

Panther Den Wilderness Quest

Quest Description:

Located in Union and Williamson Counties, Panther Den Wilderness was designated by the Illinois Wilderness Act of 1990 and encompasses 839 acres. It received this name from a rock formation known as the Panther Den located within the Wilderness boundary.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 states that by definition, “A wilderness...is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” What remains is a variety of wildlife species that is supported by the vast acreage a wilderness area provides as habitat.

As you begin walking down the path notice the many curves. These are called switchbacks and aid in climbing hills with great ease. You hike down the valley and come to a creek. Upon crossing the creek you begin to feel different; an amazing transformation is taking place. You are beginning to grow a tail. You reach up to scratch your face and realize you have grown whiskers. You turn around to use the creek’s reflection as a mirror and to your shock and surprise you have changed into a panther! Continue on your journey from a panther’s point of view.

Veer left at the trail intersection where you will come upon the wilderness boundary sign (you’ve made it!) – follow the trail, wrapping around the outcropping before you until you come to a large box-like sandstone rock feature. Take some time and explore this area and around the stone bluffs ahead as a panther. For example, where would your den be located? Where would you find water? Where would you trap your food? As panthers have been absent from the Illinois landscape since about the 1870’s, look for other signs of wildlife in this wilderness area and document them in a journal or in a photograph.



Supplies Needed:

1. Map
2. Water
3. Snack
4. Notebook
5. Pencil

Trail Name and Marker: 371 and Panther Den Loop Trail 389

Trail Difficulty: Moderate to Difficult

Trail Length: 2.5 miles round trip

Quest Time: 3 hours

Trail Type: Dirt & gravel

Best Season: Winter, Spring, Early summer, Fall

Possible Hazards: Loose rocks, tree roots, poison ivy, poisonous snakes, and a creek crossing.

Wilderness Ethics: Plan Ahead and prepare for your trip. Pack In/ Pack Out, Leave what you find, Travel on durable surfaces, respect wildlife and other visitors

Access to trailhead: From Rt. 13 in Carbondale, take Giant City Road south to Grassy Road and turn left. Continue to Rocky Comfort Road and turn right. Follow to Panther Den Road and turn left. Take to Panther Den Lane and turn left. Drive back to parking lot on right hand side.

From I-57, take exit 40 (Goreville exit) west onto Goreville Road and travel about 1 mile to North Lick Creek Road. Turn right and travel to Mt. Hebron Road and turn left. Continue to Robinson Hill Road and take a right. After curve in road, turn right onto Panther’s Den Lane. Drive back to parking lot on right hand side.

In Case of Emergency: 911

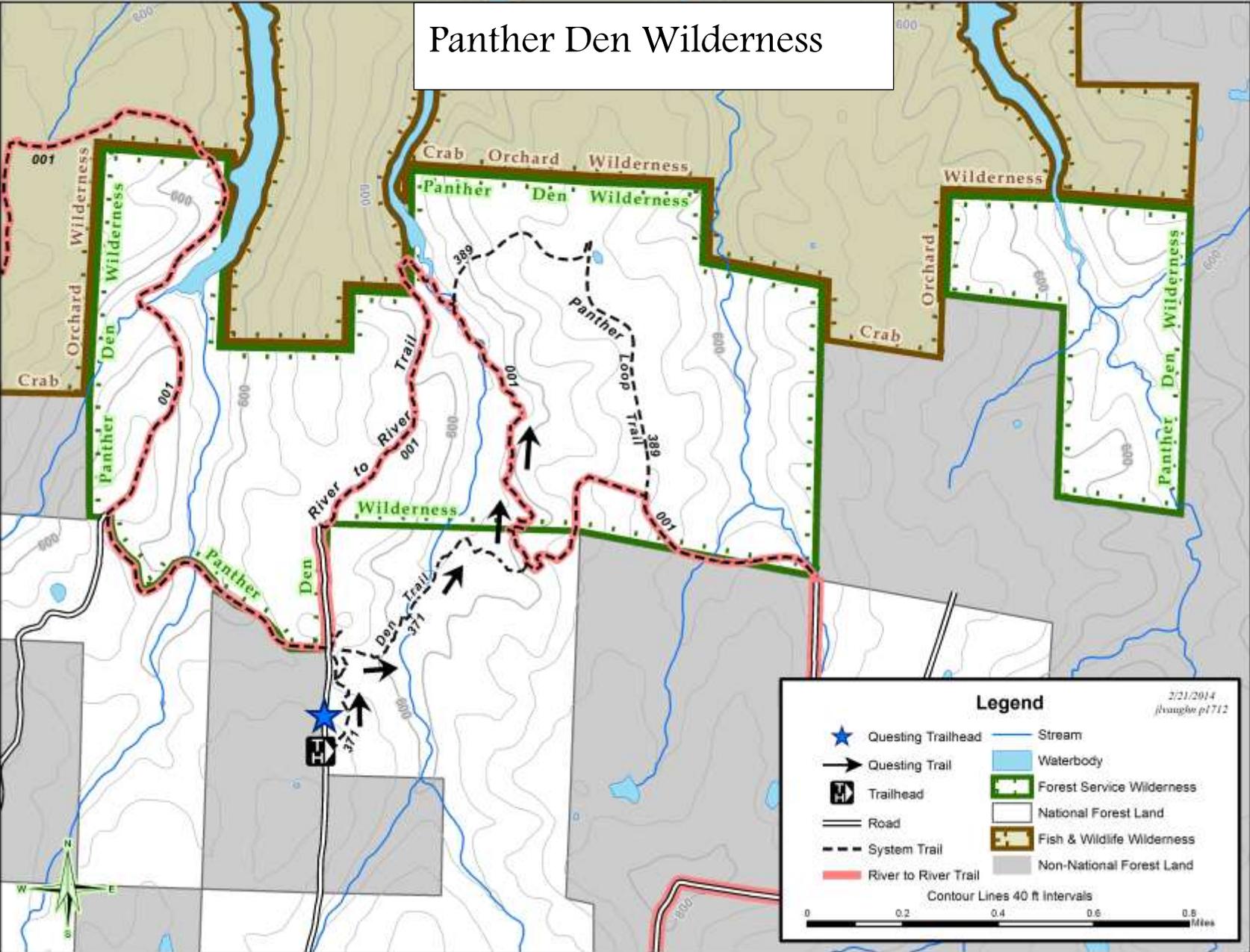
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USDA Forest Service is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

For more info contact:
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Panther Den Wilderness



Legend 2/21/2014
jlvault/p1712

	Questing Trailhead		Stream
	Questing Trail		Waterbody
	Trailhead		Forest Service Wilderness
	Road		National Forest Land
	System Trail		Fish & Wildlife Wilderness
	River to River Trail		Non-National Forest Land

Contour Lines 40 ft Intervals

0 0.2 0.4 0.6 0.8 Miles