

## WILDERNESS CURRICULUM GUIDE

### WEB I: WHAT IS WILDERNESS?

#### ACTIVITY 5: WILDERNESS: WHO CARES FOR IT?

**GOALS:** To gain an understanding of how the National Wilderness Preservation System protects and preserves federally-held land that has been designated as wilderness.

**BACKGROUND:** With the Wilderness Act of 1964, the United States Congress provided for designated federally-held wilderness areas to be protected. The National Wilderness Preservation System protects and preserves 103,721,133 acres of wilderness across the United States. There are 655 individual wilderness areas, including sites in nearly every state. They are protected by four land management agencies: the National Park Service, the Forest Service, the Fish and Wildlife Service, and the Bureau of Land Management.

In Mississippi, 10,683 acres of the state's total land area of 30,024,960 acres are protected as wilderness. On the Mississippi coast, Gulf Islands National Seashore protects Horn Island and Petit Bois Island as federally-designated wilderness areas.

**MATERIALS:** **National Wilderness Preservation System Map; Wilderness Directory.**

#### SUGGESTED PROCEDURES:

- Display the **National Wilderness Preservation System Map** and explain that it shows places that have been designated by the U. S. Congress as wilderness areas. Ask students to read and interpret the key.
- Divide the class into four groups. Ask each group to predict which states have the largest and smallest number of federally-designated wilderness sites.
- Give two groups copies of the **National Wilderness Preservation System Map**. Give the other two groups copies of **The Wilderness Directory**. Ask each group to find the federally-designated wilderness sites in Mississippi. Then ask them to check their earlier predictions by determining which states have the largest and smallest number of federally-designated wilderness areas.
- Ask each student to make a bar graph comparing the number of federally-designated wilderness areas in Mississippi with the states that have the greatest and smallest number of sites. Have students compare graphs in groups of three to check for accuracy.

#### ENRICHMENT EXTENSIONS:

- Ask students to predict which state has the largest percentage of its total land area designated as wilderness. (Alaska has 15% of its total land area, or about one of every seven acres, designated as wilderness.)