

East Fork of Greenbrier Wilderness Area (Proposed)

Size: approx. 9,573 acres

Location: Pocahontas County

Watershed: Greenbrier

USGS Topographic Maps: Thornwood,
Sinks of Gandy

Elevation Range: 2960 – 4200 ft

Dominant Vegetation: Sugar Maple –
Beech, Red Pine



Photo © Mary Wimmer

The proposed East Fork Greenbrier Wilderness Area lies in the upper reaches of the Greenbrier watershed within the ‘birthplace of rivers,’ Pocahontas County. There, the East Fork of the Greenbrier River twists and turns through the shoulders of gentle mountains in a subtle transition zone between the northern and southern regions of the Monongahela National Forest. The area is bounded on the south and east by WV-28 and FS 112, on the west by FS 14, and on the north by FS 430, 254, County Road 250/4 and private land. The proposed area is just over 10,000 acres, the majority of which has been managed as semi-primitive/non-motorized by the U.S. Forest Service for the past 18 years.

The East Fork Greenbrier area is covered mostly with second growth sugar maple and other hardwoods, with interspersed stands of red spruce. It provides habitat for the federally endangered WV Northern Flying Squirrel, and the Candy Darter, a U.S. Fish and Wildlife species of concern, as well as other rare species. The area is known for its excellent trout fishing and contains four Tier 2.5 streams. These streams, East Fork of Greenbrier, Poca Run, Mullenax Run and Abes Run, received the 2.5 classification because of their ability to support native trout populations. Large Brook Trout have been caught in this area, and if protected, these streams could become a headwaters stronghold for them in the Greenbrier. Other wildlife species flourish here as well, providing excellent opportunities for hunting and wildlife viewing.

The area is underlain primarily by shale formed during the Devonian period and to a lesser extent, sandstone formed during the Mississippian period. It lies within the Ridge and Valley physiographic province of West Virginia, near the Allegheny Front.

Remote and wild in character, the proposed East Fork Greenbrier Wilderness Area is a quiet, peaceful place, with excellent opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. The central East Fork Trail follows the East Fork of Greenbrier River from Island Campground to Pigs Ear Road, providing the hiker with especially scenic views along this pristine stream. Small waterfalls abound with many gentle pools to cool off in on a hot summer day as the kids chase crayfish. The trail is exceptional when Serviceberries are in bloom or fruit, joining a wealth of other wildflowers. Wild Strawberries can also be found. Active or past beaver activity may be evident as one travels along the river. The only other system trail in the area is the Poca Run Trail which provides an opportunity for a shorter day hike near the headwaters of Poca Run. Forest vegetation along this trail includes Red Cedar, Black Cherry, Basswood, Sweet Cicely, ferns and Blue Cohosh. Other remote hiking opportunities are available on the long-since closed and largely overgrown logging roads within the area. This area is a great place for fishing, hunting, backpacking and day-hiking.