

Pocahontas County West Virginia Birding Trails Cranberry Glades Area



County Region- South

Ownership - USDA Forest Service-

Management - Monongahela National Forest, Telephone- 304-456-3335

Ownership - Cranberry Wilderness in the Monongahela National Forest is part of the National Wilderness Preservation System with an area of 35,864 Acres. Elevation ranges from 2,400 to 4,600 feet.

Habitat and Site Description- The habitat of the Cranberry Glades is a high elevation wetland, and an early successional Red Spruce and Northern Hardwood forest consisting of 750 acres. The Cranberry Glades are made up of four bogs where plant and animal life is similar to the muskegs of the north. During the last ice age, these species spread southward as glaciations crept across the northern part of our continent. Several species, pitcher plants, sundews, northern water thrush and saw-whet owls as examples, ended their migration here and the Cranberry Glades are now the southern-most point in North America where some of these life forms are found. Fifty documented breeding bird species have been seen in this area.

Point of reference is the Cranberry Nature Center

Point of reference - Latitude/Longitude 80.156.514W- 38.11.77N, **Elevation** - 3600'

Directions to the Point of Reference - From Elkins, take US219 south and turn right onto SR150 at the top of Elk Mountain. The Cranberry Nature Center parking area is located at the junction of SR39/55 and SR150. From Marlinton, take SR39/55 west to the junction of SR150. From Richwood, take SR39/55 east to SR150 junction.

Trail descriptions-

1. Visitor Center Interpretive Loop 80.156.514W - 38.11.77N is a very short woodland walk beginning to the right of the Main Visitor Center's door at an elevation of 3600'.

2. Bruffey Trail (TR280) is a 1.1 mile loop trail that is accessed by walking down the entrance of the Nature Center, crossing SR39/55 to the left side of SR150. Descend the bank and follow the signs to the SR39/55 just east of the Cranberry Glades Road (FR102). Cross SR39/55 again

and ascend to the trail's end at the Pocahontas Trail (TR263). Turning left will return you to the Nature Center.

3. Charles Creek Trail (TR260) is an easy 1.2 mile trail with exceptional scenery. This trail is accessed just east of the junction of SR39/55 and FR102 on the right, 80.15.46.928 - 38.10.49.923N. Follow the Bruffey Trail (TR280) a short distance and turn left on Charles Creek Trail (TR260). After 0.2 miles turn left on an old Forest Road, crossing Charles Creek and pass through the Mill Point Federal Prison historic site. The trail ends at the Cranberry Glades Road. By turning left you will return to the starting point at the junction of SR39/55 and FR102.

4. Thomas Reserve Trail (TR275) 80.168.704 - 38.118.925N is 0.9 miles in length. It is accessed from the Cranberry Glades Road (FR102), 0.2 miles north of the junction of SR39/55 and FR102. Turn right and continue through a grassy area and descend into a forest to a grove of hemlock and by a cascading stream. The trail ends at the Cow Pasture Trail (TR253). Turn left and continue to the Cranberry Glades Road. Turning left will return you to your starting point on FR102. The total hike is 4.0 plus miles.

5. Cranberry Board Walk (TR222) 80.1630.736W - 38.1151.224N is a wheel chair accessible boardwalk loop (0.6 mile) through the Cranberry Glades area with abundant wild flowers and birds of high elevation. The Glades are composed of sphagnum bogs, or muskegs, which are reminiscent of the Arctic tundra. To access the Cranberry Board Walk, proceed west/left at the Nature Center on SR39/55 for 0.5-miles and turn right onto Cranberry Glades Road (FR102) to the parking area.

6. Cow Pasture Trail (TR253) 80.1625.78W - 38.1143.479 is a 5.8-mile meadow/woodland trail that loops around the Cranberry Bog between 3320' and 3550'. The trail is of moderate difficulty but there are beautiful scenic views of the bogs. The trail is best accessed at the parking area on the right of the Cranberry Glades Road (FR102), 0.2 miles south of the Cranberry Glades parking lot. Or you can park at the parking area and return 0.2-miles to the trail. The trail ends at FR102. By turning left, the FR102 will take you back to the Cranberry Glades parking lot. Continuing another 0.2-miles returns you to the starting point.