

1. What is Wilderness?

Wilderness is a uniquely American idea, one that focuses on deliberately preserving scenic wonders and expanses of wild nature. It is part of our history & heritage and will be passed as a legacy to future generations. Wilderness is America's enduring resource.

Wilderness is for the use and enjoyment of the American people today and forever. The value of wilderness depends on the degree to which it remains unimpaired –a contrast to the highly developed world in which most of us live.

-From Wilderness: An Enduring Resource brochure

"Wilderness is the physical environment that helped shape the American saga....to walk these areas today is to relive American history and bring some understanding of our heritage." -William O. Douglas, Supreme Court Justice, 1965

2. Wilderness Act of 1964

The Wilderness Act was passed by Congress in 1964 and continues to be the guiding piece of legislation for all Wilderness areas. The Act defines Wilderness as follows:

- *"...lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition..."* Section 2(a)
- *"...an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man..."* Section 2(c)
- *"...generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable..."* Section 2(c)
- *"...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation..."* Section 2(c) *-From wilderness.net*

3. Wilderness Benefits & Values

The benefits of wilderness are as diverse as the areas themselves and are highly valued. Recognizing these diverse values opens the door to understanding our natural world. Wilderness contributes significantly to our nation's health and well-being. Every citizen has a responsibility to ensure that the wilderness we have today remains wild for future generations to enjoy tomorrow.

- Sources: From National Wilderness Preservation System Map and Wilderness: An Enduring Resource brochure

Wilderness visitors are inspired and humbled by the feeling of being part of something larger than themselves. They find that going to wilderness is like going home.

4. Wilderness Character

Objective: To define the character of wilderness; the combination of biophysical, experiential and symbolic ideals that distinguish wilderness from all other lands.

Key words: attributes, solitude, wildness, forces of nature, naturalness, untrammelled, unhindered, undeveloped, outstanding opportunities for solitude, primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Wilderness lands are shaped by the forces of nature. These natural and undeveloped lands provide visitors with a sense of freedom from the constraints of society. – Wilderness Character: A National Framework.

Wilderness is essentially unhindered and free from modern human control and manipulation. - Wilderness Character: A National Framework.

Protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions. Wilderness ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization. - Wilderness Character: A National Framework.

Wilderness is essentially without improvements or modern human occupation. - Wilderness Character: A National Framework.

Wilderness is an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain and with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable. (Wilderness Act, Sec. 2)

Quotes:

"Something will have gone out of us as a people if we ever let the remaining wilderness be destroyed." –Wallace Stegner

"If future generations are to remember us with gratitude rather than contempt, we must leave them something 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 on signing the Wilderness Act of 1964

"Recreation is valuable in proportion to the intensity of its experiences, and to the degree to which it differs from and contrast with workaday life."
Aldo Leopold, 1949.

"We have a profound, fundamental need for areas of wilderness- a need that is...essential to our understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, and our place in nature." Howard Zahniser, 1956.

"Wildernesses are first of all a series of sanctuaries for the primitive arts of wilderness travel, especially canoeing and packing." Leopold, 1949.

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5. Wilderness Management

Unlike most landscapes that are dominated by human influence, wilderness is managed so people can enjoy the natural beauty with minimal impact.

Wilderness Management provides for human use while preserving the wilderness character and reduces the adverse impacts of human use in wilderness through education and regulations.

6. What is Not Allowed in Wilderness?

Use language from the Act that prohibits motor vehicles, motorized equipment and other forms of mechanical transport. Also, add District regulations, including R2 special order prohibiting wheel burrows and game carts.

7. Wilderness Registration and Permits

If wilderness unit is under required (mandatory) registration, or under a permit (Indian Peaks Wilderness), add information about required registration/permit instructions- must keep signed, visitor copy with them at all times during trip. Hard copy (tan colored) goes in the registration box.