

BAYS MOUNTAIN
CLASS I SCENIC-RECREATIONAL STATE NATURAL AREA

COUNTY: Sullivan, Hawkins

7.5' QUADRANGLE: Kingsport, Church

Hill, Sullivan Gardens, and Lovelace

PHYSIOGRAPHIC PROVINCE: Ridge and Valley

OWNERSHIP: City of Kingsport

ACREAGE: 3,000

YEAR DESIGNATED: 1973

DESCRIPTION: Bays Mountain is a 3,000-acre natural area located only six miles from downtown Kingsport, Tennessee. This natural area is located in Sullivan and Hawkins Counties along the crest and inside slopes of Holston River Mountain and Bays Mountain in the Ridge and Valley Physiographic Province. When viewed from lower elevations, these two mountains, which are joined at their northern termini, appear to be a single ridge. But when inside the park, they form a natural and spectacular "bowl or basin" within which the park lies. The basin, surrounding slopes, and ridges are underlain with limestone, shale, and sandstone that support a diversity of plant and animal life.

Bays Mountain supports numerous plant communities in a relatively un-fragmented forest ecosystem. Pine and oak forest are distributed on ridges and drier upper slopes, whereas more moist forest conditions at lower elevations support a more mesic forest of sugar maple, tulip poplar, and white oak. Hemlock and white pine are found in more restricted locations. Species more commonly associated with the nearby Blue Ridge such as striped maple, yellow birch, rosebay and Catawba rhododendron are also found here.

The park and natural area is managed by the City of Kingsport. There are various facilities including large outdoor animal habitats for wolves, bobcats, otters, deer, and other animals native to this region. There are 25 miles of hiking trails through vast forestland. Bays Mountain Park and State Natural Area offers dramatic views from the tops of Bays Mountain and Holston River Mountain. You may obtain more specific information on the park and its programs, amenities, hours of operation, and regulations by visiting the Bays Mountain web site at <http://home.naxs.com/baysmtn/>.

SITE MANAGEMENT: City of Kingsport, Sullivan County, Tennessee. Contact: Bays Mountain Park, 853 Bays Mountain Park Road, Kingsport, TN 37660, phone (423) 229-9447; **Division of Natural Areas**, 401 Church Street, 7th Floor L&C Annex, Nashville, TN 37243, phone (615) 532-0431; **Division of Natural Areas – East TN Office**, 3711 Middlebrook Pike, Knoxville, TN 37921, phone (865) 594-5601.

PUBLIC ACCESS: Public access allowed: parking and hiking trails provided.

DIRECTIONS: From I-181 North in Johnson City, Tennessee, take exit 52 (Meadowview Conference Center), at the light turn west onto Reservoir Road and continue for approximately three miles, turn right onto Bays Mountain Park Road, take the left fork and continue up the mountain to the park.