

GHOST RIVER STATE NATURAL AREA
CLASS I SCENIC RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Fayette

ACREAGE: 2,220

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Grand Junction, Moscow SE

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Coastal Plain

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1997

DESCRIPTION: The Ghost River is a 2,220-acre section of the Wolf River in Fayette County located within the Coastal Plain Physiographic Province of Tennessee. The natural area includes approximately 14 miles of the Wolf River beginning from the parking area near La Grange to just west of Bateman Road Bridge. The Ghost River section of the Wolf is an unchanneled river section that meanders through bottomland hardwood forests, cypress-tupelo swamps, and open marshes. Some of the most impressive trees that occur here are large oaks that include cherrybark, water, willow, and swamp chestnut. The low ridges above the river bottoms support tulip poplar, beech, and white oak with northern red oak infrequently occurring. The natural area also includes other ecologically significant uplands and sandy hills adjacent to the floodplain.

The braided channels and backwater sloughs of the Ghost River provide excellent habitat for rare aquatic organisms including endangered freshwater mussels and fish such as the fat mucket (*Lampsilis siliquidea*), southern rainbow (*Villosa vibex*), southern hickorynut (*Obovaria jacksoniana*) and northern madtom (*Noturus stigmosus*). There are over 22 species of freshwater mussels found in the Wolf River. A variety of aquatic and terrestrial habitats also offer unique opportunities for observing birds and other wildlife.

The Ghost River section of the Wolf River received its name from the loss of river current as the water "flows" through open marshes and bald cypress-water tupelo swamps. Blue trail markers show the way for paddlers through the disorienting maze of willow, cypress, tupelos, and stunted pumpkin ash. The marked canoe trail follows the river from Yager road in LaGrange to Bateman Road Bridge. A loop trail and 600 ft. boardwalk was constructed crossing Mineral (Minnow) Slough in 2003 and 2004.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Tennessee Wildlife Resources Agency, Wolf River Wildlife Management Area, phone (901) 878-0855. Division of Natural Areas, Jackson Environmental Field Office, 1625 Hollywood Drive, Jackson TN, 38305, phone (731) 512-1369. Division of Natural Areas, 7th Floor L&C Annex, 401 Church St., Nashville 37243, phone (615) 532-0431.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Parking areas are provided at Yager and Bateman bridges, Beasley Road at Mineral (Minnow) Slough, Leatherwood Road, or any WMA gravel parking area. A marked canoe trail leads from the bridge at Yager Road downstream to Bateman Road. A 600-foot boardwalk and loop trail crosses Mineral (Minnow) Slough on the north side of Beasley Road.

DIRECTIONS: From Memphis: take Poplar Ave. (Hwy 57) east through Moscow. Approximately 5 miles east of Moscow, Bateman Road leads to a parking lot on the western end of the natural area; Leatherwood or Yager Road will also lead to other access points off of Hwy 57. From Jackson: follow Hwy 18 south through Bolivar to Hwy. 57. Turn right (west) on Hwy 57. At the caution light in LaGrange, turn left on Yager Rd. The parking area/canoe trail entrance is on the right hand side of Yager Rd. just before crossing the bridge.