

Wilderness.net's San Pedro Parks Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the San Pedro Parks Wilderness in 1964 and it now has a total of 41,132 acres. All of the wilderness is in New Mexico and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

San Pedro Parks Wilderness began as a Primitive Area, established by the Chief of the Forest Service in 1931. In 1941 the Secretary of Agriculture classified it as a Wild Area and set its acreage at 41,132 acres. It became the San Pedro Parks Wilderness as part of the original Wilderness Act in July 1964.

Although the elevation averages 10,000 feet above sea level, San Pedro Parks Wilderness is known for high, moist, rolling mountaintops with numerous meadows and large grassy "parks." Dense stands of Engelmann spruce and mixed conifers compete for space with small stands of aspen. Clear streams wander through the forest openings and are usually abundant with trout. Be prepared for frequent afternoon rainfall in July and August. This rainfall enables the meadows to flourish with bluegrass, oat grass, sedge, rush, and Rocky Mountain iris, only to be covered with snow come November. The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail crosses through the Wilderness from Cuba, NM to the Carson National Forest. Its route follows along Los Pinos, Vacas, Penas Negras and Rio Capulin trails.

Campsites with abundant water appeal to backpackers, as do the nine major trails. Trails receiving the heaviest use are the Vacas Trail to San Pedro Park (10.69 miles) and the Palomas Trail (3.63 miles), which joins the Vacas Trail. Fall brings hunters seeking elk, deer, bear, and grouse.

San Gregorio Lake is a small irrigation reservoir in the southern part of the wilderness which was created before Wilderness designation.

The Wilderness receives approximately 35 inches of precipitation a year, mostly as snow. May and June are generally dry months with little precipitation. Daytime temperatures during the summer are often in the seventies but nights are cool, sometimes cold. The Wilderness is open to cross-country skiing and snowshoeing.

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 San Pedro Parks 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 San Pedro Parks 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 San Pedro Parks 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

All garbage and refuse must be packed out. Do not bury garbage or try to burn aluminum.

Do not shortcut switchbacks on trails.

Cutting live or dead standing trees for any purpose is prohibited.

Possessing, storing, or transporting any part of a tree or plant is prohibited, with the exception of dead and down wood for campfires.

The maximum group size for camping, hiking, or riding is 15 people.

The maximum number of pack and saddle stock allowed in a group is 15 head.

Camping for more than 14 consecutive days in one place is not allowed.

Storing equipment or supplies is prohibited.

Camping and campfires are prohibited in the area surrounding San Gregorio Reservoir.

Contacts

Cuba Ranger District

PO BOX 130

CUBA, NM 87013

Remarks: 8am-4:30 pm M-F

Phone: 575-289-3264

Links to Other Websites

[Air Resource Management Data for the San Pedro Parks 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

41,132

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](#)