

## **KETCHERSIDE MOUNTAIN CA**

Allen Gathman, summer 2016

4,877 acres Iron, Reynolds Co. DeLorme 56, D-4

GPS: 37.5332167,-90.7148314

Owned by MDC. For additional information call (573) 223-4525 or see

<http://mdc7.mdc.mo.gov/applications/moatlas/AreaSummaryPage.aspx?txtAreaID=7602>

**Directions:** From Ironton, take MO 21 south 4 miles. Take Rt. CC north to fire tower, privy, upper Russell Mountain trail access. Royal Gorge and lower Russell Mountain trail access available from a gravel parking lot on MO 21, 1.1 miles south of Rt. CC turnoff.

**ADA Information:** Parking area and privies at end of Rt. CC are wheelchair accessible. See Hazards/Limitations below for additional information.



**When to Visit/Species to Expect:** Any time, but especially worth visiting during spring and fall migration. Habitats in this area are primarily hardwood forest on steep mountainsides, with some open rocky glades. Breeding warblers and vireos are common in summer; numerous migrant species have been recorded. Prairie warbler is likely in glades.

**Features of interest to birders:** This conservation area comprises four non-contiguous areas, and much of it is accessible only on foot via challenging trails with substantial elevation change. Russell Mountain trail provides access for the intrepid to several Ozark glades; examples of a unique habitat with characteristic flora and fauna. The easiest access for birding is via the relatively level Royal Gorge trail, which circles a small peak, paralleling Big Creek for about half of its length. A leisurely mid-morning walk on about a half-mile of this trail in late June yielded six species of resident warblers, and eBird records suggest there will be substantial variety of migrants in season. There is also a gravel road that crosses this trail leading from MO 21 (turnoff 0.3 miles south of the Royal Gorge trailhead parking lot) to some private property east of the conservation area; this road offers even easier walking access to the Royal Gorge natural area.

The 80-acre Royal Gorge Natural features a shut-ins. Shut-ins are formed when a stream is “shut in” to a narrow canyon-like valley, typically where streams flow through soft sedimentary bedrock such as dolomite, then encounter more resistant rock. Here it is igneous rhyolite formed from magma (molten rock) when this region was volcanic, a billion years ago. The western exposure igneous glades nearby have a distinctive, often stunted plant community with potential for bird species that exploit dry glades. For more information, see <http://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/royal-gorge>

1,600 of the 7,028-acre St. Francois Mountains Natural Area is also within Ketcherside Mountain CA. See <http://nature.mdc.mo.gov/discover-nature/places/st-francois-mountains> for additional information.

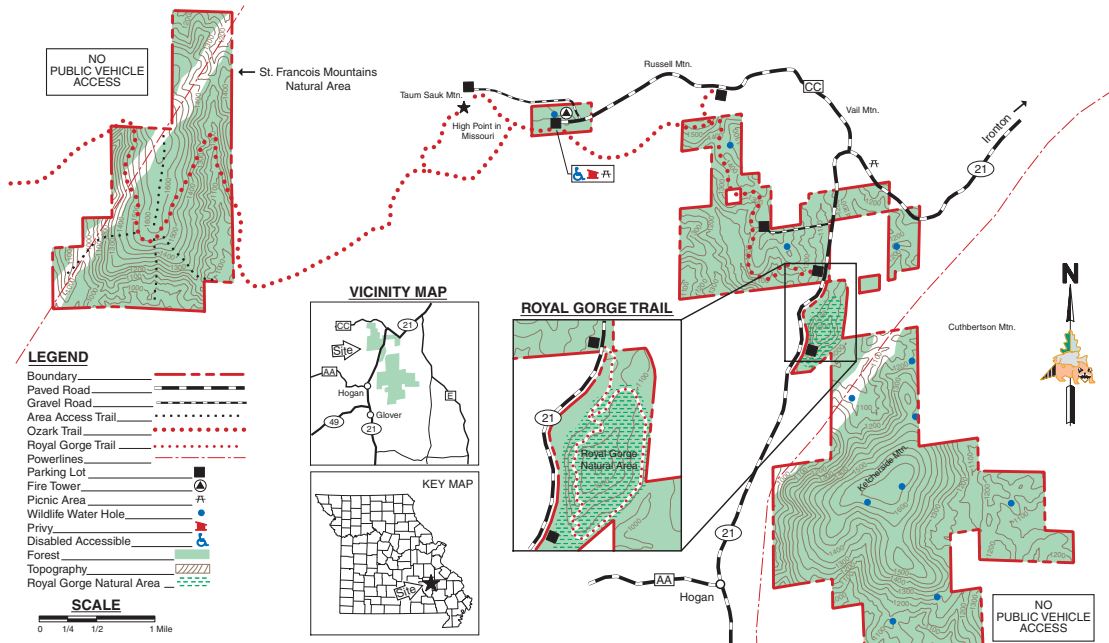
**Toilets:** Privies at parking area at end of Rt. CC.

**Camping:** Permitted year round; no amenities.

**Hazards/Limitations:** Trails are steep and lead to remote areas; cell phone service is limited. The usual population of ticks and chiggers can be expected.

**Nearby Birding sites:** Taum Sauk Mountain State Park, Johnson’s Shut-Ins State Park\*, Lower Taum Sauk Lake, Roselle Access, Fort Davidson State Historic Site, Elephant Rocks State Park.

\*Birders’ Guide available



# KETCHERSIDE MOUNTAIN CONSERVATION AREA

IRON AND REYNOLDS COUNTIES  
4877 ACRES

