

Other Laws Governing Water Quality in Wilderness

Wilderness is not mentioned by name in the **Clean Water Act** (Federal Water Pollution Control Act (As Amended, P.L. 109-169, January 11, 2006; 33 U.S.C. 1251 et seq.)). However, high elevation and mountain top wilderness areas often provide sources of clean water important to downstream river systems. This source of clean water is often cited as rationale for implementation of the Clean Water Act (Section 101a) when determining if a downstream water body is impaired. Wilderness areas located in the lowlands, for example swamp and coastal environments, may be subject to the effects of pollution from upstream sources. The Federal EPA and State Agencies which administer the Clean Water Act use a holistic approach to water quality management placing emphasis on protecting healthy waters as well as restoring impaired water bodies.

Several **Executive Orders** have application to watershed and wilderness management. These include EO 11514, 11574, 11988, 11990, and 12088 (FSM 2501.2).

EO 11514 (amended May 24, 1977) states that the Federal government shall provide leadership in protecting and enhancing the quality of the nation's environment to sustain and enrich human life. This order provides for monitoring, evaluation, and control of activities.

EO 11574 (Dec 23, 1970) regulations discharge of pollutants and other refuse matter into navigable waters of the US or their tributaries or the placing of such matter upon their banks (Section 13 of the Refuse Act (March 3, 1899)).

EO 11988 (May 24, 1977) requires federal agencies to minimize adverse impacts to floodplains and reduce risks of flood loss. The restoration and preservation of the natural and beneficial values served by floodplains is stated in Section C.

EO 11990 (May 24, 1977) requires agencies to take action to minimize destruction, loss, and degradation of wetlands and to preserve and enhance the natural and beneficial values of wetlands.

EO 12088 (Oct 13, 1978) establishes agency responsibility for ensuring the prevention, control, and abatement of environmental pollution with respect to Federal facilities and activities.