

Wilderness.net's Mount Baker Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Mount Baker Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 119,417 acres. All of the wilderness is in Washington and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Mount Baker has shown steamy signs of life as recently as 1975. The volcanic mountain stands at 10,778 feet, making it the fourth highest summit in the state and the dominant feature in the southern portion of this Wilderness. Fourteen glaciers blanket the immediate region of the mountain. Add to that the frozen sheets on nearby peaks and the total perpetual ice in the area surpasses 10,000 acres. Precipitation on the heights of Mount Baker sometimes reaches 150 inches per year, with up to 18 feet of snow accumulating. Many of the ridges stand above fir- and cedar-forested drainages, dividing the sky and opening often into large heather-filled meadows that showcase riots of summer alpine wildflowers, huckleberries, and blueberries. Devil's club, salmonberry, skunk cabbage, and ferns brighten the banks of creeks and rivers. Black bears and black-tailed deer share the area, while mountain goats clamber about in the rocky high country. Just south of Mount Baker, outside the Wilderness, elk congregate in numbers rarely seen in this part of the state. The Wilderness shares its eastern border with North Cascades National Park, and lovely Mount Shuksan looms just over the boundary inside the park. Mountain climbers flood onto Mount Baker in spring and summer before fall opens numerous large crevasses. Hundreds of climbers may be seen on the mountain in a single day. The Heliotrope Ridge Trail winds 2.7 miles to the Coleman Glacier, the most popular climbing route on the mountain. A well-developed and very busy trail system provides access to the lower country.

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 Mount Baker 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 Mount Baker Wilderness is part of the 111 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 Mount Baker 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, in any combination of people and pack or saddle stock. Dogs are not counted as part of the group size limit.

-- Camping is prohibited within 1 mile slope distance from the following lakes, except at designated

sites: Mazama Lake, Iceberg Lake, Hayes Lake, Arbuthnot Lake, Chain Lakes Trail (#682), Ptarmigan Ridge Trail (#682.1), Yellow Aster Butte Trail (#686.1).

-- Campfires are prohibited within one mile slope distance of the following trails: Lake Ann Trail (#600), Heliotrope Ridge Trail (#677), (HogsBack Route #677.1), High Divide Trail (#630), Excelsior Trail (#670), Welcome Pass Trail (#698), High Pass Trail (#676), Skyline Divide Trail (#678), Yellow Aster Meadows Trail (#699), Yellow Aster Butte Trail (#686.1), Ptarmigan Ridge Trail (#682.1), Chain Lakes Trail (#682), Winchester Mtn Trail (#685), Goat Mtn Trail (#673), Table Mtn Trail (#681), Hannegan Pass Trail (#674), Hannegan Peak Trail (#674.1), Ruth Arm Trail (#674.2). Stoves are approved.

-- Do not shortcut switchbacks.

-- Do not enter areas closed for restoration.

-- Do not cut standing green trees, snags, and boughs for firewood or other purposes.

-- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste. If you are in an area where fires are allowed, remove all non-combustibles such as foil and glass from fire rings. Never put litter into a backcountry toilet.

-- Caching or storing equipment, personal property, or supplies longer than 48 hours is prohibited.

STOCK USERS

-- Certified weed free hay, grain, or other forms of livestock feed is required on all Wilderness trails and at trailheads.

-- Grazing, hitching, or tethering of pack or saddle stock within 200 feet of lakes is prohibited. Watering is permitted.

-- Do not tie pack or saddle stock directly to living or dead trees. The use of highlines, hobbles, and/or movable pickets will help to prevent damage to trees and other vegetation.

Fees

The following user fee system(s) have been implemented for this wilderness: TRAILHEAD PARKING. Fees are most often used to offset the operating costs of a permit system or to help fund management activities such as trail maintenance. Contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more specific information on this fee system.

Contacts

Mt. Baker Ranger District
810 STATE ROUTE 20
SEDRO WOOLLEY, WA 98284

Phone: 360-856-5700

Links to Other Websites

[Mt. Baker-Snowqualmie National Forest, Mount Baker 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)
Public Law 98-339	July 3, 1984	117,900

Washington State Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-339 (7/3/1984) To designate certain National Forest System lands in the State of Washington for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, and for other purposes.

 [download 98-339](#)