

Wilderness.net's New Water Mountains Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the New Water Mountains Wilderness in 1990 and it now has a total of 24,600 acres. All of the wilderness is in Arizona and is managed by the Bureau of Land Management.

Description

Despite its name, this land of colorful craggy spires, sharp ridges, sheer rock outcrops, natural arches, and slickrock canyons receives less than five inches of rainfall annually, so you should pack in your own water. Bordered on the south by Kofa Wilderness and on the north by Interstate 10, New Water Mountains offers great backpacking. About 20 old roads are closed to car traffic and can be easily followed on foot.

Black Mesa, a large volcanic butte, stands in the northwest corner 1,200 feet above the Ranegras Plain and 3,639 feet above sea level, the highest point in the Wilderness. Vegetation is sparse. Saguaro, creosote, ocotillo, and cholla dot the hills, and paloverde and ironwood line the washes. New Water and Dripping Springs are prime lambing areas for desert bighorn sheep. Hunters track sheep and mule deer here.

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 New Water Mountains 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.](#)

Location

The New Water Mountains Wilderness Area is located east of Quartzite, just south of I-10 and just north of the Kofa National Wildlife Refuge in La Paz county.

The western boundary of the Wilderness can be accessed from I-10 at the Gold Nugget Road exit

(#26). Taking the exit for State Route 60 (#31) and then turning right onto Ramsey Mine Road gives access to the northern boundary.

Due to infrequent maintenance and the wide range of road conditions that you might encounter, it is strongly recommended that high-clearance, four-wheel-drive vehicles are used for access to the Wilderness boundary.

Area Management

The New Water Mountains Wilderness is part of the 110 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 New Water Mountains Wilderness to ensure protection of this unique area.

There are no developed trails, visitor facilities, or permanent water sources within the Wilderness. Wildlife water catchments are present in the Wilderness in several locations. Visitor registers and informational displays are located at three access points around the Wilderness.

Contacts

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Links to Other Websites

[Bureau of Land Management](#)

[Bureau of Land Management, Arizona](#)

[Bureau of Land Management, Yuma Field Office](#)

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 101-628	November 28, 1990	21,680

Arizona Desert Wilderness Act of 1990 - Public law 101-628 (11/28/1990) To provide for the designation of certain public lands as wilderness in the State of Arizona

— [download 101-628](#)

Recreational Opportunities

Recreational opportunities include hiking, primitive camping, horseback riding, and hunting. Noncommercial trapping is permitted in accordance with State and Federal laws. Hobby rock collecting is permitted, but limited to hand methods or detection equipment that does not cause a surface disturbance- digging and prying tools are not permitted.

To help preserve Wilderness character through responsible recreation, please:

Choose your equipment in earthtone colors that blend in with the environment.

Hike in small groups when traveling cross-country.

Camp at least $\frac{1}{4}$ mile from wildlife water sources.

Hide your camp from view and refrain from building camp structures.

Use camp stoves instead of campfires.

If you do build a fire, do not construct a fire ring and use only small sticks. Once the fire is out, scatter ashes and naturalize the area.

Pick up trash and pack it out (yours and others).

Be courteous to other people. Avoid loud music or noise and keep pets under control.

Bury human waste in cat holes 6-8 inches deep and at least 75 paces from your camp or water sources.

Climate and Special Equipment Needs

Temperatures can be as low as 30° Fahrenheit from December through January,, and can reach above 115° Fahrenheit or greater during June through September. Precipitation generally ranges from 2 to 4 inches per year. Rainfall, which can occur at any time of the year, is often preceded by strong and sudden windstorms. Watch for cloud build up and be aware of possible flash flooding in washes and drainages.

Safety and Current Conditions

For your safety:

Let a friend or relative know where you plan to go and when you plan to return.

Plan your trip. Take plenty of water; there are no permanent water sources or facilities in the New Water Mountains.

Be prepared for extreme temperatures. Check weather forecasts. Dehydration and heat exhaustion can be life threatening. In colder months, guard against hypothermia.

Be aware of poisonous animals. The Wilderness is home to many reptiles and insects whose bite or sting could ruin your day. Never put hands or feet where you can't see.

Avoid abandoned mine workings. These areas are susceptible to collapse and extremely dangerous. They are also home to a variety of animal species that might view your presence as a threat.

Pace yourselves and recognize your limitations as well as your abilities. The terrain is rugged and there are no established trails. Watch your footing.