50th Anniversary
Wilderness Walk Planning Guide

How to Organize and Execute Your Local Wilderness Celebration
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Introduction

On September 3\textsuperscript{rd}, 1964, the Wilderness Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson, establishing the legal definition of wilderness and forever protecting wild places in the United States of America.

The 50\textsuperscript{th} anniversary of this historic event will occur in 2014 and this guidebook was created to assist in planning a popular Wilderness Act anniversary event: Wilderness Walks. Wilderness Walks are community celebrations which include organized walks through scenic areas and wilderness related educational activities. This booklet will guide you through the basics of planning your Wilderness Walk event, but feel free to come up with your own ideas! Tailoring this plan to meet the needs of your community is recommended and encouraged.

Check out 40\textsuperscript{th} anniversary Wilderness Walk events for even more inspiration!
Creating a Committee

Select a few individuals who have the time to volunteer for planning and executing a Wilderness Walk event. The success of your Walk largely depends on a few key committee members and dedicated volunteers that champion the Walk.

Consider assigning committee members certain tasks or titles such as, Finance Manager, Marketing Manager, Booths Manager, Volunteer Manager, etc.

Assign specific tasks for each individual and make yourself available as a point of contact for everyone. Enlist the help of local wilderness volunteer organizations, schools, college staff, Girl Scouts, Boy Scouts, and other youth organizations.

Remember to start planning and organizing several months before the Walk.
Planning With Social Media

Assign tasks and team meetings using a collaborative calendar like Google Calendar. Prepare your event information as a team using Google Docs, which provides efficient online document drafting and collaboration among multiple parties.

If your committee is unable to meet in person, use Skype for conference calls and chats about event planning. Bouncing ideas back and forth via video or audio can make the brainstorming process move much faster. Google Talk and Tokbox are also fast and easy ways to engage audio and video conversations.

Create a Meetup page to organize and lead your event. Direct all people to RSVP via the Meetup page and send messages before the event to participants through Meetup.

*The social media tools listed here are simply a few examples of the breadth of media available.*
Determine Target Audience

Your target audience will most likely be local community members. If you wish to include children, elderly people, and people with disabilities in your Walk, consider the location of your Walk, physical ability levels, and sponsorship criteria. For example, if you wish to have a family friendly event, sponsorship from a local nightclub may not be appropriate.

Clearly define your target audience, write the definition down on paper, and keep them in mind throughout the entire planning process. This ensures not only a successful event for you, but an enjoyable time for your participants.
Choosing a Date, Time, and Location

Location Reminders
It is recommended that your Walk NOT be held in congressionally designated for due to group size limits, prohibitions against large organized hikes that degrade opportunities for solitude for other visitors, and the potential for resource damage.

Suggestions for Selecting a Location
Select a Walk that is scenic (along a creek path or through a park). Walks that make a loop, starting and finishing at the same location, are best.

If stock (horses, llamas, pack goats, etc.) will be participating in your Walk, choose a route that is both appropriate and legal for stock. Some 40th Anniversary Wilderness Walks, for example, were led by pack stock.
Keep safety in mind at all times. Select a pathway that walkers with children and those with disabilities can safely enjoy and that is accessible to emergency vehicles and personnel.

Consider parking space. Be sure to select an endpoint big enough to have special clinics, booths, venues, and a safe area for kids to play.

Apply for a permit and purchase insurance, if necessary (see FAQ).

**Suggested Date**
The official date for the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act is Wednesday, September 3rd, 2014. Aim for your Walk to occur on or as close to this date as possible as a symbol of our national support for the National Wilderness Preservation System. The previous or following weekends (August 30, 31 or September 6, 7) are the most suitable alternatives to hosting a Walk on September 3rd.

**Time Considerations**
Consider the weather forecast. If it’s predicted to be 90 degrees on the day of your Walk, you may want to start your Walk earlier in the day or ensure that water is available along the route. Also consider post-Walk activities and plan for that time.
Funding Your Event

How to Raise Funds

Funding may or may not be an issue, depending on the size and scope of your event. Most of the cost of funding the Walk is shared in volunteer time. Many items and services can be donated. However, if you require funding for certain aspects of your event, there are strategies for fundraising:

✓ Walk Registration: A non-profit organization (501(c)(3)) will need to handle the money transactions and collect registration fees for the Walk. Consider charging $15-25/person with a reduced price for early registration and no charge for children under 4 years old.

✓ Promotional Items: Items such as t-shirts can be commemorative for Walk participants. You may choose to charge for the base cost of the shirt and screen printing, or charge extra with proceeds going to your local wilderness advocacy organization.

✓ Booths: Many events charge for booth space. This is usually by size, such as for an 8 or 10 foot table. The amount you charge per booth space is largely dependent upon the fees, if any, you acquire from renting your post-Walk space. Research other local event booth prices to find a competitive price.

✓ General Event Funding: Check with local wilderness management agency offices. Agency regions may offer small amounts of funding to forest, district, park or refuge offices specifically for 50th events. Application is required.
Sponsors

Ask local businesses to donate their time, money, or materials for your event. Include the sponsor logos on all Walk materials as recognition of their support for wilderness. Donated items can include: banners, t-shirts, entertainment, food/beverages, printed materials such as fliers or postcards, etc.

Be sure to select sponsors that align with your Walk objectives and present a corporate image that fits with the overall event. Document, in writing, the agreed upon conditions of sponsorship so that you and your sponsors fully understand the extent of their obligations. Learn more about event budgeting [here](#).
Setting the Agenda

Walk Kick-Off
Set a specific time for your Walk to begin. You may want to have a short keynote speech to begin the event. Have participants start the Walk together as a group.

Post-Walk Activities
This list is not comprehensive, but rather a jumping off point for ideas. Feel free to add whatever activities you think are appropriate. Just remember to always keep your audience in mind when deciding on post-Walk activities.

✓ Leave No Trace: Consider having the [Leave No Trace Traveling Trainers](https://www.lesstrace.org/traveling-trainers) set up a booth at your Walk or host an Awareness Workshop. If you are unable to host the official trainers, anyone in your area who is certified as a Leave No Trace Trainer can host a workshop or pass out LNT materials.
Traditional Skills: Agency employees may be able to set up a traditional skills booth, demonstrating the use of cross-cut saws and other hand tools. Contact your local Bureau of Land Management, Fish & Wildlife Service, Forest Service, or National Park Service office for inquiries.

Pack Stock Demonstrations: 
Backcountry Horsemen of America, other local horse packing groups, wilderness outfitters, or your local agency office may be willing to provide demonstrations related to the use of horses and other pack stock in wilderness.

Speakers: Invite local wilderness champions or political or community leaders to speak about the importance and history of wilderness stewardship. Keynote speakers may include a Forest Supervisor, National Park Superintendent, Wildlife Refuge Manager, other Federal wilderness-management agency representative, Senator/Congressman, Mayor, local NGO director, area historian, etc.
✓ Booths: Invite local groups to set-up informational or educational booths. Groups may include wilderness-related NGOs, student outdoor activity associations, hiking/backpacking/horse packing associations, county noxious weed extension offices, K-12 or university environmental programs, etc. Be sure to draft criteria for organization eligibility and screen booth applicants to ensure that applicants and the information they present aligns with the objectives of the Walk.

✓ Refreshments or Concessions: It is likely that people will be thirsty and hungry either after they finish the Walk or at some point during post-Walk activities. This is a great opportunity to seek local restaurant sponsorship and donations, or invite food and beverage concessionaries. (Keep in mind health codes for preparing and handling food). Check to see if additional permits or fees apply, especially if you plan to invite alcoholic beverage concessionaries.

✓ Entertainment: Consider having local musicians, poets, dancers, or artists provide entertainment.
Promoting Your Event

Promotional items can be things used to promote the event itself (fliers, posters, postcards, etc.) and they can also be items you give away or sell during the event (t-shirt, water bottle, stickers, etc.). Again, most of these items are things you want to obtain through donations or sponsorship.

Identify the items you feel are relevant and useful to participants and then seek donations of those items through local businesses, individuals, and organizations.
Utilize the Internet and Social Media

Even if you don’t use social media sites or participate in social networking, many people, especially young people, use these websites and their mobile phones as primary ways to communicate. It’s important to promote your Walk using these popular communication methods and tools to ensure that your messages are far-reaching.

50th Anniversary Website

✓ The most effective way to publicize your Walk is to enter it on the 50th Anniversary Website, http://www.wilderness50th.org. Log in using your email address and “Zahnie1964” to add your Walk. This website serves as the official clearinghouse for all 50th anniversary events and helps promote all events entered on its event map.

Facebook

✓ Create a Facebook event, invite friends, and keep it open to all people.
✓ Create your own Facebook page for the event and let people know about it on the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Facebook page.
**Twitter**

✓ Tweet about your event as it approaches. Use the #wilderness50 hashtag. Be sure to follow the [50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Twitter feed](https://twitter.com). If you’re using Meetup.com for RSVP purposes, link to the event page in your tweets.

**Flickr**

✓ Encourage your event attendees to upload photos they take at your event to the [50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Flickr group](https://www.flickr.com). Using the [iPhone Flickr app](https://www.flickr.com) makes this easy for attendees to upload images in real time during your event.

**Foursquare**

✓ Ensure your Walk is listed on Foursquare so that participants can check in.
✓ Discuss with Walk sponsors opportunities for offering discounts or promotions to participants who are Foursquare users.
Local Promotion

✓ Make flyers to be posted in local businesses and community centers. Enlist the help of a graphic designer to ensure your advertisement is eye-catching.

✓ Post an ad for the event in local newspapers, online event boards, college activity boards, Craigslist, etc.

✓ Contact your local newspaper and television station (daily local news) and ask whether a feature story can be done about the Walk. It is likely that many in the news media will be covering the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act more generally, and your Walk may provide the perfect opportunity to make a national story local.

✓ Ask local radio stations (including college radio stations) to donate airtime for announcements about the Walk.

✓ Tell all your friends and promote word-of-mouth advertising. Post the flyer online (via Facebook, possibly) and make it easy for people to download and share.
After Your Event

Social Media Wrap-up

✓ Flickr - Upload pictures to the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Group.

✓ Facebook - Thank everyone who RSVPed via Facebook and/or Meetup. Encourage them to upload their pictures to the Flickr group.

✓ Twitter - Tweet about the event using the hashtag #wilderness50.

✓ YouTube - If you took video of your Walk, upload it to YouTube, then post links to Facebook and Twitter.

Proceeds

If you have any proceeds from your Walk, be sure to inform your participants (through Facebook, Twitter, or otherwise) how much money you raised, what organization received the funds, and how they are planning on spending the money.
Frequently Asked Questions

What is the purpose of a Wilderness Walk?

✓ A Wilderness Walk is a great way to engage local communities members to join together to raise awareness of wilderness. It is also a good way to gain additional support and visibility for wilderness stewardship in your community.

How long should a Walk be?

✓ A 10K (6 miles) walk is great, but your community might sponsor a walk that is shorter or longer depending on your selected location and target audience’s physical abilities.

Can federal land management agencies sponsor a Walk?

✓ It’s best to have a non-profit partner to host the Walk and federal land managers can be co-sponsors. The main reason for having a non-profit take the lead is to sign Walk permits with city, state, and county parks, purchase insurance and make other business arrangements that are best secured by non-government partners. Land managers can help with keynote speakers, law enforcement, communications, Leave No Trace instructors, Walk guides/interpreters and educators at the post-Walk booths (such as a cross-cut saw demonstration or horse packing).
Do I need a permit to host a Walk?
✓ Perhaps. This largely depends on the location you have chosen for your Walk. Please check with your county or city government about organized walks and use of parks or open space areas. In most cases, waivers can be granted for educational events.

Do I need insurance for my event?
✓ Depending on the size of your event, it is recommended that you take out a one-day event insurance policy. Federal agency representatives cannot secure the insurance; it must be non-government partner, such as a non-profit. The amount of coverage varies, depending on the specifics of your Walk (distance, location, types of post-Walk activities, etc.) and how many are participating. A typical Walk insurance policy will cost approximately $250-300 dollars for a one-day event. One suggested contact for a policy is McKay Insurance Agency. To find out more information visit www.mckayinsagency.com.

What kind of safety concerns should be considered?
✓ First, the Walk pathway must be safe and free of motorized use. Second, the Walk pathway must have motorized access points in case of emergency. Make your Walk as safe as possible by enlisting the help of search and rescue team members and others with emergency medical training. Have good radio communication and vantage points so that “spotters” can observe the pathway.
About this Guidebook

Author
This guidebook was created by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, a federal, interagency wilderness stewardship training organization. Much of the content was taken from the 40th Anniversary Wilderness Walk Guidebook.

Additional Resources
To learn more about the management and stewardship of wilderness, visit www.wilderness.net. To learn more about 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act planning, visit http://www.wilderness50th.org.

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