



50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act

1964-2014

Anniversary Celebration for the National Wilderness Preservation System

50 YEARS OF AMERICAN WILDERNESS: On September 3, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Wilderness Act. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wildlands for the use and benefit of the American people. Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America's support for wilderness, Congress has added over 100 million acres to this unique land preservation system. The 1964 Wilderness Act defines "Wilderness" as; areas where the earth and its communities of life are left unchanged by people, where the primary forces of nature are in control, and where people themselves are visitors who do not remain.

The NWPS was established for the use and enjoyment of the American people and provides many direct and in-direct benefits, such as those relating to ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic and historical uses and activities. Wilderness units within this system are managed by all four federal land managing agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Park Service.

In 2014, our nation will celebrate "50 years of Wilderness" and we hope that you will find a way to become a part of this historical commemoration. Read on to find out more about local, regional, and national 50th celebration events and activities and how you can participate in honoring America's "*True American Legacy of Wilderness!*"

50th CELEBRATION PLANNING: The 50th Anniversary National Planning Team (*wilderness50*) has formed and is collaborating on the planning and eventual implementation of local, regional, and national events and projects, specifically designed to elevate the profile of wilderness during the 50th anniversary celebration.

Wilderness50's goals are to:

- (1) Engage the public to better understand and appreciate the many benefits and values of wilderness, ultimately resulting in more people supporting responsible wildlands stewardship;
- (2) Bring the wilderness community (NGOs/Agencies/International Advocates) "*together*" to efficiently and consistently steward wilderness for the use, enjoyment, and benefit of the American people;
- (3) Connect with today's youth and with non-wilderness using groups to find the thread that ties their lives to wild places so they can more directly relate to, understand, and value, wilderness.

WHO'S INVOLVED / WHAT'S GOING ON: *Wilderness50* is a growing group of representatives of federal agencies and of non-profit wilderness organizations who have come together to plan and conduct 50th celebration events and activities. These events include but in no way are limited to: community walks for wilderness, classroom and general public wilderness educational programming, museum and visitor center exhibits and television and studio quality movie productions.

WHAT YOU CAN DO: Local community events across the country will truly be the foundation of the 50th anniversary. You can be a leader in your state or community by participating in or organizing a local 50th anniversary celebration. Log onto the 50th Anniversary Toolbox, your toolkit for event planning, at <http://www.wilderness.net/50th>.

If you're interested in and have skills useful for national involvement, *Wilderness50* is in the process of recruiting people who have an interest in actively participating in 50th anniversary national celebratory planning. If this is "YOU" please



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contact one of the people listed below for more information. Don't miss out on one of the greatest environmental events in the history of this country - as it's going to be a celebration - you will not want to miss!

Vicky Hoover – Sierra Club / vicky.hoover@sierraclub.org

Greg Hansen – Society for Wilderness Stewardship / REDROADONE@AOL.COM

Lisa Eidson – Wilderness Institute, University of Montana (federal agency liaison) / lisa@wilderness.net