

Wilderness.net's Washakie Wilderness Fact Sheet



Credit:
Ralph Maughan

Introduction

The United States Congress designated the Washakie Wilderness in 1964 and it now has a total of 693,933 acres. All of the wilderness is in Wyoming and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

Chief Washakie was a historical figure and leader of the Shoshone tribe of Wyoming. In 1972, the Stratified Primitive Area was joined with South Absaroka Wilderness to form the Wilderness area (Wyoming's largest) that now bears his name.

Yellowstone National Park borders to the northwest, Teton Wilderness to the west, and the Wind River Indian Reservation to the southeast--a combination of lands that stretches across a tremendous part of western Wyoming and is one of the greatest wild regions of America. In the southern Absarokas you'll find broad, flat-topped mountains and plateaus separating narrow valleys that have been deeply incised with exposed volcanic strata. This volcanic material lies primarily horizontal and has been eroded into irregular step-like cliffs and buttes. These unique geological formations, in addition to petrified forests and many fossils of long-gone plants and animals, are among the most attractive attributes of this area. Elevations range from about 6,600 feet to 13,153 feet, and peaks exceeding 12,000 feet are scattered throughout the Wilderness. Large portions are rough and barren, and vegetation is sparse. Approximately half the area is forested. With fewer lakes than the Wind River Mountains, the fishing is less active here, but large streams do support trout. Nonetheless, the wildlife population and diversity is extraordinary. Bobcats, coyotes, foxes, beavers, and numerous smaller furbearers, as well as bald eagles and peregrine falcons, can be spotted. Lucky visitors may see bull elk sparring or catch a glimpse of a moose. Hunters come for elk, moose, bighorn sheep, mule deer, and black bears. Grizzly bears, wolves and mountain lions are numerous and on the increase. Travelers should take appropriate precautions. There are many miles of trails and the relative openness of much of the area encourages off-trail hiking. Snow may fall any day of the year in the higher country, and summer temperatures rarely rise above 80 degrees Fahrenheit. Be prepared for rain showers in late summer.

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 Washakie 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 Washakie 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 Washakie 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

--Using a campsite or other area with a group exceeding 20 people and/or a combined number of pack and saddle stock exceeding 30 animals is prohibited.

-- Do not camp within 50 feet of any trail. br />

-- Camping or otherwise occupying a single location for more than 16 days is prohibited. br />

-- Storing equipment, personal property, or supplies for more than 48 hours is prohibited.

STOCK USERS

--Possessing and using feed other than pelletized feed, processed grain, or cubed hay that is certified weed seed free is prohibited.

Contacts

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CODY, WY 82414

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Phone: 307-527-6921

Shoshone National Forest North Zone
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CODY, WY 82414

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 88-577	September 3, 1964	505,552
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		
Public Law 92-476	October 9, 1972	208,000

(No official title, adds to Washakie Wilderness) - Public law 92-476 (10/9/1972) To designate the Stratified Primitive Area as a part of the Washakie Wilderness, heretofore known as the South Absaroka Wilderness, Shoshone National Forest, in the State of Wyoming, and for other purposes

 [download 92-476](#)

Public Law 98-550 **October 30, 1984** **10,000**

Wyoming Wilderness Act of 1984 - Public law 98-550 (10/30/1984) To designate certain lands in the state of Wyoming for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, to release other forest lands for multiple use management, to withdraw designated wilderness areas in Wyoming from minerals activity, and for other purposes

 [download 98-550](#)