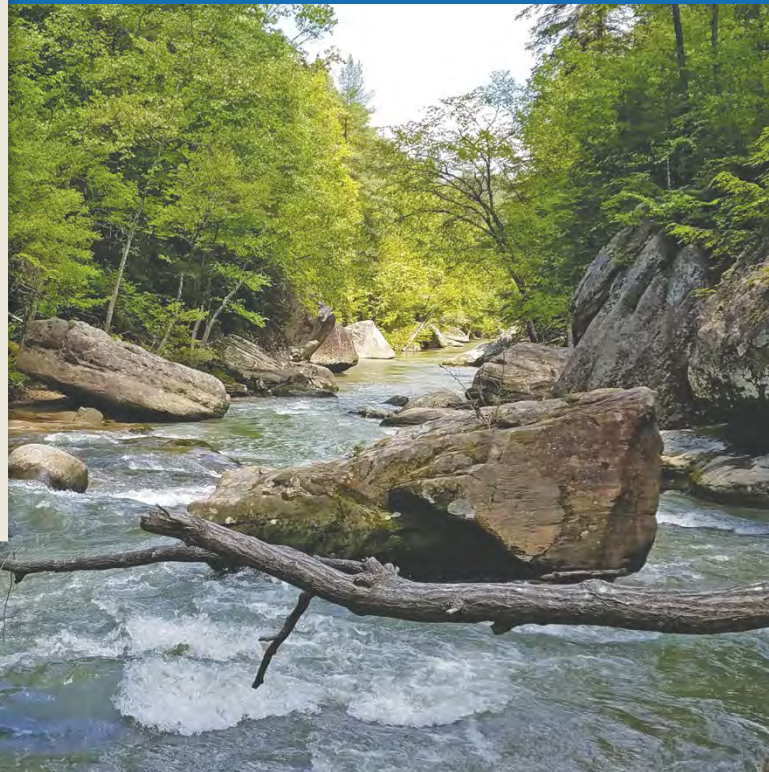



RED RIVER

A NATIONAL WILD AND SCENIC RIVER



 *Red River Gorge rapids. USDA Forest Service photo.*

The Red River begins its long, winding journey through a narrow, boulder-strewn ravine. This 97.2-mile tributary to the Kentucky River flows through some of the State's most rugged but scenic landscape, commonly known as the Red River Gorge. Sculpted by wind and water over millions of years, the terrain rises and falls. Towering sandstone cliffs line steep, forested ridges where unique rock features randomly appear. In the valleys below, creeks and streams ripple through densely shaded coves of hemlock trees and rhododendrons.



Nestled in the heart of the Daniel Boone National Forest, the Red River and its surrounding area attracts thousands of outdoor recreation enthusiasts year round. Rock climbers, hikers, canoeists, and campers are just a few of those who come to enjoy and explore the gorge.

More than 70 species of fish and 16 species of mussels occur in the Red River's free-flowing waters. The surrounding cliffs are home to white-haired goldenrod (*Solidago albopilosa*), a plant found only in the Red River Gorge region of eastern Kentucky.

AMERICA'S WILD AND SCENIC RIVERS



President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act in 1968. It established a system of remarkable rivers that would be preserved as free-flowing rivers for the benefit of present and future generations. Since that time, 226 rivers, spanning 13,413 miles and 41 States and Puerto Rico, have become part of our Nation's National Wild and Scenic Rivers System.

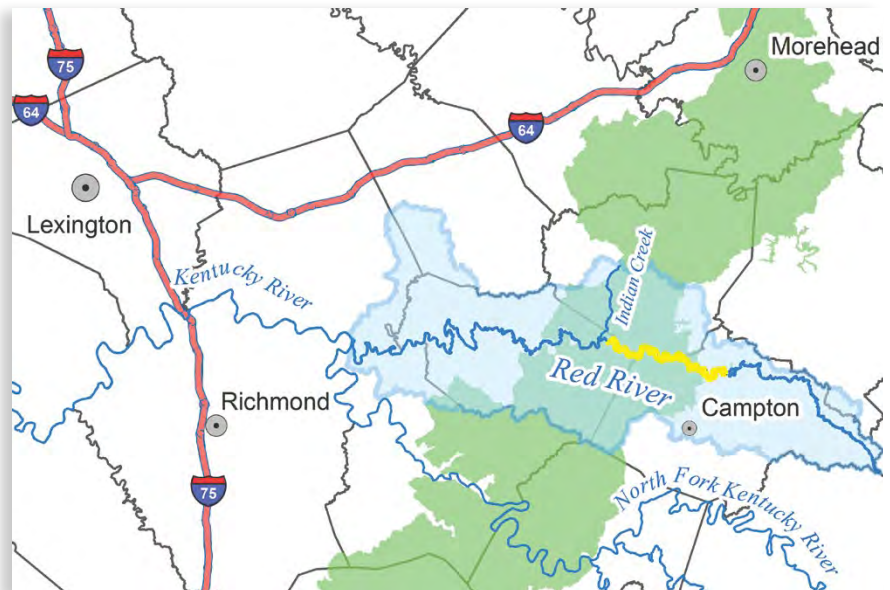
The U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service and the U.S. Department of the Interior, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service manage the National Wild and Scenic Rivers System. State agencies and local organizations serve as vital stewardship partners.

Millions of Americans rely on these rivers to provide abundant clean water for use and enjoyment, and many communities rely on them for economic strength through tourism.

During 1993, the Federal Government designated a 19.4-mile segment of the Red River a national wild and scenic river. Kentucky also designated a 9.1-mile portion of the river a Kentucky Wild River.

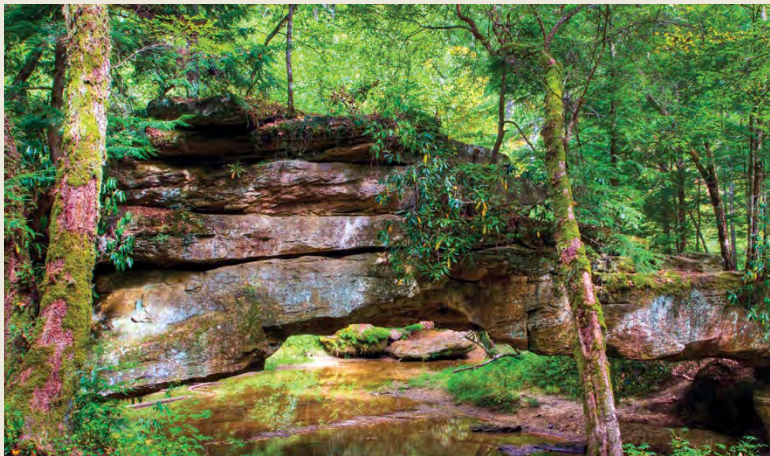
The gorge has more than 100 natural sandstone arches. Some say this is the largest concentration of arches east of the Mississippi River.

More than 600 known rock shelters are located along the Red River. Some shelters are more than 11,000 years old.



- Federal Wild and Scenic River Designation
- Red River Watershed
- Daniel Boone National Forest
- Counties

Rock Bridge on the Cumberland Ranger District.
USDA Forest Service photo.



About the Red River

The Red River Gorge also includes:

- A national archaeological historic district (41,000 acres)
- A national natural landmark and a national geological area (29,000 acres)
- The Clifty Wilderness (13,000 acres)
- The Red River Gorge National Scenic Byway (46 miles)

RED RIVER WATERSHED RESTORATION



☛ *Recreation includes kayaking or canoeing in the rapids of the Red River. USDA Forest Service photo.*



☛ *Kids in the Woods-Red River Conservation Education. USDA Forest Service photo.*

Along the Red River and its tributaries, preventing soil erosion is a challenge. About half a million visitors come to the Red River Gorge each year, mostly for hiking and backcountry camping. In frequently visited locations, the soils are compacted and stripped of vegetation, often resulting in soil runoff into nearby streams. A watershed coordinator, funded through a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) 319 grant, also provides river education and plans special events, such as river cleanups, canoe and rafting activities, and festivals to increase environmental awareness.

Indian Creek East Fork Restoration

A project, such as a new road, that impacts a stream or wetland must mitigate its effects. One way project developers can do that is to pay “fees in lieu of” the actual mitigation. These fees can be used for stream restoration projects in other locations. That’s how the Kentucky Department of Fish and Wildlife Resources and the Daniel Boone National Forest restored the East Fork of Indian Creek, a major tributary to the Red River. The project enhanced recreation, improved fish and wildlife habitat, and reduced erosion along 4,500 feet of stream. Support from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Louisville District made the restoration of this stream possible.



A group of people are working to ensure that people continue to enjoy the Red River’s natural beauty and recreation opportunities. They focus on reducing sediment and pathogens to keep the water clean and clear.

The absence or failure of septic systems on private lands is one of the greatest challenges to restoring clean water. Elevated pathogen levels are commonly documented in the river.

Thanks to EPA’s Clean Water Act, Section 319 funding, a watershed coordinator works with people who live near the river’s headwaters to install or repair septic systems.




📍 *Red River cleanup crew. USDA Forest Service photo.*

SPOTLIGHT ON COLLABORATION



A group of organizations work together to improve water quality in the Red River. Funding from EPA's Clean Water Act, Section 319 forms the foundation for these efforts. Highlights include:

- Kentucky Division of Water administers incoming funds and works with partners.
- Kentucky Waterways Alliance employs a watershed coordinator who works closely with private landowners in need of septic systems.
- East Kentucky PRIDE (Personal Responsibility in a Desirable Environment) works with regulatory agencies and contractors to install septic systems.
- The Red River Gorge Trail Crew maintains trails to help prevent soil erosion along popular hiking trails.
- Friends groups help with educational efforts and river cleanups.
- Eastern Kentucky University conducted a fish passage study on the restored portions of East Fork Indian Creek.
- The Center for Aquatic Technology Transfer assessed the river's fish and macroinvertebrates communities, as well as the habitat in the river for aquatic life.

 Red River Gorge rapids. USDA Forest Service photo.



CONTACT US:

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