

Wilderness Area - East Fork of the Pigeon River in Shining Rock Wilderness

Directions: From Asheville take the Blue Ridge Parkway south to mile 412.1 then head north on US 276. Go approximately 3 miles to a small parking lot on the left. If the lot is full there is additional parking just pass the bridge

From Hendersonville take US 64 west towards Brevard. When you get to Pisgah Forest go straight across the intersection on US 276 into Pisgah National Forest. Drive under the BRP and follow above directions.

Hiking directions from small parking lot trailhead:

Hike past the kiosk staying left on the trail. You will pass a wooden sign that states you are entering the Wilderness Area. Hike along the stream until the trail forks up. You take this left, but you can go straight to see the small waterfall and pool. Many folks place rock cairns along the river here and can be very inspiring. The trail is not marked because it is in a wilderness area and folks have made many paths. When the trail forks again, if you keep right, you can continue to follow the river. Eventually you will come to a large rock outcropping that is on an angle towards the water. You can stop and have lunch or a snack here before turning around and heading back the way you came. (3.5 to 4 miles)

Information

The United States Congress designated the Shining Rock Wilderness (map) in 1964 and it now has a total of 18,479 acres. All of this wilderness is located in North Carolina and is managed by the Forest Service. The Shining Rock Wilderness is bordered by the Middle Prong Wilderness to the southwest.

Description

Named for a micaceous rock outcrop, Shining Rock became one of the original components of the National Wilderness Preservation System in September 1964, a few months after garnering designation as a Wild area. It is now the largest Wilderness in North Carolina, separated by only a road from Middle Prong Wilderness to the southwest. Standing at an elevation of more than 5,000 feet and boasting five peaks exceeding 6,000 feet (three within the Wilderness boundaries), Shining Rock Ledge forms the backbone of this area. Here in this series of high ridges on the north slopes of Pisgah Ridge, you'll find extremely steep and rugged

terrain ranging in elevation from 3,200 feet on the banks of the West Fork of Pigeon River, a major tributary of the Tennessee River, to 6,030 feet on Cold Mountain. Streams abound, cutting narrow passages through the mountains on their way to either the East or West Forks of the Pigeon River. Loggers cut down the forest between 1906 and 1926 and fires raged through the area in 1925 and 1942. These two factors account for Shining Rock's grassy "balds" and unique vegetation. Almost all the trails in the area rate as difficult, and they can be hard to follow. Nevertheless, this Wilderness is one of the most trampled in the state, especially along the trails of Art Loeb (11.6 miles), Ivester Gap (1.6 miles), and Shining Creek (3.4 miles). The entry at the Big East Fork Trailhead also sees heavy use. Off-trail you will see few other humans. No campfires are permitted, and group size is limited to 10 <http://www.wilderness.net/NWPS/wildView?WID=550>

