not provided. Few, if any, signs or trails are provided to guide you. When entering a wilderness you are entering a remote site where cell or radio communications may not exist. Emergency services may be very limited.

Wilderness travel is by foot. Motorized vehicles and equipment such as all-terrain vehicles and chainsaws as well as mechanized equipment such as bicycles and wheeled carts are prohibited.

You are free to explore and discover all that wilderness provides including solitude, challenge, scenic beauty, and natural ecosystems. Hiking, camping, hunting and fishing are allowed.

Help Protect the Wilderness

As more people seek to escape the urban world and experience nature on its own terms, the wilderness is becoming more impacted from our visits. To ensure that future visitors can have the same high quality wilderness experience, each person must take responsibility to minimize the impact of their visit.

Some important things you can do:

- Carry out everything you bring in. Do not leave trash or food debris.
- Use a camp stove instead of building a campfire. If a fire is necessary, keep it small and never leave it unattended. Make sure it is dead out before you leave.
- Never cut or damage live trees.
- Bury human waste at least 200 feet from water sources.
- Refrain from taking rocks, wildflowers, antlers or artifacts. Take only memories.
- Select campsites at least 200 feet away from streams.
- Do not camp or build fires in rock shelters.



Photo by Boyd Shearer

Wilderness Restrictions

Group size is limited to 10 people. Motorized vehicles and mechanized equipment such as all-terrain vehicles, chainsaws, bicycles, wagons and carts are prohibited.



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Stearns District
3320 US 27 North
Whitley City, KY 42653
606-376-5323



Location
16 miles south of Somerset, KY or 12 miles north of Whitley City near US 27 at Greenwood, KY. Turn onto Bauer Road (Forest Road 50) towards Hammonds Camp, then go 5 miles to Forest Road 51 to the Three Forks of the Beaver trailhead.



Open Dates
Trails are open all year.



Trail Fees
None.



Parking
At the trailheads.



Camping
Primitive camping is permitted in the Beaver Creek Wilderness except in rock shelters. Camping for more than 14 consecutive days without terminating forest occupancy for a minimum of 10 days within a 31 day timeframe is prohibited.



Accessibility
These trails do not meet accessibility standards for persons with disabilities.



For more information
Guides like this are available at www.fs.usda.gov/dbnf



Consumption of alcohol and open containers of alcohol are prohibited.



Do not camp or build fires within 100 feet of the base of any cliff or the back of any rock shelter.



No climbing or rappelling is permitted from cliffs, arches or other rock formations at the Three Forks of Beaver Overlook.

9/11/2024

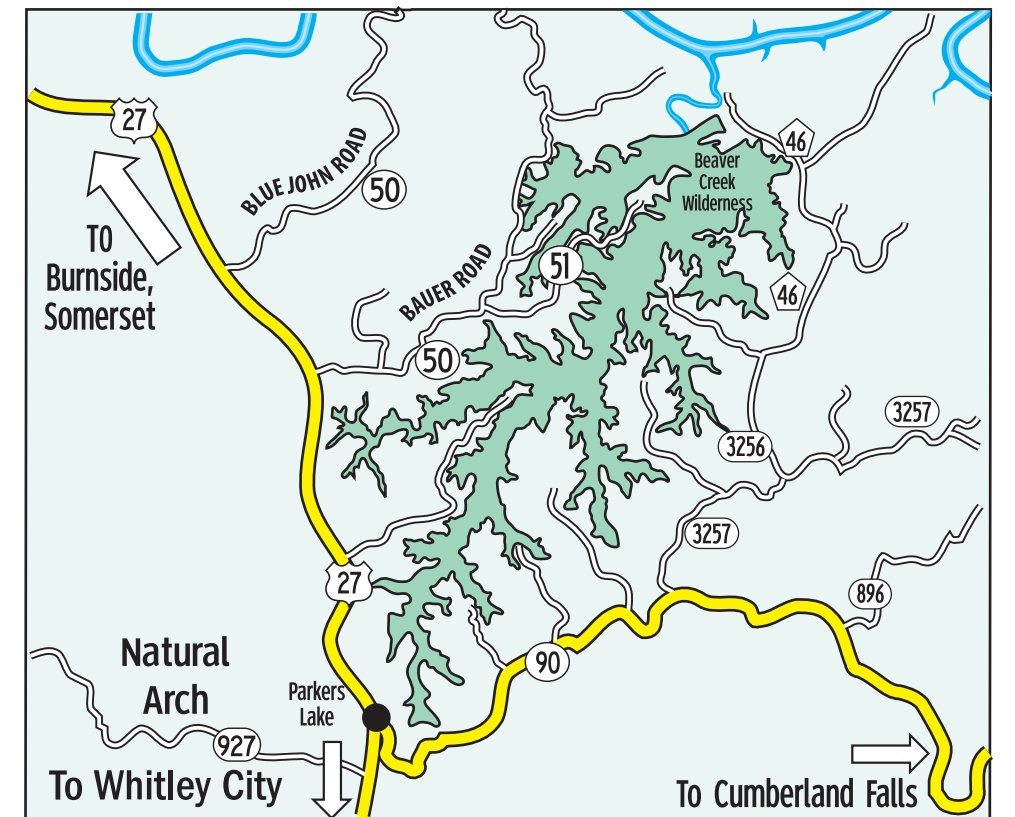
Three Forks of Beaver Loop #512
Three Forks of Beaver #512A
Three Forks Spur #512B
Bowman Ridge Trail #514

Upper Bowman Trail #532
Upper Bowman Trail #532A
Middle Ridge Trail #518

Beaver Creek Wilderness is located on Stearns District of the Daniel Boone National Forest. Towering sandstone cliffs, natural arches, hardwood forests, rippling streams and abundant wildlife are some of the special resources that led to designation of this 4,753-acre area as a wilderness in 1975. Beaver Creek Wilderness is an isolated, natural area where you may encounter adverse weather, wild animals and strenuous hiking conditions. Expect few trail signs or markers to guide you.

Before becoming a wilderness, this area was settled as a small coal mining and cooperage town during the late 1800s. Signs of the past remain visible with old roads, homeplaces, stone fencing, exotic shrubs and grave sites scattered throughout the area. Over time, nature is slowly erasing the signs that man left behind. The prehistoric use of the land at Beaver Creek dates back nearly 10,000 years. Archaeological evidence suggests that Native Americans used rock shelters in the area as shelter, most likely for hunting and gathering. State and federal laws protect all archaeological resources. Do not collect or dig for artifacts.

The wilderness is surrounded by the Beaver Creek Wildlife Management Area, which is managed cooperatively between the Forest Service and the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources. Hunting is allowed in the wilderness. See Kentucky Hunting and Trapping Guide for hunting information.



U.S. Department of Agriculture | Forest Service
Southern Region | Daniel Boone National Forest
Supervisors Office | 1700 Bypass Rd. | Winchester, KY 40391 | 859-745-3100
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Beaver Creek Wilderness Trails

Daniel Boone National Forest | Stearns District

Wildlife Management Area Boundary

Beaver Creek Wilderness Boundary

National Forest Land

Stream

27

U.S. Highway

90

State Highway

128

County Road

5011

Forest Road

508

Forest Trail

Highway

Road

Gravel

Dirt

Trail

Trailhead

0

0.5

1.0

1.5

2 mi.

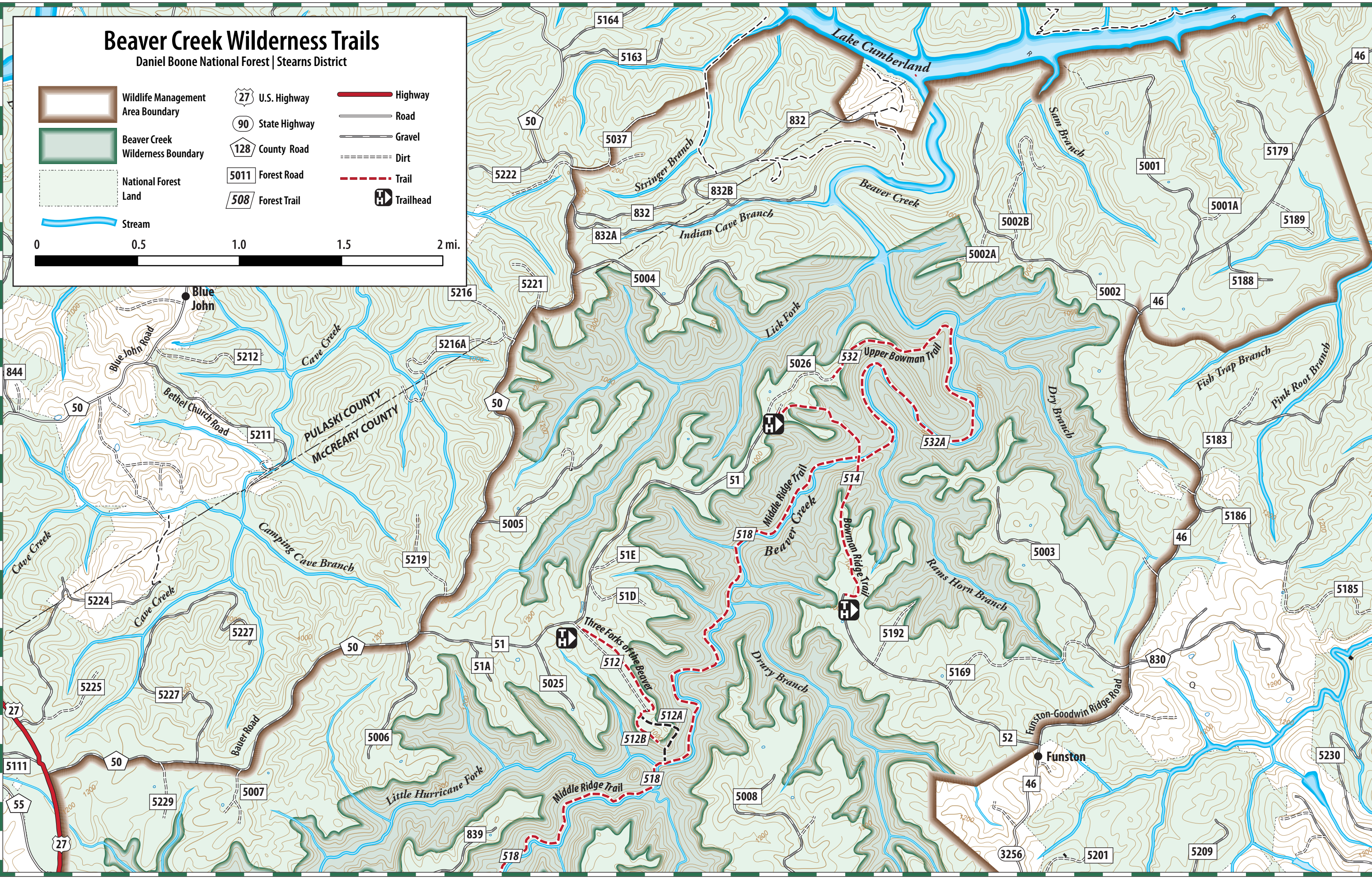




Photo by Boyd Shearer

Three Forks of Beaver Loop #512

From the trailhead parking lot, follow the trail to the left of the gate. The trail runs southeast along the ridgetop and cliffline for approximately one mile, where it intersects with Trail #512A that leads to Three Forks of Beaver and Trail #512B that leads to the scenic overlook. Turn right to return to the parking lot, following an old road that leads you near wildlife ponds and openings.

Connections: Middle Ridge Trail #518 (6.5 miles), Three Forks of Beaver Trail #512A (-.5-mile), Three Forks of Beaver Spur Trail # 512B (0.25-mile)

Begins:	Trailhead parking lot	Difficulty:	Easy
Ends:	Trailhead parking lot	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	1.5 miles	County:	McCreary
Quad:	Hail	Latitude:	36.907071
Closest Town:	Whitley City	Longitude:	-84.448427

Three Forks of Beaver #512A

This trail provides hikers with access to the wilderness. The trail meanders along an old roadway in a southeasterly direction and then follows Beaver Creek to the Three Forks of Beaver. Notice the change in vegetation as the trail leaves the ridgetop and continues below the cliff.

The trail begins at the intersection of Three Forks of Beaver Trail #512 near the scenic overlook.

Connections: Middle Ridge Trail #518, Three Forks of Beaver Loop Trail #512, Three Forks of Beaver Spur Trail # 512B

Begins:	Trail #512 near overlook.	Difficulty:	More difficult
Ends:	Three Forks of Beaver	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	.5 mile	County:	McCreary
Closest Town:	Whitley City	Quad:	Hail
		Latitude:	36.907071
		Longitude:	-84.448427

Three Forks Spur #512B

Hikers will enjoy the panoramic view of the Three Forks that join to form Beaver Creek. To the left is Freeman Fork, followed by Middle Fork and Little Hurricane Fork. The trail begins at the intersection of Three Forks of Beaver Trails 512 and 512A. This trail leads to the Three Forks of Beaver overlook. Follow the old roadway northwest back to the beginning.

Connections: Middle Ridge Trail #518 (6.5 miles), Three Forks of Beaver Trail #512A (0.5-mile), Three Forks of Beaver Loop Trail # 512 (1.5 miles)

Begins:	Trail #512	Difficulty:	Easy
Ends:	Overlook	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	.25 mile	County:	McCreary
Quad:	Hail	Latitude:	36.907071
Closest Town:	Whitley City	Longitude:	-84.448427

Bowman Ridge Trail #514

From the trailhead parking lot, the trail meanders along the old roadway in a southerly direction into the wilderness. Cross the wooden bridge and continue along the old road to its terminus at the trailhead parking lot on Swain Ridge. Connections include Middle Ridge Trail #518, Upper Bowman Trail # 532, Upper Bowman A Trail #532A.

Directions to Swain Ridge trailhead: Take US 27 south 20 miles from Somerset or take US 27 north 8.5 miles from Whitley City. Turn east onto KY 90 for five miles, and then turn left onto KY 3257 for 2.5 miles. Turn left onto KY 3256 for 1.5 miles, and then turn left onto Forest Service Road 52 for 1.25 miles to its end. The trailhead is on the right.

Begins:	Bowman Ridge Trailhead	Difficulty:	More difficult
Ends:	Swain Ridge Trailhead	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	2 miles	County:	McCreary
Quad:	Hail	Latitude:	36.9215
Closest Town:	Somerset	Longitude:	-84.430616



Pixel's Travels



You are responsible for your own safety.

All outdoor activities have inherent risks and you may encounter a variety of unexpected and/or dangerous conditions. It is your responsibility to be informed and take precautions. Learn more at www.fs.usda.gov/r8.



Photo by Boyd Shearer

Upper Bowman Trail #532A

This trail begins to the east of Trail #514, just south the bridge. This is a beautiful scenic trail following Beaver Creek. When you reach the end you may cross the creek to make a loop back along Trail #532 or if the creek is too high, retrace your steps back to Trail #514.

Connections: Bowman Ridge Trail #514, Upper Bowman A Trail #532

Take US 27 south 20 miles from Somerset or US 27 north 8.5 miles from Whitley City. Turn east onto KY 90 for 5 miles, and then turn left onto KY 3257 for 2.5 miles. Turn left onto KY 3256 for 1.5 miles; turn left onto Forest Service Road 52 for 1.25 miles to its end. The trailhead is on the right.

Begins:	Swain Ridge Trailhead	Difficulty:	More difficult
Ends:	Overlook	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	1 mile	County:	McCreary
Quad:	Hail	Latitude:	36.909066
Closest Town:	Whitley City	Longitude:	-84.423533

Middle Ridge Trail #518

Middle Ridge Trail #518 provides access to Beaver Creek Wilderness. The trail follows the creek to the Three Forks of Beaver Trail #512. You may continue to follow Beaver Creek or return to the Middle Ridge Trail. The upper portion of the Middle Ridge Trail is the most difficult trail in the wilderness with multiple stream crossings. Primitive camping is permitted except in rock shelters. Camp at least 300 feet away from any road, stream or trail.

Connections: Three Forks of Beaver Trail #512; Bowman Ridge Trail #514.

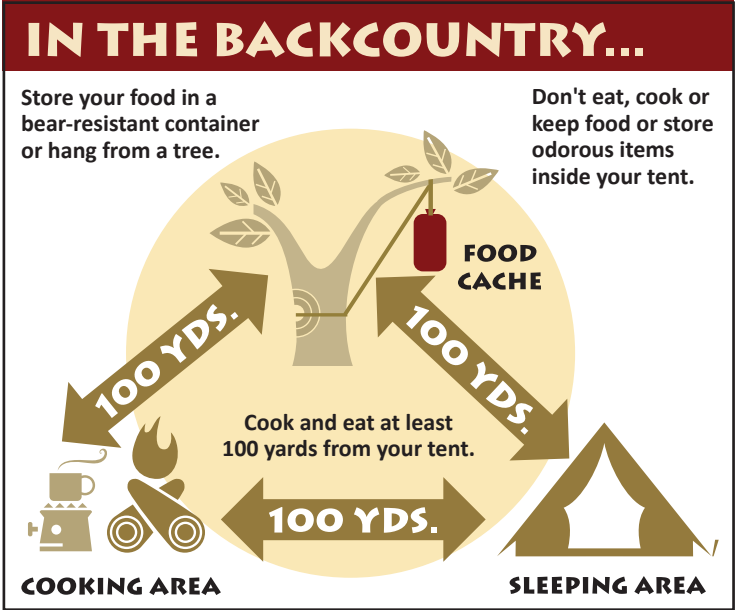
Begins:	Trailhead parking	Difficulty:	Most Difficult
Ends:	Trail #512	Surface:	Dirt
Length:	6.5 miles	County:	McCreary
Quad:	Hail, Wiborg	Latitude:	36.86895
Closest Town:	Somerset	Longitude:	-84.48325

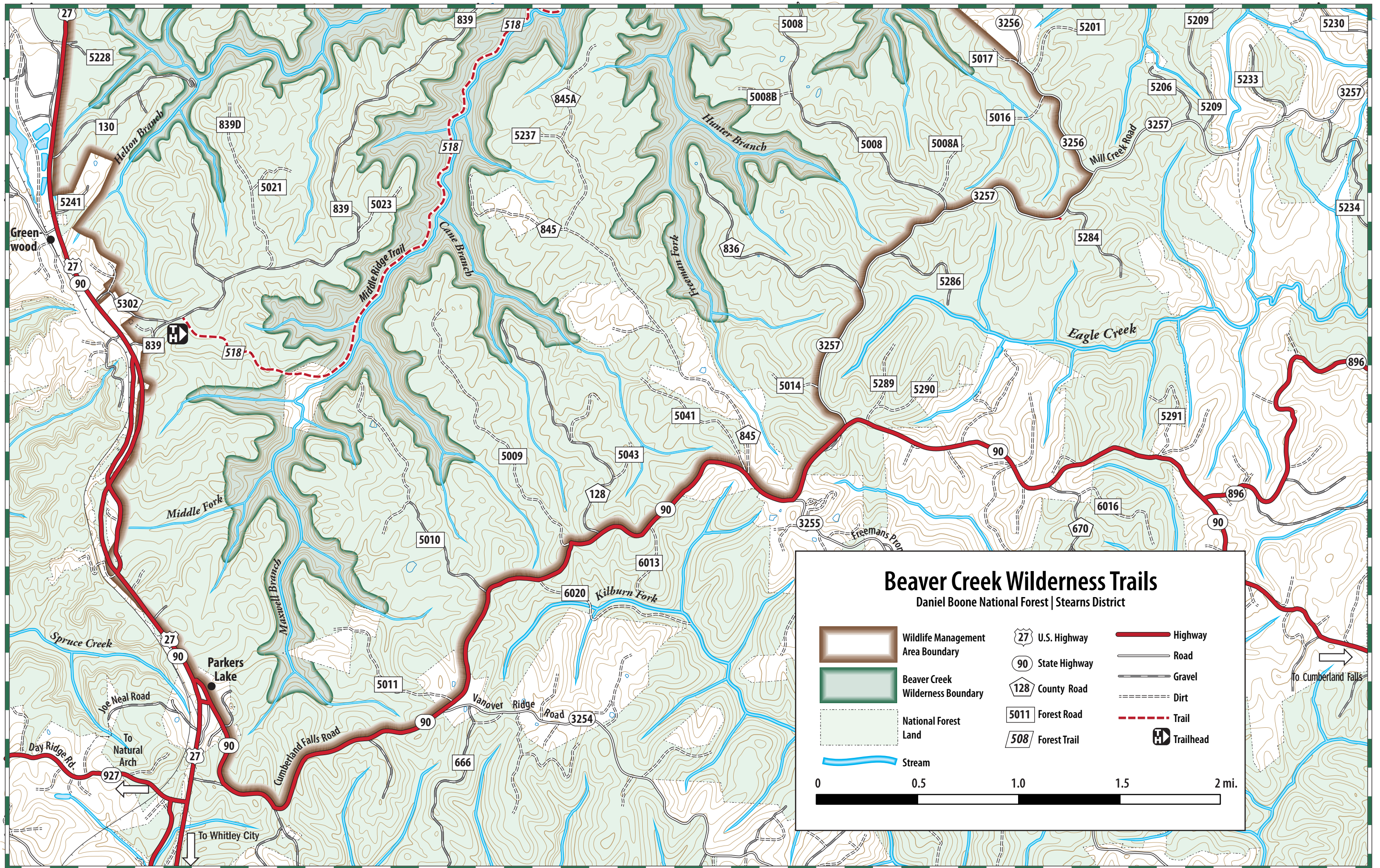
Upper Bowman Trail #532

From the parking lot, follow the road a short distance before leaving to follow the ridgeline into the Beaver Creek Wilderness. This trail will take you within sight of Beaver Creek. Turn right and follow Beaver Creek upstream. Follow the stream for 1/4-mile. Cross the creek to Upper Bowman Trail #532A or continue following the creek upstream to the intersection of Bowman Ridge Trail #514 to return to the Bowman Ridge parking lot.

Connections include Bowman Ridge Trail #514, Upper Bowman Trail #532A

Begins/Ends:	Bowman Ridge Trailhead	Difficulty:	More difficult
Length:	4 miles	Surface:	Dirt
Quad:	Hail	County:	McCreary
Closest Town:	Whitley City	Latitude:	36.9215
		Longitude:	-84.430616





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