

Frontier News

Daniel Boone
National
Forest



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Your Daniel Boone National Forest

If you ask Forest Supervisor Dan Olsen what Kentucky's greatest treasure is, he will most assuredly tell you that it's the Daniel Boone National Forest (DBNF). With an abundance of natural resources and more than a million visitors each year, he makes a strong case.

The DBNF extends along the Appalachian foothills across 21 counties of Eastern Kentucky, making it the largest federally managed area within the state. These public lands support local communities through recreational tourism, sustainable timber supplies, clean water, energy and minerals, and wildlife.



In states that have national forest lands, federal payments are made that help support schools, road maintenance, stewardship projects, and county governments. The investments in infrastructure, ecosystem restoration, forest health, and salaries further support local jobs and income.

Providing Outdoor Recreation

Kentucky's national forest lands are characterized by steep forested slopes, sandstone cliffs, and narrow ravines. For those who come here, the rugged terrain is part of the attraction. Hikers and campers enjoy the quest for adventure, while nature lovers relish the scenic beauty and solitude.

Nearly 100 developed recreation areas and 600 miles of trail, including the Sheltowee Trace National Recreation Trail, are managed as part of the national forest. Cave Run Lake, Laurel River Lake, and the Red River Gorge are among the most popular areas. According to 2017 survey data, the majority of



Mountain forest view in Red River Gorge.

forest visitors are hikers. The viewing of natural features comes in second as a main activity, followed by fishing and boating. DBNF visitors spend an estimated \$49 million annually, an economic benefit that's especially important for the small, rural communities that occur in or near national forest lands.

Managing Natural Resources

Wood, water, and wildlife are the foundational resources that create a healthy forest, and the DBNF has a bountiful supply of these renewable assets. Currently, more than sixty percent of total forest acres is 80 years old or more, reaching its peak as a prime timber source. White oak is among one of the most sought-after woods, and the DBNF happens to be one of the most white oak-dominated forests in the country, a major perk for Kentucky's bourbon industry that uses white-oak barrels to age the distilled spirit.

Foresters, biologists, and fire-management specialists work together to promote forest health and reduce the risks of destructive pathogens and non-native invasive species. Prescribed fire, thinning, and midstory removal are a few of the management tools used to manage and protect our forest resources.

Portions of three major watersheds occur within the national forest boundaries. The Licking, Kentucky, and Upper Cumberland rivers flow through the forest, providing surface and groundwater resources for more than a million people.

The DBNF has five wildlife-management areas and two federally designated wilderness areas—Clifty Wilderness and Beaver Creek Wilderness. With more than 88,000 acres combined, these areas provide important habitat for an array of plants and animals, along with significant opportunities for biological research and education. The DBNF is also home to Kentucky's only federally designated Wild and Scenic River, the Red River.

Protecting Culture and Heritage

In addition to providing our most basic needs, the land is inherent to our cultural sense of place. Our national forest lands preserve remnants of our history and connect us to our ancestors. As citizens, these lands belong to all of us, and we all benefit from the resources that these lands provide. In the sense of greatest treasure, Olsen is apparently on to something. The DBNF is certainly among our nation's greatest treasures, and Kentucky is richer for having it.

More About The Forest:

The Daniel Boone National Forest is among 154 national forests and 20 grasslands managed by the Forest Service under the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The agency's mission is to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the nation's forests and grasslands to meet the needs of present and future generations. Visit the DBNF website at <https://www.fs.usda.gov/dbnf/>