

# Wilderness.net's Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness Fact Sheet



## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness in 1978 and it now has a total of 176,737 acres. Oregon contains approximately 65,266 acres. Washington contains approximately 111,471 acres. It is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

This Wilderness is a maze of deep, sheer-walled canyons that cut into what was once a flat and expansive plateau at the northernmost reach of the Blue Mountains located in Northeast Oregon and Southeast Washington. The plateau has since eroded into long ridge tops and wide, forest-covered mesas that now stand as much as 2,000 feet above the drainages. Following ridges will often bring you to a bluff line that fall away vertically into a confluence of drainages. Much of the area's water runs south into Oregon's Wild and Scenic Wenaha River, although some of it slips north into Washington's Tucannon River. Ponderosa pine dominates the lower drainages, then defers to a forest of lodgepole pine above about 4,500 feet, with some larch, fir, and spruce. Subalpine fir reigns supreme at the highest elevations, with native grasses and forbs covering the ground. Elevation ranges from nearly 2,000 feet at the Wenaha River to Oregon Butte which is the tallest point of this vast wilderness at 6,401 feet. Rocky Mountain elk thrive in this area, which seasonally attracts more hunters than hikers. Rattlesnakes love the area, too, and you may see mule deer, white-tailed deer, black bears, coyotes, cougars, bobcats, and snowshoe hares. You might even be lucky enough to catch a glimpse of Big Horned sheep. Snow falls and accumulates about five feet deep between November and April. Summers are typically very hot and very dry. Approximately one-third of the Wilderness lies in Oregon (see Oregon, Wenaha-Tucannon Wilderness). Approximately 200 miles of trail system stays high on the open ridges, winding and connecting often enough to provide long loops through the Washington side and down into Oregon. Entry points can be found in both Washington and Oregon, with Three Forks, Godman, Troy, Cross Canyon, Hoodoo, Elk Flats and Timothy being the most easily accessed trailhead locations.

## 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 Wenaha-Tucannon 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 Wenaha-Tucannon 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 Wenaha-Tucannon 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 people per party.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.
- Caching or storing equipment, personal property, or supplies for longer than 72 hours is prohibited.

## OVERNIGHT VISITORS

- Overnight visitors are limited to 14 consecutive days within any 30-day period.
- Camp at least 75 feet from any live stream (except Panjab and Meadow Creek Trailheads).

## STOCK USERS

- Maximum group size is 18 heartbeats.
- Certified weed free hay cubes, straw, crops or mulch products are required. Commercially processed feed, such as feed pellets or steamed, rolled grains is okay.
- Hitch, tether, or hobble pack or saddle stock at least 75 feet from a live stream (except Panjab and Meadow Creek Trailheads).

## Contacts

**Pomeroy Ranger District**  
71 WEST MAIN  
POMEROY, WA 99347

Phone: 509-843-1891

## Links to Other Websites

[Umatilla National Forest, Wenaha-Tucannon 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)
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**Public Law 95-237**

**February 24, 1978**

**180,000**

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

*NOTE:* Public law acreage includes WA and OR acreage.

—: [download 95-237](#)