

# Wilderness.net's Anaconda Pintler Wilderness Fact Sheet



## Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness in 1964 and it now has a total of 158,712 acres. All of the wilderness is in Montana and is managed by the Forest Service.

## Description

One of the jewels of the Northern Rockies, the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness, managed by the Forest Service, encompasses 158,615 acres in the

Beaverhead-Deerlodge and Bitterroot national forests. It was designated in 1964, the year the Wilderness Act was certified.

**Terrain** The Anaconda Pintler Wilderness straddles the Continental Divide along the crest of the Anaconda Range in southwestern Montana, positioned between the Bitterroot Valley to the northwest and the Big Hole Valley to the south. Streams and rivers drain to the Bitterroot and Big Hole rivers as well as Rock Creek. While the Anaconda Range's permanent snowfields today are modest, the Wilderness protects a spectacular array of glacially carved landforms. These include tarn-pocked cirques, huge U-shaped valleys, knife-edged ridges (arêtes), and moraines. Elevations stretch from 5,100 feet along the canyon bottoms to 10,893 feet at West Goat Peak (one of several 10,000-plus-footers in the Wilderness).

**Geologically**, the Anacondas include Precambrian and Paleozoic limestones, sandstones, and other sedimentary layers struck with igneous intrusions.

**Ecology** Canyon bottoms support riparian forests and willow thickets, while vegetation on the mountain slopes ranges from sagebrush in the foothills through spruce-fir and pine forests to subalpine communities of quaking aspen, whitebark pine, and alpine larch. Along the high Divide, bare rock, tundra, and snowfields reign.

Native wildlife includes many of the large mammals indigenous to the Rockies at the time of Euro-American settlement, among them mule deer, elk, moose, mountain goat, bighorn sheep, wolverine, gray wolf, puma, black bear, and the odd grizzly bear. The Anaconda Pintler Wilderness offers endless opportunities for outdoor recreation. U.S. Highway 93 and Montana Highways 38, 1, and 43 provide access to numerous trails. A 45-mile-long portion of the Continental Divide Trail cleaves the heart of the Wilderness. Backpackers should practice leave-no-trace ethics among the alpine lakes, which are sensitive to overuse. Mountaineering opportunities abound on the high peaks.

## 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 Anaconda Pintler 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 Anaconda Pintler Wilderness is part of the 110 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 Anaconda Pintler 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

Party leads and/or individuals must register. Groups may not exceed 12 people and 12 head of stock.

Campfires are NOT allowed within 1/4 mile of the following lakes: Oreamnos, Sawed Cabin, Upper Phyllis, Upper Carpp, Surprise, Bear, Buck, Emerald, Lost Lakes, Lower Phyllis, Park Lakes, Sauer, Continental, the unnamed lake below Queener Mtn., the unnamed lake west of Warren Lake. Camping is prohibited between Trails #96 and #111 and Johnson Lake.

Maximum length of campsite occupancy is 16 consecutive days in one place. A person or group cannot relocate within a five-mile radius of the original site for the next 14 days. Camping equipment must be removed by the end of the 16 day limit or the equipment may be impounded.

Possessing or using a bicycle, motor vehicle, wagon, cart (including game carts), aircraft or other motorized equipment is prohibited.

#### OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Camping is prohibited between Trails #96 and #111 and Johnson Lake.

-- Overnight visitors cannot occupy a single location for a period longer than 16 consecutive days. A person or group cannot relocate within a five-mile radius of the original site for the next 14 days. Camping equipment must be removed by the end of the 16 day limit or the equipment may be impounded.

#### STOCK USERS

-- Using more than 12 head of pack or saddle stock in any group is prohibited.

-- All pack or saddle stock feed must be certified weed seed free. Weed seed free products must be certified as being noxious weed seed free by an authorized State of Department of Agriculture official or designated county official; each individual bale or container must be tagged or marked as weed free and reference the written certification.

-- Grazing and tethering of stock within 200 feet of any lake is prohibited.

-- Camping with stock is prohibited within 1/4 mile of: Sawed Cabin, Oreamnos, and Ripple Lakes.

-- Stock is prohibited within 200 feet of Big Johnson Lake except on designated trails.

-- Hope Lake Trail #424 is closed to pack and saddle stock.

-- Use of pack and saddle stock on the Pintler District is prohibited from April 1 to July 1.

### **Wilderness Permit System**

A wilderness permit system has been implemented for this wilderness. This involves a mandatory permit, which does not limit use. Wilderness permit systems are implemented to collect information on use levels and patterns and as an education and information tool. People interested in visiting the Anaconda Pintler Wilderness should contact the national forest office for more information about this permit system, which may vary by location or time of the year.

## Contacts

### Wisdom Ranger District

PO BOX 238

WISDOM, MT 59761

Remarks: Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 8:00-4:30; call 406.689.3243

Phone: 406-689-3243

Phone: 406-859-3211

### Pintler Ranger District

88 10-A BUSINESS LOOP

PHILIPSBURG, MT 59858

Remarks: Office Hours: Mon-Fri: 8:00-4:30; call 406.859.3211

## 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)
<b>Public Law 88-577</b>	<b>September 3, 1964</b>	<b>157,803</b>
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](#)