

Wilderness

50 Years and Counting...



On September 3, 1964 President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Wilderness Act. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of

wildlands for the use and benefit of the American people. Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America's support for wilderness, Congress has added over 100 million acres to this unique land preservation system. The 1964 Wilderness Act defines "Wilderness" as areas where the earth and its communities of life are left unchanged by people, where the primary forces of nature are in control, and where people themselves are visitors who do not remain.

The NWPS was established for the use and enjoyment of the American people and provides many direct and

in-direct benefits, such as those relating to ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, spiritual, economic, recreational, historical, and cultural uses and activities. The 757 wilderness areas within the NWPS are managed by all four federal land managing agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Park Service.

In 2014, our nation will celebrate "50 Years of Wilderness" and we hope that your organization will find a way to become a part of this historical commemoration honoring America's "True American Legacy of Wilderness!"

Planning for 2014

The 50th Anniversary National Wilderness Planning Team (*Wilderness50*) goals are to:

- Engage the public to better understand and appreciate the many benefits and values of wilderness, ultimately resulting in more people supporting responsible wildlands stewardship;
- Bring the wilderness community (NGOs/Agencies/International Advocates) "together" to efficiently and consistently steward wilderness for the use, enjoyment, and benefit of

the American people;

- Connect with today's youth and with non-wilderness using groups to find the thread that ties their lives to wild places so they can more directly relate to, understand, and value, wilderness.

Wilderness50's diversity commitment is to:

- Acknowledge that diverse communities celebrate and engage with wilderness in many different ways—even though their traditions have not always expressed these

*"Wilderness is a necessity...
There must be places for
human beings to satisfy
their souls."*

- John Muir (Sierra Club co-founder)

Cedar Roughs Wilderness, CA
Photo by Gregg Morgan



connections in the same way as more “orthodox” environmentalists.

- Realize that the assumptions of the Wilderness Act, valuable and pathbreaking in many ways for Americans, have led to a “non-inclusive” movement around the

wilderness concept, and many people in non-traditional communities view wilderness as irrelevant.

- Reach out to and work with diverse communities to incorporate them as full participants into planning efforts.

50th Anniversary Celebratory Events

Planned and proposed events include: 300-400 community events including many Walks for Wilderness; teacher workshops introducing a new K-12 curriculum; museum, airport and visitor center displays; local art and photography contests and exhibits; a national photography contest in the summer of 2013; a national website and social media campaign; an online and radio “Wilderness of the Week” enhanced podcast series; commemorative products including stickers, pins, patches, water bottles, etc.; a commemorative poster commissioned by famous Montana

artist Monte Dolack; a commemorative magazine; wall map; and television and studio-quality movie productions. High-profile, nationally-focused wilderness events will round out the year-long 50th anniversary and include the “Wilderness Forever” photography exhibition opening in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History on September 3rd; the Washington D.C. Wilderness Week, held during the third week of September, 2014; and the National Wilderness Conference scheduled for October 15-19, 2014, in Albuquerque, NM.

“The wilderness is a place of rest – from distractions, in the slowing of the daily centrifugal forces that keep us off balance.”

- David Douglas (Scottish botanist)

Who is Wilderness50?

Wilderness50 is a diverse and growing coalition of government agencies, non-profit organizations, and academic institutions that have come together to plan and conduct 50th celebration events and activities. Participating organizations to date include:

- Alaska Geographic
- Alaska Wilderness League
- Backcountry Horsemen of America
- Bureau of Land Management
- Californians for Western Wilderness
- Conservation Lands Foundation
- Fish and Wildlife Service
- Forest Service
- Fulcrum Publishing
- Great Old Broads for Wilderness
- International League of Conservation Photographers
- International League of Conservation Writers
- Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics
- Murie Center
- National Park Service
- National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance
- New Mexico Wilderness Alliance
- O.A.R.S. Foundation
- Pew Charitable Trusts
- Sierra Club
- Society for Wilderness Stewardship (Wilderness50 fiscal sponsor)
- University of Idaho
- WILD Foundation
- Wilderness Institute, University of Montana
- Wilderness Land Trust
- Wilderness Society
- Wilderness Volunteers
- Wilderness Watch
- Wildlands Network

www.wilderness50th.org