

What you can do

The 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge is more than the USDA Forest Service can accomplish alone. **Join us for an opportunity to make a difference in the legacy we will give to future generations.**

Partnerships are being developed with local and national groups concerned with the health of the wilderness resource. You can help support these partnerships in many ways.

- Join a trail restoration work project.
- Volunteer to survey and remove invasive species.
- Become part of a team educating others about wilderness.
- Learn new skills while inventorying recreation campsites.
- Contribute to wilderness stewardship by analyzing data about wilderness character.

Learn more about Wilderness Stewardship:
Visit <http://www.wilderness.net>

Or contact your local Forest Service Ranger District Wilderness Program Manager.

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United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service

Wilderness Stewardship

10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge



Are you up to the challenge?

Photo by Tom Kogut

What is the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge?

The goal of the 10-Year Wilderness Challenge is to bring every one of the more than 400 wildernesses under the USDA Forest Service's care to a minimum stewardship level by 2014, the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act. The 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge defines a new level of accountability for Forest Service Wilderness Stewardship.

Signed in 1964, the Wilderness Act was landmark legislation that set aside 9 million acres of wilderness for the enjoyment of present and future generations.

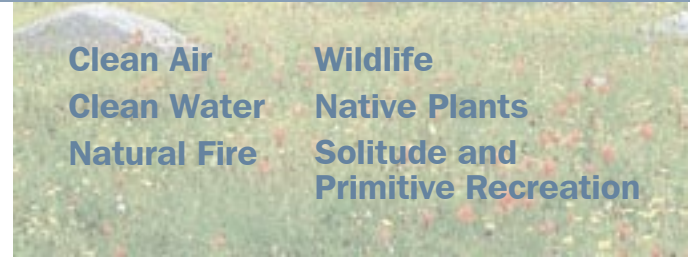
Now more than 106 million acres of designated wilderness are managed by Federal land management agencies. The U.S. Department of Agriculture is responsible for the management of about 35 million acres, or 33 percent of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

To ensure that these wildernesses stay wild forever, we have identified 10 key elements that help define successful wilderness stewardship. These 10 elements combine many essential qualities of wilderness character.

However, your help is needed with the task of wilderness stewardship. Today, only about 20 percent of all wildernesses managed by the USDA Forest Service meet even our minimum stewardship level — defined as achieving success in 6 out of these 10 elements. Yet, meeting all ten elements is our ultimate goal to assure the preservation of wilderness character.

Like any challenge, this won't be easy, but the rewards will be great. By working together, we can keep wilderness wild.

A Healthy Wilderness has . . .



Clean Air **Wildlife**
Clean Water **Native Plants**
Natural Fire **Solitude and**
 Primitive Recreation

The Ten Key Elements

Success of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge means:

- fire managers consider a full range of responses with the goal of restoring natural fire
- invasive plants are successfully treated
- air quality trends are measured
- priority actions identified in a wilderness education plan are implemented
- opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation are protected
- recreation site inventory is completed
- outfitter/guides model wilderness practices and incorporate appreciation for wilderness values to clients
- adequate direction exists to protect wilderness character
- information needs are met
- baseline workforce is in place

Legacy of Wilderness Stewardship

The Forest Service has long been in the forefront of wilderness stewardship. As early as 1919, wilderness leaders including Bob Marshall, Aldo Leopold, and Arthur Carhart, recognized a growing public sentiment that desired some portions of public land to remain in a natural state.



Arthur Carhart exploring the Boundary Waters Canoe Area, MN

An Enduring Resource

“. . . to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”

The Wilderness Act of 1964



Photo by Connie Myers

“In Wildness is the preservation of the world.”

—Henry David Thoreau



Photo by George Wuerthner

The value of wilderness depends on the degree to which it remains undeveloped and free—a contrast to the highly developed world in which most of us live.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 gave wilderness managers a difficult and challenging task. Wilderness areas are to be kept in a wild and natural state—relatively free of human influence and control while at the same time, providing for human use and enjoyment.

In the last 40 years, this has become even harder. Thousands of feet are trampling lakeshores. Campfire scars dot remote valleys. Funding allocated for wilderness education programs and rangers has declined.



Photo by Kari K. Brown

Huge expanses of wilderness have experienced profound changes because of fire suppression. When fire occurs naturally in wilderness, it gives rise to a colorful patchwork of plants and animals.

What's at stake?

After 40 years, it may seem as if we will always have wilderness as part of the American landscape.

But what is a wilderness where native birds and animals no longer thrive because invasive species have crowded them out?

What is a wilderness where you can't escape the sights and sounds of other people?

What is a wilderness without the heart and soul of wildness? What happens when we lose the “wild” from wilderness?

Keeping wilderness wild contributes to the ecological, economic, and social health and well-being of our citizens, our country, and our world.



Photo by Mark Moulton



Photo by Mark Moulton

Surveys show that Americans rank the protection of water and air quality as top priorities when describing wilderness values. Pollution originating from outside wilderness can dramatically change the ecosystems within. Preserving wilderness preserves clean air and clean water.