

Wilderness.net's Bear Wallow Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Bear Wallow Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 11,235 acres. All of the wilderness is in Arizona and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

The Bear Wallow Wilderness was the origin point of, the Wallow Fire of June 2011, the largest wildfire in Arizona history. Though much of the area was affected by the fire, much of the wilderness experienced a lower intensity burn due to earlier fires that reduced fuel loading. However, post-fire flooding has created landslides in some drainages. Much of the wilderness is already renewing, with native grasses and thickets of aspen regenerating among the burned trunks of mixed conifer trees consumed by the fire. The sustenance provided by this new growth is a boon to the area's resident wildlife, and over time, this regenerative cycle will repeat itself once again, with the mature aspen eventually giving way to encroachment and reclamation by conifer species consumed in the path of the fire. The Bear Wallow Wilderness is home to some of the largest acreage of virgin ponderosa pine in the Southwest, and although affected by fire in some places they are still venerable reminders of a once extensive forest of these giants. Along the length of the area, through a blanket of pine, fir, and spruce, Bear Wallow Creek flows year-round and is shaded by green riparian hardwoods during summer. Early explorers were impressed by the large number of well-used wallows, which revealed how plentiful the area's population of black bears was. Black bears still abound, and you may see elk, deer, and a diverse community of smaller mammals, birds, and reptiles. Wildflowers bloom in profusion, especially during the summer rains. Poison ivy is present and can be dangerously abundant in places. Aspen and gambel oak thickets thrive in many of the areas burned most severely by the Wallow Fire. Bear Wallow Creek provides a habitat refuge for the endangered Apache trout, and is currently closed to all fishing. Five trails offer foot and horse access to the wilderness: The Reno Trail #62 (1.9 miles) and the Gobbler Point Trail #59 (2.9 miles) drop into the canyon of the creek from easily accessible trailheads on Forest Service roads. The Bear Wallow Trail # 63 follows the rocky stream bed 8.2 miles to the boundary of the San Carlos Apache Indian Reservation. The Schell Canyon Trail #316 (2.8 miles) connects the Bear Wallow Trail and the canyon floor to the Rose Spring Trail #309 (4.5 miles), which skirts the southern boundary along the precipitous Mogollon Rim, the southern edge of the vast Colorado Plateau. From atop the Mogollon Rim the views to the south are remarkable. Visitors to the San Carlos Reservation must have an advance permit. For information and permits, contact the San Carlos Tribal Office, Box O, San Carlos, AZ 85550.

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 Bear Wallow 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 Bear Wallow 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 Bear Wallow 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 25 people per party.

OVERNIGHT VISITORS

-- Overnight visitors cannot occupy a single location longer than 14 days within a 30-day period. After 14 days, a group or individual must leave the Forest for 16 days before they can reoccupy their previous location. Any stay over 14 days must be approved by the local District Ranger and be authorized by a permit.

STOCK USERS

--Possessing pack and saddle stock in groups larger than 35 animals is prohibited.

Contacts

Alpine Ranger District
PO BOX 469
ALPINE, AZ 85920

Phone: 928-339-4384

Links to Other Websites

[Apache-Sitgreaves National Forest, Wilderness and Primitive Areas](#)

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 98-406	August 28, 1984	11,080
Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public Law 98-406 (8/28/1984) Arizona Wilderness Act of 1984		

 [download 98-406](#)

