

## **Turkey Mountain Wilderness Area (Proposed)**

**Size:** approx. 6,168 acres

**Location:** Webster, Pocahontas Counties

**Watershed:** Gauley

**USGS Topographic Maps:** Bergoo, Sharp Knob,  
Webster Springs SE, Woodrow

**Elevation Range** (approx.): 2,520 - 4,040 ft

**Dominant Vegetation:** Mixed Hardwoods



Photo © Brent Rowley

The proposed Turkey Mountain Wilderness would protect approximately 6,168 acres along the Pocahontas and Webster County border.

Along with the existing Cranberry Wilderness, this area would protect a significant portion of the upper Williams River basin. Turkey Mountain is bordered by the Williams River and FS Rt. 86 to the south. Cranberry Wilderness is on the opposite side of FS Rt. 86 from Turkey Mountain. To the east lies the

Tea Creek roadless area where the Forest Service maintains many miles of hiking trails that can be used to access Turkey Mountain. The northern boundary is along private land while the western boundary is just east of White Oak Fork. Most of the proposed wilderness area is on steep mountain sides with rolling mountain tops. The top of Turkey Mountain reaches a height of 4,040 ft. while near the Williams River the elevation dips to a low of approximately 2,520 ft.

Located on the south flank of Turkey Mountain, the proposed wilderness area consists of steep, heavily wooded slopes with numerous sparkling streams that carve small canyons into the mountainside. Most of the area consists of a northern hardwood habitat where the dominant species are sugar maples, white ash, yellow birch, black cherry, red oak, and red spruce. The forest understory includes teaberry, greenbrier, and numerous species of ferns. Along the Williams River at lower elevations there are also hemlocks and numerous rhododendron thickets.

Turkey Mountain has a good representation of West Virginia's fauna diversity including a healthy black bear population, timber rattlesnakes, pheasants, coyotes, salamanders, and whitetail deer. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Turkey Mountain is also home to several rare species, including a recognized species of concern, the candy darter. The waters in the Williams River, and Upper Bannock Shoals are already considered tier 2.5, meaning that it has anti-degradation status that limits non-point source pollution of the water way. The Williams River is also home to a healthy population of brown trout.

Turkey Mountain is an excellent place to find solitude. The only way to get to most of the proposed wilderness area is by bushwhacking, as there are no official trails to follow. There are, however, several old abandoned logging roads that can be followed to access parts of the proposed wilderness. Another recreational asset of the Turkey Mountain region is the Williams River. This river is a renowned trout stream that attracts anglers from all over the East Coast. Turkey Mountain also has healthy populations of several game species for hunters to enjoy.