# Wilderness.net's Sandia Mountain Wilderness Fact Sheet

## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Sandia Mountain Wilderness in 1978 and it now has a total of 37,877 acres. All of the wilderness is in New Mexico and is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

Despite the fact that these mountains tower above the very nearby sprawl of Albuquerque and despite the fact that the trails of this Wilderness may be more heavily used than any other trail system in the state, Sandia Mountain Wilderness still provides an opportunity to get out of town . . . but be prepared to work for your solitude.

The area lies primarily on the western slope of the Sandia Mountains, but it crosses over to the eastern side at the north and south ends. Spruce and fir dominate the high country, with stands of mixed conifers just below. Many raptors migrate through these mountains in spring and fall, sharing their territory with a few mule deer and black bears. Accessible from the tram is the Crest Trail, which runs along 26.54 miles of the main ridge of the Sandias at an elevation averaging 10,000 feet. There are 117 miles of well-maintained trails here, but you have the best chance of avoiding other hikers if you stick to side trails. Carry water, as there is very little in this region.

### 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 Sandia Mountain 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 Sandia Mountain 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 Sandia Mountain 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 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 for more specific information about the regulations listed.

ALL VISITORS

Groups are limited to 25 People-at-One-Time (PAOT) in the Transition Zone and 10 PAOT in the Semi-Primitive Zone - Order #03-0422

Discharge of Firearms is prohibited - Order #03-0426

Certian portions of the Sandia Mountain Wilderness (east of the Piedra Lisa Trail) are closed to all entry (except for persons with a permit) from March 1 through August 15 annually for protection of

rare bird species - Order #03-0460

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

Camping for more than 14 days, whether or not consecutive, within any 45-day period - Order 03-0359

## Contacts

**Sandia Ranger District**
11776 HWY 337
TIJERAS, NM 87059

Phone: 505-281-3304

## 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 95-237** | **February 24, 1978** | **30,930** |

Endangered American Wilderness Act - Public law 95-237 (2/24/1978) To designate certain endangered public lands for preservation as wilderness, and for other purposes

download 95-237

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|---|---|---|
| **Public Law 96-248** | **May 23, 1980** | **6,423** |

(No official title, boundary adjustment for Sandia Mountain Wilderness) - Public law 96-248 (5/23/1980) To amend the Act of November 8, 1978 (92 Stat. 3095), to designate certain Cibola National Forest lands as additions to the Sandia Mountains Wilderness, New Mexico

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|---|---|---|
| **Public Law 97-283** | **October 5, 1982** | **0** |

(No official title, adds to Sandia Mountain Wilderness) - Public law 97-283 (10/5/1982) To further amend the boundary of the Cibola National Forest to allow an exchange of lands with the city of Albuquerque, New Mexico
*NOTE:* Boundary changed, acreage not specified.

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**Public Law 98-603 October 30, 1984 20**

San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act of 1984 - Public law 98-603 (10/30/1984) The San Juan Basin Wilderness Protection Act of 1984

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