

Wilderness.net's William O. Douglas Wilderness Fact Sheet



Introduction

The United States Congress designated the William O. Douglas Wilderness in 1984 and it now has a total of 168,956 acres. All of the wilderness is in Washington and is managed by the Forest Service.

Description

This magnificent region pays tribute to the Wilderness-loving Supreme Court justice who often explored the area on foot. It lies bordered to the west by Mount Rainier National Park, with Norse Peak and

Goat Rocks Wildernesses just to the north and south, respectively. Non-Wilderness roads drive into the area from the north, up Bumping River to a non-Wilderness central section around Bumping Lake. From the lake, the wild terrain rises west and east to high, broad ridges capped with rock summits. Subalpine meadows and thick old-growth forestland of fir, hemlock, and cedar distinguish the lower elevations. Beyond the east ridge, the land descends to open ridges and tall ponderosa pine. The southern portion of the Wilderness spreads out into a large park-like plateau, where the forest thins and 59 lakes lie among another 200 or so ponds and pools. You may see members of large herds of elk and mule deer, who reside here with fishers and foxes, mountain goats and grouse. As much as 120 inches of precipitation per year drowns the western side of the area, while the eastern side may get as little as 20 to 24 inches. Snow usually starts to fall by November, and often lingers in patches up high until midsummer. Sixty-six trails crisscross the Wilderness for a total of about 250 miles, providing access to just about everything the Wilderness has to offer. All but two trails are open to horsepackers (the exceptions being the Spring Trail and the Goat Peak Trail). Indeed, the land may be best appreciated from a saddle. The Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) traces the western ridge and rambles across the southern plateau for a total of 13.5 miles.

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 William O. Douglas 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 William O. Douglas 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 William O. Douglas 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.
- Pack out all debris, garbage, or other waste.

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 William O. Douglas Wilderness should contact the national forest office or visit the websites listed below for more information about this permit system, which may vary by location or time of the year.

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

Naches Ranger District
10237 HIGHWAY 12
NACHES, WA 98937

Phone: 509-653-1400

Links to Other Websites

[Gifford Pinchot National Forest, William O. Douglas Wilderness](#)

[Okanogan-Wenatchee National Forest, William O. Douglas 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	166,603

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](#)