BEAR CREEK & SENG MOUNTAIN NATIONAL SCENIC AREAS

At a glance:
Bear Creek and Seng Mountain NSAs quick facts

Date established: March 30, 2009
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 111-11, Sec. 104
Forest Service region: 8, Southern Region
State: Virginia
Associated national forest: George Washington-Jefferson
Total Forest Service acres: Bear Creek: 5,122; Seng Mountain: 5,195
Reasons designated: “to ensure the protection and preservation of scenic quality, water quality, natural characteristics, and water resources; to protect wildlife and fish habitat; to protect areas in the scenic areas that may develop characteristics of old-growth forests; and to provide a variety of recreation opportunities in the scenic areas.” (U.S. Congress, 2009)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Bristol, VA and TN; 46 miles (Bear Creek); 32 miles (Seng Mountain)

Population within 25 miles: Bear Creek: 147,324; Seng Mountain: 147,218

Population within 100 miles: Bear Creek: 4,123,931; Seng Mountain: 4,605,590


Main recreational uses: Hiking, camping, fishing, mountain biking, backcountry exploration, hunting

DESCRIPTION AND BACKGROUND
The Bear Creek and Seng Mountain National Scenic Areas (NSAs) are located in southwest Virginia. The areas were designated at the same time under the same section of the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009. Both areas feature steep topography with numerous ridges, mountain crests, and valleys, and offer rugged and scenic backcountry experiences along with more developed trails and facilities.

The Bear Creek NSA covers an enclosed valley that runs from the crest of Walker Mountain (3,700 feet above sea level) on the north to the crest of Brushy Mountain on the south. Within the valley, visitors can experience solitude. The NSA area includes the headwaters of Bear Creek and a large network of trails, including several miles of the Appalachian National Scenic Trail. Forests in the area host diverse hardwood species and stands of Table Mountain pine.

The Seng Mountain NSA is located inside the boundaries of the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. It contains numerous ridges including Bear Ridge, Seng Mountain, Chestnut Ridge, Pine Spur, Round Top, and Double Top. Between the ridges, streams—some of which harbor brook trout—flow into the South Fork of the Holston River. Much of the terrain is steep and rugged, providing ample opportunity for primitive backcountry recreation. The NSA features a campground, picnic area, and network of recreational trails focused around Rowland Creek Falls, a 45-foot cascading waterfall. Although many of the forests in this area were logged and burned in the early 1900’s and prior, much of the vegetation, which is primarily hardwood trees, is over 100 years old and forms a dense canopy conducive to solitude and primitive backcountry recreation.
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 3: Southwest
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Southern
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Photo: George Washington-Jefferson National Forest viewpoint. USDA Forest Service Southern Region. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forest_service_southern_region/16551465013/in/album-72157650797623853/. License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/.
At a glance:
Beech Creek NSBA quick facts

Date established: October 18, 1988
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 100-499
Forest Service region: 8, Southern Region
State: Oklahoma
Associated national forest(s): Ouachita
Total Forest Service acres: 8,042
Reasons designated: “to protect and interpret to the public areas within the Ouachita National Forest which contain unique plant species and unique plant communities that are significant in their occurrence, variety and location” ... “to protect and enhance certain scenery and wildlife within the Ouachita National Forest.” (U.S. Congress, 1988)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Fort Smith, OK and AR; 44 miles
Population within 25 miles: 36,057
Population within 100 miles: 1,357,879
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Ouachita National Forest: 1,234,670 estimated annual visits (2015, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Hiking, nature viewing, scenic driving

DESCRIPTION
The Beech Creek National Scenic and Botanical Area (NSBA) is located in southeastern Oklahoma. The area is based around the headwaters of Beech Creek, a clear, free-flowing stream. It features mature vegetation, including American holly and old beech trees, which are rare in Oklahoma. Visitors are attracted to the area for its solitude and scenic vegetation. The area contains a 32-mile network of interconnecting trails that travel through different ecosystems and an old Forest Service road that provides access to hiking opportunities. The area does not have restrooms or camping areas, but these developed facilities are available at the nearby Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area.

BACKGROUND
In 1988, Congress passed a public law that designated several special areas on the Ouachita National Forest. These included the Beech Creek Botanical Area, designated to conserve 400 acres of mature beech trees near the headwaters of Beech Creek in Oklahoma, and the larger Beech Creek Scenic Area. The nearby Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area and the Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area were also designated at the same time. These areas, designated together, represent all of the Forest Service-managed special designations in the state of Oklahoma.
USDA Forest Service land

Iconic places

USDA Forest Service Regions

Urban areas

Interstates

Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 3: Southwest
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Southern
Region 8: Eastern
Region 9: Western
Region 10: Alaska

COOSA BALD NATIONAL SCENIC AREA & ED JENKINS NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:  
Coosa Bald NSA quick facts

Date established: December 11, 1991  
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 102-217  
Forest Service region: 8, Southern  
State: Georgia  
Associated national forest: Chattahoochee-Oconee  
Total Forest Service acres: 7,044  
Reasons designated: “For the purposes of protecting and enhancing the natural beauty, special ecological features, watershed integrity, mature-forest habitat, scenic recreation opportunities and other distinctive values of certain lands in Georgia.” (U.S. Congress, 1991).

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Gainesville, GA; 23 miles  
Population within 25 miles: 200,537  
Population within 100 miles: 9,752,885  
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest: 2,390,671 estimated annual visits (2014, NVUM)  
Main recreational uses: Hiking, camping, boating, fishing

At a glance:  
Ed Jenkins NRA quick facts

Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 102-217  
Forest Service region: 8, Southern  
State: Georgia  
Associated national forest: Chattahoochee-Oconee  
Total Forest Service acres: 23,541  
Reasons designated: “For the purposes of ensuring the protection of certain natural, scenic, fish and wildlife, historic and archaeological, wildland and watershed values, and providing for the enhancement of the recreation opportunities associated with these values.” (U.S. Congress, 1991).

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Atlanta, GA; 22 miles  
Population within 25 miles: 375,229  
Population within 100 miles: 9,405,035  
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest: 2,390,671 estimated annual visits (2014, NVUM)  
Main recreational uses: Hiking, mountain biking, camping, boating, fishing

DESCRIPTION
The Coosa Bald National Scenic Area (NSA) and the Ed Jenkins National Recreation Area (NRA) are located in northern Georgia close to the border of Tennessee. The southern terminus of the Appalachian Trail is near the center of the Ed Jenkins NRA, at Springer Mountain.

BACKGROUND
The Coosa Bald NSA and Springer Mountain NRA were designated at the same time in 1991. In 1992, H.R. 6000 was introduced to redesignate Springer Mountain NRA as “Ed Jenkins” NRA, and was enacted on October 23, 1992.
ED JENKINS
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA
USDA Forest Service land
Iconic places
USDA Forest Service Regions
Urban areas
Interstates

Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

0 500 1,000 Miles
0 250 500 Miles
0 250 500 Miles

Photo: Viewpoint from Springer Mountain in the Ed Jenkins NRA, Georgia. Public domain available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/93558439@N05/21991938539/.
DESCRIPTION
The Cradle of Forestry in America National Historic Area (NHA) is a heritage site located in the Pink Beds Valley of the Blue Ridge Mountains near Asheville, North Carolina. Management of the NHA is shared between the Cradle of Forestry in America Interpretive Association and the Forest Service. Visitors may explore paved interpretative trails through the campus of America’s first forestry school, visit interactive exhibits in the Forest Discovery Center, or attend a number of scheduled special events and nature programs.

BACKGROUND
The Cradle of Forestry NHA is a legacy of the Vanderbilt family’s interest in and promotion of science-based forest management. In 1914, Edith Vanderbilt sold 87,000 acres of the Vanderbilt’s “Pisgah Forest” tract, which was part of the Vanderbilt’s “Biltmore Estate,” to the Forest Service. This 87,000-acre tract later became part of the Pisgah National Forest in 1916. The Cradle of Forestry NHA was established in 1968 from a portion of what was formerly the Vanderbilt’s Pisgah Forest tract. This natural historic area was designated with the explicit purpose of expanding upon the Vanderbilt’s desire to support science-based forest management, with public law 90-398 pronouncing the establishment of the Cradle of Forestry NHA “to promote, demonstrate, and stimulate interest in and knowledge of the management of forest lands” (U.S. Congress, 1968).
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 3: Southwest
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Intermountain
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

INDIAN NATIONS & WINDING STAIR MOUNTAIN
NATIONAL SCENIC & WILDLIFE AREA
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Indian Nations NSWA & Winding Stair NRA quick facts

Date established: October 18, 1988
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 100-499
Forest Service region: 8, Southern
State: Oklahoma
Associated national forest: Ouachita
Total Forest Service acres: Indian Nations: 44,519; Winding Stair Mountain: 26,617
Reasons designated: Indian Nations NSWA: “to protect and enhance certain scenery and wildlife within the Ouachita National Forest, Oklahoma;” Winding Stair NRA: “to ensure the conservation and protection of certain natural, scenic, historic, pastoral, and fish and wildlife values and to provide for the enhancement of the recreational values associated there within.” (U.S. Congress, 1988)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Fort Smith, AR and OK; 39 miles
Population within 25 miles: Indian Nations: 62,936; Winding Stair Mountain: 64,311
Population within 100 miles: Indian Nations: 1,874,931; Winding Stair Mountain: 1,819,702
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Ouachita National Forest: 1,234,670 estimated annual visits (2015, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Fishing, hiking, horse riding, hunting, picnicking

DESCRIPTION
The Winding Stair Mountain Nation Recreation Area (NRA) and the Indian Nations National Wildlife and Scenic Area (NSWA) are located within the Ouachita Mountains, south of Heavener, Oklahoma, on the Oklahoma portion of the Ouachita National Forest. The Indian Nations NSWA sits mainly on the north slopes of Winding Stair Mountain. It includes the Homer L. Johnson Wildlife Management Area and features a 15-acre fishing lake on Post Mountain. The Winding Stair Mountain NRA includes campgrounds, an equestrian camp, an old military road, and several springs.

Both areas can be viewed from the Talimena National Scenic Byway, which runs through Winding Stair Mountain. The scenic drive is a 54-mile long byway following the crest of Rich Mountain and Winding Stair Mountain. Forests in the Ouachita National Forest are comprised of stunted northern red oak, white oak, post oak, and blackjack oak. In the fall, these areas offer panoramic views of the autumn foliage, and opportunities for hunting wild turkey and deer.

BACKGROUND
The Ouachita Mountains were inhabited by Native Americans for thousands of years prior to European settlement. The name “Ouachita” is derived from the French spelling of a Native American term meaning “good hunting grounds.” Timber in the Ouachita Mountains is of such low commercial value that a large proportion of its old growth was retained through the 19th and early 20th centuries. The entire forest nearly became a national park in the 1920s, but the effort was vetoed by President Calvin Coolidge. The Forest Service developed the 15-acre fishing lake at Indian Nations during the 1930s, constructing an earthen dam and road access. Both Winding Stair and the Indian Nations areas were congressional designated in 1988. The Talimena National Scenic Byway was constructed with federal public highway funds in the 1960s. It received its designation as a National Forest Scenic Byway in 1989 and as a National Scenic Byway in 2005.
USDA Forest Service Regions

- Region 1: Northern
- Region 2: Rocky Mountain
- Region 4: Intermountain
- Region 5: Pacific Southwest
- Region 6: Pacific Northwest
- Region 3: Southwest
- Region 8: Southern
- Region 9: Eastern
- Region 10: Alaska

Iconic places:
- Ouachita National Forest
- Indian Nations National Scenic and Wildlife Area
- Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area

Map credits:
LAND BETWEEN THE LAKES
NATIONAL RECREATION AREA

At a glance:
Land Between the Lakes NRA quick facts

Date established: October 21, 1998
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 105-277
Forest Service region: 8, Southern
State: Kentucky
Associated national forest: Independent administrative unit
Total Forest Service acres: 171,251
Reasons designated: “to protect and manage the resources of [the area] for optimum yield of outdoor recreation and environmental education through multiple use management.” (U.S. Congress, 1998)

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Clarksville, TN and KY; 33 miles
Population within 25 miles: 289,264
Population within 100 miles: 4,333,132
Annual visitors estimate and geography: Land Between the Lakes NRA: 958,204 estimated annual visits (2017, NVUM)
Main recreational uses: Camping, picnicking, hiking, hunting, fishing, boating, wildlife viewing, water sports

DESCRIPTION
The Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area (NRA) is located in western Kentucky and Tennessee, comprising 170,000 acres of forest, wetlands, and open lands. The peninsula sits between Kentucky Lake on the west and Barkley Lake on the east, both reservoirs on the Cumberland and Tennessee Rivers, respectively. It ranges from one to nine miles wide and is 40 miles long. The NRA has 300 miles of shoreline with 26 boat ramps. It also boasts 500 miles of trails dedicated to hiking, biking, and horseback riding, as well as 444 miles of scenic drives that link wildlife viewing areas. Bird migrations bring as many as 240 different species to the NRA each year, in part due to an innovative management strategy that includes cover crops, timber, and 190 acres of wildlife refuges. There are four major attractions: Bison Prairie, the Homeplace 1850s Working Farm and Living History Museum, the Woodlands Nature Station, and the Golden Pond Planetarium, which has an observatory.

BACKGROUND
The Land Between the Lakes area has had human occupation for at least 6,000 years. The area was settled in the late 18th century and at that time referred to as the “land between the rivers.” During the Great Depression and the New Deal, the federal government began a program to obtain lands for wildlife conservation. The dam on the Tennessee River forming Kentucky Lake was completed by the Tennessee Valley Authority (TVA) in the early 1940s as part of the 1933 Tennessee Valley Authority Act. However, TVA didn’t obtain all 170,000 acres of the Land Between the Lakes until the early 1960s when Lake Barkley on the Cumberland River was created. At that time, the town of Golden Pond was abolished and residents of the Land Between the Lakes were relocated. The NRA was declared in 1963 and in 1998, it was transferred from the TVA to the Forest Service, under the authority of the 1911 Weeks Act.
Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 7: Intermountain
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Land Between the Lakes National Recreation Area

Photo: Sunset at Land Between the Lakes NRA. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forest_service_southern_region/16390824184/in/album-72157649387928943/. License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/.
MOUNT PLEASANT NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

At a glance:
Mount Pleasant NSA quick facts

- **Date established:** August 26, 1994
- **Established by:** Congressional designation, Public Law 103–314
- **Forest Service region:** 8, Southern Region
- **State:** Virginia
- **Associated national forest(s):** George Washington-Jefferson
- **Total Forest Service acres:** 6,864
- **Reasons designated:** “to ensure the protection and preservation of scenic quality, water quality, natural characteristics, and water resources; to protect wildlife and fish habitat; to protect areas in the scenic areas that may develop characteristics of old-growth forests; and to provide a variety of recreation opportunities in the scenic areas” (U.S. Congress, 1994)

DESCRIPTION
The Mount Pleasant National Scenic Area (NSA) is located in central Virginia between the city of Roanoke and Shenandoah National Park. The area is named after 4,070-foot Mount Pleasant, one of several prominent mountains within its boundaries. Throughout the NSA, there are small virgin groves of hardwood forest and wild trout streams. Panoramic vistas in the area are provided by open, historically agricultural fields that today are maintained with prescribed fire. Approximately 110 miles of the Appalachian Trail also pass through the NSA, attracting many hikers each year. The area has become an increasingly popular destination for a variety of other activities, including ultra-running, mountain biking, and stargazing.

BACKGROUND
Designation for the Mount Pleasant NSA began with advocacy groups seeking stricter protection for the area as a wilderness. At that time, the local hunting community became concerned about losing access to the area if it were designated as wilderness. Congressional representatives, balancing both groups of stakeholders, compromised by designating it as a scenic area on August 26th, 1994, with the purpose of protecting and preserving the area’s water quality, wildlife habitat, recreational opportunities, and scenic value.

People and visitors

- **Nearest metropolitan area:** Lynchburg, VA; 13 miles
- **Population within 25 miles:** 232,076
- **Population within 100 miles:** 3,494,529
- **Annual visitors estimate and geography:** George Washington-Jefferson National Forest: 1,766,449 estimated annual visits (2016, NVUM)
- **Main recreational uses:** Wildlife viewing, hiking, backpacking, hunting, bird watching, stargazing

Sources used and cited for this text are listed by location starting on page 90
The USDA Forest Service manages lands across the United States in various regions:

1. Region 1: Northern
2. Region 2: Rocky Mountain
3. Region 3: Southwest
4. Region 4: Intermountain
5. Region 5: Pacific Southwest
6. Region 6: Pacific Northwest
7. Region 7: Southern
8. Region 8: Southern
9. Region 9: Eastern
10. Region 10: Alaska

Each region includes different areas, such as national forests and scenic areas.

At a glance:
Mount Rogers NRA quick facts

Date established: May 31, 1966
Established by: Congressional designation, Public Law 89-438
Forest Service region: 8, Southern Region
State: Virginia
Associated national forest(s): George Washington-Jefferson
Total Forest Service acres: 114,223
Reasons designated: “to provide the public outdoor recreation use and enjoyment... and to the extent feasible the conservation of scenic, scientific, historic, and other values of the area.” (U.S. Congress, 1966).

People and visitors

Nearest metropolitan area: Bristol, VA; 42 miles
Population within 25 miles: 399,525
Population within 100 miles: 6,511,761
Main recreational uses: Camping, picnicking, sight-seeing, bird watching, trout fishing, hunting, hiking, bicycling, horseback riding, cross-country skiing, swimming

DESCRIPTION
The Mount Rogers National Recreation Area (NRA) is located in southwest Virginia near the border with Tennessee and North Carolina. It is based around the 5,729-foot tall Mount Rogers, the highest peak in Virginia. The NRA contains four separate wilderness areas that comprise about 18,500 acres of the NRA: the Lewis Fork Wilderness (which contains Mount Rogers), the Little Wilson Creek Wilderness, the Raccoon Branch Wilderness, and the Little Dry Run Wilderness. The area has 11 developed campgrounds, and over 500 miles of trail, including 60 miles of the Appalachian Trail, 18 miles of the Virginia Creeper Trail, and 67 miles of the Virginia Highland Horse Trail. The area contains large rock formations, a mixture of mountain balds and spruce-fir forests; a herd of wild, free-ranging ponies; and the highest-elevation road in the state of Virginia, which leads to the summit of Whitetop Mountain. The NRA’s landscape contains sites of geologic interest, showing evidence of ancient volcanoes and glacial deposits from many ice ages ago.

BACKGROUND
The Mount Rogers NRA was one of the Forest Service’s first special areas, with congressional designation in 1966. The area was designated due to a recognized need to preserve the high country around Mount Rogers. It was also intended to act as an economic catalyst through natural resource management activities and by drawing people and businesses to the area. The mountain and National Recreation Area are named after William Barton Rogers, the first Virginian state geologist and founder of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
USDA Forest Service land

Iconic places

USDA Forest Service regions

Urban areas

Interstates

Region 1: Northern
Region 2: Rocky Mountain
Region 4: Intermountain
Region 6: Pacific Northwest
Region 5: Pacific Southwest
Region 3: Southwest
Region 8: Southern
Region 9: Eastern
Region 10: Alaska

Photo: Fall colors in the Mount Rogers National Recreation Area. USDA Forest Service, Southern Region. Available at: https://www.flickr.com/photos/forest_service_southern_region/16984105320/in/album-72157650797623853/. License: https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/2.0/.