

Wilderness.net's Glacier Peak Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Glacier Peak Wilderness in 1964 and it now has a total of 566,166 acres. All of the wilderness is in Washington and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Glacier Peak Wilderness, which shares its northern border with North Cascades National Park, has few equals in terms of sheer ruggedness. Glacier Peak, the highest summit in the area at 10,541 feet, is more remote than any of the state's other famous old volcanoes. Above the tree line (5,000 feet to 6,000 feet), lovely meadows stretch out below the tattered ridges and the dozen or so summits draped with active glaciers, while below the tree line you will wander through dense forest cover. Ultimately, the steep fractured walls and ragged peaks lead to deep U-shaped valleys tangled with huckleberry and other woody plants. Numerous ice-cold creeks splash gloriously through the valleys from their sharp drainages. Other bodies of water include more than 200 lakes, many unnamed and tremendously difficult to access, in various cirques and hidden basins. Wildlife species include several that epitomize Wilderness: grizzly bears, wolverines, gray wolves. Snows accumulate to depths of 45 feet on the west side of the crest. The paths of old avalanches mark some of the forested hillsides. The 450 or so miles on as many as 100 trails vary from relatively easy hiking on maintained footpaths to starkly strenuous and seldom-used old animal trails. The Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail (PCT) follows the crest through the area for about 60 miles. The Suiattle River Trail acts as the main route from the west side, a pathway that travels 7.0 miles and joins the PCT. Above timberline, the land opens invitingly to cross-country travel. Climbers have put up routes on at least 140 peaks and faces in the area, and the rock climbing rates among the best in America. Blue Mountain, for example, in the northern portion of the area, boasts a 700-foot granite face with routes rated as high as 5.10. Some of the faces in the Wilderness exceed 1,000 feet.

Leave No Trace

How to follow the seven standard Leave No Trace principles differs in different parts of the country (desert vs. Rocky Mountains). Click on any of the principles listed below to learn more about how they apply in the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

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](#)

For more information on Leave No Trace, [Visit the Leave No Trace, Inc. website.](#)

Area Management

The Glacier Peak Wilderness is part of the 109 million acre National Wilderness Preservation System. This System of lands provides clean air, water, and habitat critical for rare and endangered plants and animals. In wilderness, you can enjoy challenging recreational activities like hiking, backpacking, climbing, kayaking, canoeing, rafting, horse packing, bird watching, stargazing, and extraordinary opportunities for solitude. You play an important role in helping to *"secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness"* as called for by the Congress of the United States through the Wilderness Act of 1964. Please follow the requirements outlined below and use Leave No Trace techniques when visiting the Glacier Peak Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

General Wilderness Prohibitions

Motorized equipment and equipment used for mechanical transport is generally prohibited on all federal lands designated as wilderness. This includes the use of motor vehicles, motorboats, motorized equipment, bicycles, hang gliders, wagons, carts, portage wheels, and the landing of aircraft including helicopters, unless provided for in specific legislation.

In a few areas some exceptions allowing the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport are described in the special regulations in effect for a specific area. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information.

These general prohibitions have been implemented for all national forest wildernesses in order to implement the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Wilderness Act requires management of human-caused impacts and protection of the area's wilderness character to insure that it is "unimpaired for the future use and enjoyment as wilderness." Use of the equipment listed as prohibited in wilderness is inconsistent with the provision in the Wilderness Act which mandates opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation and that wilderness is a place that is in contrast with areas where people and their works are dominant.

Wilderness-Specific Regulations

Wilderness managers often need to take action to limit the impacts caused by visitor activities in order to protect the natural conditions of wilderness as required by the Wilderness Act of 1964. Managers typically implement 'indirect' types of actions such as information and education measures before selecting more restrictive measures. When regulations are necessary, they are implemented with the specific intent of balancing the need to preserve the character of the wilderness while providing for the use and enjoyment of wilderness.

The following wilderness regulations are in effect for this area. Not all regulations are in effect for every wilderness. Contact the Forest Service office or visit the websites listed on the 'Links' tab for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

- Group size is limited to no more than 12, in any combination of people and pack or saddle stock. Dogs are not counted as part of the group size limit.
- Camping is prohibited within 1/4 mile slope distance of Image Lake and within 200 feet of Holden and Lyman Lakes.
- Campfires are prohibited within 1/2 mile slope distance of Ice Lakes, within 1/4 mile slope distance of Image and Byrne Lakes, within 200 feet slope distance of Holden and Lyman Lakes, and above 4,000 feet on Lime Ridge. Stoves are acceptable.
- Do not shortcut switchbacks.
- Do not enter areas closed for restoration.
- Do not cut standing green trees, snags, and boughs for firewood or other purposes.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste. If you are in an area where fires are allowed, remove all non-combustibles such as foil and glass from fire rings. Never put litter into a backcountry toilet.
- Caching or storing equipment, personal property, or supplies longer than 48 hours is prohibited.

STOCK USERS

- It is prohibited to possess or store hay or crop products that are not state certified weed free including any hay, hay cubes, straw, grain or other crop or mulch product. This regulation does not apply to persons possessing or storing commercially processed feed (feed pellets or steamed, rolled grains) or to persons possessing state certified weed free hay or crop products packaged as bales, containers, or sacks, when also marked using official tags, twine or other identification as required by the product's State of origin, or in possession of the original and current State documents which certify the hay or crop products meet or exceed the North American Weed Management Association (NAWMA) or comparable certification standard.
- Grazing, hitching, tethering, or hobbling any pack or saddle stock within 200 feet of a lake shore is prohibited.
- Some trails are closed to use by pack and saddle stock due to steep grades, inadequate design, lack of grazing or other factors. Consult specific trail closure information at <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/mbs/conditions/?cid=STELPRDB5126323> AND <http://www.fs.usda.gov/detail/okawen/alerts-noticees/?cid=stelprdb5308168>

Fees

The following user fee system(s) have been implemented for this wilderness: TRAILHEAD PARKING. Fees are most often used to offset the operating costs of a permit system or to help fund management activities such as trail maintenance. Contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information on this fee system.

Contacts

Darrington Ranger District
1405 EMMENS ST
DARRINGTON, WA 98241

Phone: 360-436-1155

Phone: 509-664-9200

Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forests
215 MELODY LANE
WENATCHEE, WA 98801

Links to Other Websites

[Mt. Baker-Snoqualmie National Forest, Glacier Peak Wilderness](#)

[Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, Glacier Peak Wilderness](#)

Links on Wilderness.net

[National, Regional and Local Wilderness Organizations \(NGOs\)](#)

A listing of societies, organizations, coalitions and other wilderness-related advocacy and stewardship groups.

[Career and Volunteer Opportunities](#)

A listing of sites providing information about wilderness- and environmentally-related career and volunteer opportunities.

Applicable Wilderness Law(s)

Law	Date	Acreage Change (in acres)
Public Law 88-577	September 3, 1964	458,105
The Wilderness Act - Public law 88-577 (9/3/1964) To establish a National Wilderness Preservation System for the permanent good of the whole people, and for other purposes		
— download 88-577		
Public Law 90-544	October 2, 1968	10,000
(No official title, designates Pasayten Wilderness) - Public law 90-544 (10/2/1968) To establish the North Cascades National Park and Ross Lake and Lake Chelan National Recreational Areas, to designate the Pasayten Wilderness and to modify the Glacier Peak Wilderness, in the State of Washington, and for other purposes.		
— download 90-544		
Public Law 98-339	July 3, 1984	112,607

Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-339 (7/3/1984) To designate certain National Forest System lands in the State of Washington for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes.

— [download 98-339](#)