

POGUE CREEK
CLASS II NATURAL-SCIENTIFIC STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Fentress

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Sharp Place, Pall Mall

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Cumberland Plateau

OWNERSHIP: State of Tennessee

ACREAGE: 3,000

YEAR DESIGNATED: 2006

DESCRIPTION: Pogue Creek is a 3,000-acre natural area located on the Cumberland Plateau. It is contiguous to parts of Pickett State Forest and very near Pickett CCC Memorial State Park. The Tennessee Chapter of The Nature Conservancy (TNC) acquired Pogue Creek to protect it from development, then sold the tract to the State in 2006 when it was then designated a state natural area.

The natural area is named for Pogue Creek, which, along with its tributaries, formed and runs through the magnificent gorge that makes this area so special. Pogue Creek is a tributary of the Wolf River, which empties into the Cumberland River. The topography and plant communities are characteristic of the Cumberland Plateau with rich forests and scenic sandstone formations. The narrowest sections of the gorge are often dominated by eastern hemlock, magnolia species, and red maple with rhododendron (*Rhododendron maximum*) and mountain laurel forming the shrub layer. As the gorge broadens, the forest becomes a mix of tulip poplar, beech, sycamore, yellow birch, maples, American basswood (*Tilia americana*), yellow buckeye, (*Aesculus octandra*), oaks and hickories. This type of forest is characteristic of the mixed mesophytic forest found in rich plateau gorges. Sugar maple and American beech forest are common on many slopes while oaks, hickories, red maple, and pines (*Pinus* spp.) become dominant on drier upper slopes and along the bluff line.

The bluff line is scenic where exposed reddish orange sandstone forms bands of sheer rock cliffs. In many places very scenic rockhouses and sandstone formations occur creating astonishing, picturesque rock structures. The rockhouses are habitat for rare species such as Cumberland sandwort (*Arenaria cumberlandensis*), which is a federally endangered plant species. The state listed species Lucy Braun's snakeroot (*Ageratina luciae-brauniae*), which is only known from four counties in Tennessee, is associated with these rockhouses and is locally abundant here. Limited botanical inventories indicate that the diversity of Pogue Creek is significant with more than 300 plant species recorded by spring of 2006.

SITE MANAGEMENT: Pickett CCC Memorial State Park, 4605 Pickett Park Hwy., Jamestown, TN 38556, phone (931) 879-5821; Division of Natural Areas, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431; Division of Natural Areas, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921, phone (865) 594-5601.

PUBLIC ACCESS: No public access is provided at this time; trails are under development.

DIRECTIONS: Directions are not provided until public access is completed. Click on the map link to view its location.