

Expressions of Wilderness Contest
2014 Aspen Youth Leadership Conference

“In wildness is the preservation of the world....”

Henry David Thoreau

In addition to celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, this year’s Youth Leadership Conference will also focus on the role of creative expression as a tool for leadership, activism and social change.

To this end, all attendees of the 2014 Youth Leadership Conference are eligible to compete in the Expressions of Wilderness contest. Applicants are invited to submit one entry on the theme of “Wilderness in America: The Next 50 Years” in either the “written essay” or “multi-media expression” category (see details below.)

Successful entries will demonstrate significant research and/or understanding of the history of Wilderness, as well as include personal experience in or around Wilderness areas. Awards will be selected by a panel of Youth Conference presenters and organizers. Contestants must be present at the August 2nd, 2014 conference event to be eligible for awards and prizes.

Specific topics/themes of focus for this contest:

1. *The Next 50 Years: The Future of Wilderness.* What do you envision for the future of wild lands? With so many competing needs (recreation, resource extraction, ecological integrity, etc.) how should wild lands be managed in the future? What are the tools we have to protect the lands we love?
2. *Wilderness for the Rest of Us: Cross-Cultural Aspects of Wild Lands.* Is the wilderness just a recreational playground for the white and wealthy or are public lands really here for all of us? What are the barriers to connecting diverse populations with Wilderness? If you have never spent time in a Wilderness area, what experiences or places have you explored which feel authentically “wild?”
3. *“My Wilderness”—Personal Experience in the Wild.* We are sculpted by the landscape in which we live, play, and work. Here in the Southern Rocky Mountains, we have the amazing opportunity to be shaped by vast and pristine wildlands and Wilderness areas. How have you been shaped by Wilderness lands? What are the places, experiences, and interactions you have personally had that have influenced your path as a leader and engaged citizen? How do you envision protecting this same experience for future generations?

Entries can fall into either of two categories:

Written essay: Create a 500-1000 word essay on any one of the three specific topics listed above.

Multi-media expression: Working with one of the above themes, create a photo essay, short video production, visual art piece or other multi-media piece

Prizes include:

Grand Prize: \$1000 cash award

1st Prize (two each in “written essay” and “multi-media” category): Eco-Flight air adventure