

Little Allegheny Mountain Wilderness Area (Proposed)

Size: approx. 5,086 acres

Location: Greenbrier County

USGS Topographic Maps: Alvon, Rucker
Gap

Watershed: Greenbrier

Elevation Range (approx.): 2,000 - 3347 ft

Dominant Vegetation: Mixed Oaks



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Located in eastern Greenbrier County near the Virginia border, the proposed Little Allegheny Mountain Wilderness Area is over 6,100 acres in size. It is bounded on the south and west by private land, on the north by County Road 14 and private land, and to the east by FS road 372. It is directly adjacent to another proposed wilderness area, Laurel Run, the two being separated only by the gated, high clearance (four-wheel drive) road, FS 372.

The Little Allegheny Mountain area is vegetated mostly by mixed oak forest with interspersed stands of White Pine, Pitch Pine and Eastern Hemlock. Some of these stands are around 150 years old. Critical habitat exists here for the federally endangered Shale Barren Rock Cress. This plant can be grouped with other wild plants referred to as 'mustards.' As its name suggests, it grows only in shale barrens, a habitat where few other species can survive.

The proposed area lies within the Ridge and Valley Province of West Virginia, a series of long folded mountains and valleys. The bedrock of the area was formed during the Devonian and Mississippian Periods of the Paleozoic Era. The western two thirds of the area are characterized by Devonian shale while the eastern third contains Mississippian sandstone. The western slope of Little Allegheny Mountain within the proposed area is quite steep and heavily dissected, draining into Anthony Creek below.

The adjacent section of Anthony Creek is stocked with catchable sized trout. The area, like most roadless areas, is a haven for wildlife. Black Bear can be found here as can White-Tailed Deer, Wild Turkey and countless other species. A few occurrences of rare species have been noted in the area as well.

The area has been traditionally used for hiking and hunting. The Little Allegheny Mountain Trail generally follows the ridge's spine through nearly the entire length of the proposed area, treating the hiker with scenic overlooks, wildflowers, and flowering trees and shrubs along the way. Branching off to the west is the Humphrey's Draft Trail, leading hikers down into the lower elevations and through some of the shale barrens for which the area is known. In the Wilderness Attribute Rating study of the late 1970's conducted by the U.S. Forest Service, the area was found to have very good opportunity for solitude and high natural integrity. Since this study was conducted, the area has remained roadless and grown wilder, such that wilderness characteristics are even more apparent.