

# Wilderness

What does wilderness mean to you? Many early civilizations felt wilderness was the unknown and the uncontrolled.

A large portion of their energy was directed at defeating wilderness in nature and controlling it in human nature. There was too much wilderness to appreciate it. Pioneers described wilderness as dark, gloomy and nightmarish. Their obsession was to clear the land and bring light into darkness.

Attitudes about wilderness changed after the American frontier closed in 1890. For the first time, wilderness became an asset and not a liability due to its increasing scarcity. In 1964 President Lyndon Johnson signed the Wilderness Act to establish a National Wilderness Preservation System. Wilderness was officially defined 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."

In 1976 the majority of Chiricahua National Monument became part of the National Wilderness System. Today 86%, or 10,290 acres/4,116 hectares, is designated wilderness. The land is protected and managed in such a way that it "appears to have been affected primarily by the force of nature." An exception is the hiking trail system that was built in the 1930s by the Civilian Conservation Corps. The Coronado National Forest south of the monument contains the 87,700 acre/35,080 hectare Chiricahua Wilderness.

*"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt we must leave them more than the miracles of technology. We must leave them a glimpse of the world as it was in the beginning, not just after we got through with it."*

President Lyndon B. Johnson



## Leave No Trace

Remember, when visiting any wilderness area, always follow these principles:

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

