

The Nature Conservancy...

- Has more than 1 million members worldwide
- Works in all 50 states and more than 30 countries—protecting habitats from grasslands to coral reefs
- Has protected more than 119 million acres of land and 5,000 miles of rivers worldwide—and manages more than 100 marine conservation projects globally
- Addresses threats to conservation involving climate change, fire, fresh water, forests, invasive species and marine ecosystems

Contact Us:

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Mission:

The mission of The Nature Conservancy is to preserve the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life on Earth by protecting the lands and waters they need to survive.

Vision:

The Nature Conservancy envisions a world where forests, grasslands, deserts, rivers and oceans are healthy; where the connection between natural systems and the quality of human life is valued; and where the places that sustain all life endure for future generations.

High above the surrounding valleys, the plateau called Dolly Sods is a windswept expanse of subalpine heath barrens, where stunted red spruce, cranberry bogs and massive boulders define the landscape. The Nature Conservancy's 477-acre Bear Rocks Preserve is a cornerstone of this wonderfully diverse and complex ecosystem astride the Eastern Continental Divide.

Eighteenth century accounts described the area around Bear Rocks as an open, almost treeless expanse much like it looks today. Most of the plateau, however, was originally covered by dense, towering red spruce forests. Major deforestation from logging and associated fires a hundred years ago left the region ecologically distressed. Today, the much-visited landscape is recovering. Conservancy efforts in the region focus on restoring habitat and conserving a large landscape that can be as resilient as possible to new challenges from invasive species, air pollution and climate change.

What You'll See

On a clear day, visitors to Bear Rock's open and exposed expanse can see undulating mountains as far to the east as Shenandoah National Park. In early fall the rocks are a great vantage point to watch the migrating hawks, falcons and eagles that ride warm air currents rising from the valley below. In spring and summer colorful warblers, vireos, thrushes and other songbirds can be found in the profusion of plant life that provides protection and food. Foot paths ramble throughout the preserve's unusual plant communities, leading hikers through the open, shrubby landscape of blueberry, huckleberry, mountain laurel, azalea and rhododendron. In some areas, soggy

peat supports bogs that display colorful cranberries and white-tufted cotton grass each autumn. Throughout, red spruce trees poke from patches of soil, and are at once both nurtured and hampered by the icy cool climate.

The plateau hosts an incredibly rich diversity of plant and animal life. Many are found only in the Central and Southern Appalachians, such as the rare Cheat Mountain salamander. Others, such as the snowshoe hare and pink-edged sulfur butterfly, are typically found much further north. Widespread species, such as black bear, white-tail deer and bobcat, also live here.

Current Conservation Work

In order to protect these diverse plant and animal communities, The Nature Conservancy seeks to expand protection efforts and combat threats to Bear Rocks Preserve and the surrounding Dolly Sods area. Efforts have included:

- Planting red spruce trees on formerly logged sections and repairing an eroding firebreak to sustain the diversity of the preserve.
- Protecting private properties surrounding U.S. Forest Service land through the use of conservation easements.
- Acquiring more than 6,000 acres known as "Dolly Sods North" in the early 1990s for the Monongahela National Forest.
- Acquiring 15,000 acres of coal rights in the 1970s for the Monongahela National Forest.

bear rocks
 preserve
 Dolly Sods, Central Appalachians



How to Prepare for Your Visit

Bear Rocks Preserve is open to the public for hiking and nature study. Informal, unmarked trails weave across the preserve, and an extensive national forest trail system occurs in the adjacent Dolly Sods Wilderness. Visitors should carry the appropriate USGS topographic map (Blackbird Knob, Blackwater Falls, Hopeville, and Laneville cover the entire Dolly Sods area). Topographic maps and additional information about adjoining federal land can be obtained from:

Monongahela National Forest
Potomac Ranger District
HC 59, Box 240
Petersburg, WV 26847
Phone: (304) 257-4488

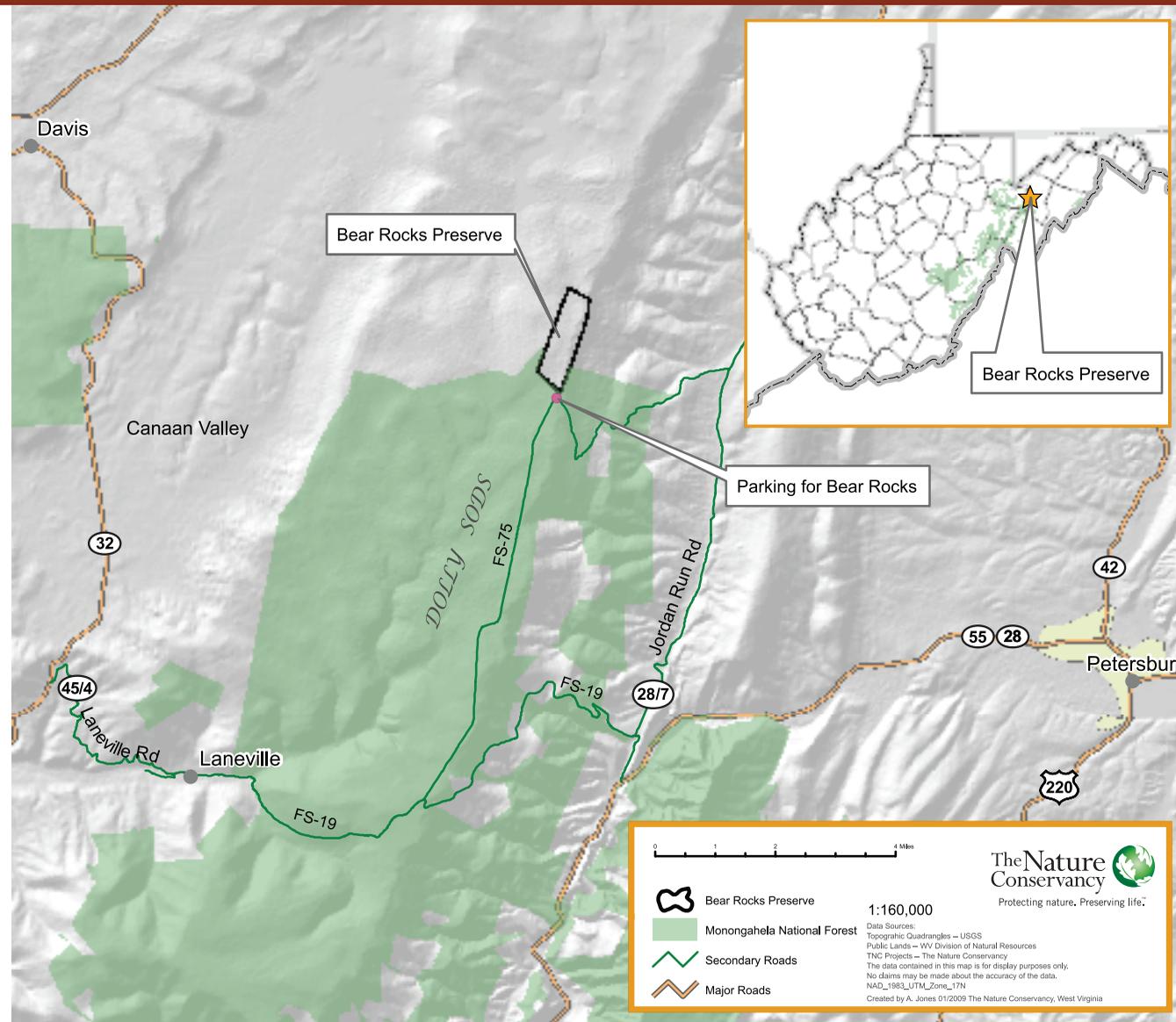
THE FOLLOWING ACTIVITIES ARE NOT PERMITTED AT BEAR ROCKS PRESERVE:

- Gathering of berries for sale or other commercial purposes (berries can be gathered by hand for personal use)
- Removing any part of the natural landscape, including wildflowers
- Camping
- Using an ATV or off-road vehicle
- Cooking or camp fires
- Horseback riding and mountain biking
- Snowmobiling
- Geocaching

CAUTION:

Unexploded artillery shells may be encountered! Dolly Sods - including the Bear Rocks Preserve - was an artillery training area during World War II. Please, stay on existing trails, keep children close by and do not pick up or remove shells or shell fragments. More information can be found by visiting the Dolly Sods Region Project on the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers website: http://www.lrh.usace.army.mil/projects/current/derp-fuds/wvma/dolly_sods_region_project/

Visitors to Dolly Sods plateau, including Bear Rocks Preserve, may experience severe weather. Cold, wet weather can occur year-round. Thunderstorms, dense fog and rugged terrain can make cross-country travel dangerous.



Directions

FROM PETERSBURG:

- Take WV 55 west to Jordan Run Road (Rt. 28/7; a right turn).
- Take Jordan Run Road 1 mile then turn left onto Forest Service Road 19 and follow it for six miles to the top of the Allegheny Front. Caution: FS Road 19 is not plowed in the winter. Winter travel is not advised.
- At the top of the mountain, turn right onto Forest Service Road 75.
- Continue on FS Road 75 for about eight miles to the Bear Rocks parking lot (where the road turns sharply to descend the mountain). FS Road 75 is also not plowed and is often gated closed in winter. The preserve is a very short walk north of the parking lot.

FROM CANAAN VALLEY:

- Take WV 32 south to Laneville Road (Rt. 45/4; a left turn).
- At Laneville, Rt. 45/4 becomes Forest Service Road 19. Caution: FS Road 19 is not plowed in the winter. Winter travel is not advised.
- Follow FS Rd. 19 to top of mountain, turn left onto Forest Service Road 75.
- Continue on FS Road 75 for about eight miles to the Bear Rocks parking lot (where the road turns sharply to descend the mountain). FS Road 75 is also not plowed and is often gated closed in winter. The preserve is a very short walk north of the parking lot.

The Nature Conservancy would like to thank Dominion Energy for donating Bear Rocks Preserve and Dominion Foundation for its generous help in advancing our conservation work at Bear Rocks Preserve and for making this brochure possible.