Wilderness Act of 1964: "...where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Unconstrained. Unconfined. Untrammeled...Wilderness

In 1964, Congress established the National Wilderness Preservation System under the Wilderness Act. From the swamps of the southeast to the tundra in Alaska, from the hardwoods of the northeast to the deserts of the southwest, wilderness is found in all but six states. The Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and the National Park Service are charged to preserve the natural condition of these lands and provide outstanding opportunities for primitive and unconfined wilderness experiences.

An Enduring Resource of Wilderness

Federal lands qualifying as wilderness must be designated by Congress through legislation. In some cases, federal agencies recommend suitable lands. In other instances, citizens put forward proposals for consideration by Congress. The process culminates when the legislation is passed by Congress and signed by the President. This ensures "...for the American people of present and future generations an enduring resource of wilderness."

Wilderness Benefits

Wilderness areas contribute significantly to our nation's health and well-being. The benefits these areas provide vary in diverse ecosystems and for the benefit of people, plants, and animals alike. Preserving wilderness preserves wildlife.

Water and Air

In our wilds, wilderness areas are sources of clean water and air. While the benefits of wilderness are numerous and irreplaceable, they are threatened by human activities. Pollution diminishes water, and air quality, and plants and animals alike. Preserving wilderness preserves our fragile ecosystems.

Wildlife

Wildlife feels the effects of development and fragmentation. Wildlife is threatened by habitat loss, species displacement, and the expansion of natural processes. Preserving wilderness preserves wildlife.

Legacy

"...for the American people of present and future generations an enduring resource of wilderness."

Recreation

Wildlands were created for the use and enjoyment of the American people. Today, over 3.2 million acres of wilderness is open to public use, recreation, and enjoyment. Preserving wilderness preserves the unique recreational value of wilderness.

Economics

Wildlands areas have positive impacts on local and regional economies. Communities with wilderness generally have higher incomes and employment growth rates. Preserving wilderness helps to maximize the economic benefits of wilderness. Preserving wilderness helps to preserve a healthy community.

Leave No Trace...

Seven principles for outdoor ethics:

1. Plan ahead and prepare.
2. Travel and camp on durable surfaces.
3. Dispose of waste properly.
4. Leave what you find.
5. Minimize your effects.
6. Respect wildlife.
7. Be considerate of other visitors.

All Americans are welcome to enjoy and partake of wilderness as part of their heritage. Each citizen has a responsibility to ensure that wilderness areas remain as wild and as unconfined as possible.