



50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act Successes Report

Background

2014 marked the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act of 1964, one of the most groundbreaking pieces of environmental legislation ever enacted. A team of more than 30 non-profit organizations, businesses, universities, and federal agencies, called *Wilderness50* convened in 2011/2012 to begin charting the course of the 2014 year, which grew to include a nationwide suite of local community events, high profile national events, and branding and media campaigning.

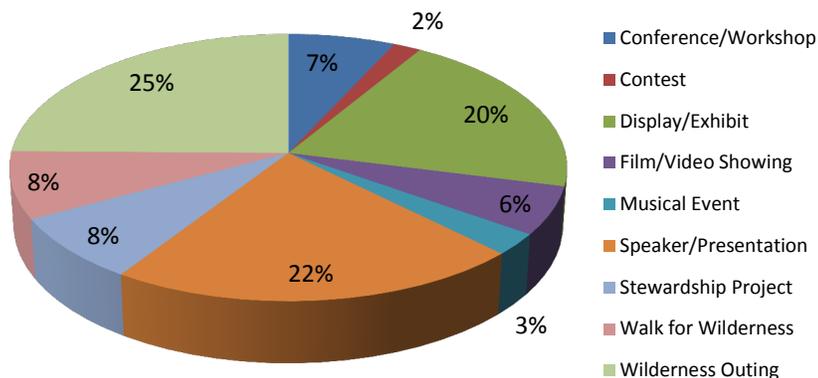
Goals

1. Engage the public to better understand and appreciate the many benefits and values of wilderness, ultimately resulting in more people supporting responsible wildlands stewardship;
2. 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;
3. 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.

Outcomes

Throughout 2014, nearly **850 community-level events** took place in 45 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico, and included everything from wilderness outings for 6-10 people to Seeley Lake Montana's Wild 50th Fest weekend which drew around 2400 people for live music, hikes, speakers, a BBQ and other activities. A total of 20 wilderness proclamations were passed by state, county, and city governments in both conservative and liberal communities alike.

Popularity of Different Types of Local 50th Events



Outings like this New Year's Day interpretive hike in New Mexico's Manzano Mountain Wilderness (above) got people out into the wilderness, while festivals like Montana's Wild50th Fest (below) brought people together for educational and family activities in their home communities.





Images comprising the “Wilderness Forever” exhibit were selected from a summer 2013 national contest that received over 5,000 entries.

On the actual Wilderness Act anniversary on September 3rd, the **“Wilderness Forever” photography exhibit**, containing more than 40 breathtaking images of wilderness areas from Florida to Alaska, debuted in the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Natural History, which receives over 8 million visitors each year. The exhibit will remain up through the summer of 2015.

Later in the month, more than 150 wilderness advocates descended on our nation’s capital during the **D.C. Wilderness Week** to lobby Congress for passage of current wilderness bills. Shortly afterward, the Senate passed a resolution of support for the 50th anniversary.

In October at the **National Wilderness Conference**:

- 84 sessions, 7 plenary presentations, and 2 lunch panels addressed contemporary topics including civic engagement, education, stewardship, science, experience, and history
- 1,156 people from 43 states, Washington D.C. and Puerto Rico attended representing more than 160 different non-profit organizations and businesses, 12 international/federal/state/city government agencies, more than 60 universities, and more than 20 media outlets
- 1,500 New Mexico residents came to the public ‘Get Wild’ Festival
- Agency leaders signed **2020 Vision**, the agency strategy for future management of wilderness
- 157 people participated in 20 field trips to New Mexico wilderness areas and cultural sites
- 100 people attended a certified pre-conference training for government employees and non-profit advocates
- 800 people attended 3 events at the historic KiMo Theater: a 2-night wilderness film gala, a live docudrama on author and conservationist Aldo Leopold, and a screening of the documentary film *Wrenched*
- 55 exhibitors showcased their organizations in the exhibit hall
- 100 volunteers helped with everything from packet stuffing and registration to ‘Get Wild’ Festival setup
- The conference silent auction—more than 120 items including vacation packages, artwork, and outdoor gear—raised over \$11,000
- Several thousand pictures from Raymond Watt Photography are now available to anyone on the following FTP site, <ftp://ftp.cfc.umt.edu/Special/Ronald/50th/Conference/>.



The conference opened to a packed house where speakers and performers, including a special video welcome from former President Jimmy Carter, welcomed attendees.



The all-day outdoor ‘Get Wild’ Festival included Crosscut saw, Leave No Trace, horse-packing, backcountry cooking and survival skills demonstrations; climbing wall; Girl and Boy Scout encampments; campfire circle music and storytelling; Wilderness Jr. Ranger booth and Wilderness Passport scavenger hunt; wildlife ambassadors; cultural performances and speakers; live music from local bands Animal Opera, Le Chat Lunatique, and Let It Grow; food trucks and a beer garden serving the limited editing Wilderness Brew from Marble Brewery.

With our special focus on the next generation of wilderness stewards, here are some **youth engagement and education successes**:

- More than 100 youth under the age of 25 attended the conference and Youth Summit
- A total of 24 diverse youth (2/3 were female and 45% were Asian, Hispanic, African-American or American Indian) received scholarships to attend
- 14 Youth Leader Wilderness Scholarship winners were selected and will implement the knowledge they gained at the conference in their home communities through Wilderness Ambassador Projects such as grassroots wilderness designation awareness walks, videos and podcasts
- 9 youth presenters who spoke about future stewards and listening to youth drew crowds of more than 80 people
- 350 grade- and middle-school students along with 10 teachers were led through the Wilderness Awareness Trail by youth scholarship winners as part of local New Mexico school field trips
- 300 kids completed the Wilderness Passport Program at the 'Get Wild' Festival
- Throughout 2014, 15 Wilderness Investigations teacher workshops served more than 280 teachers who will ultimately teach more than 10,000 students about wilderness this year alone

With our special focus on informing more people about wilderness during 2014, here are some **public awareness and marketing successes**:

- The [50th anniversary Facebook page](#) exceeded 5,000 likes by September 3rd, and our wilderness photo blitz that day had a post reach of 91,973 people
- More than 40 YouTube short videos and 3 podcasts have been broadcast
- Wilderness-themed pub trivia rounds were hosted on September 3rd in more than 120 venues across the country
- Wilderness50th.org serves as the clearinghouse for information about all local and national events and includes a toolbox with more than 120 resources
- The semi-monthly *Wilderness50* e-news reaches more than 3,000 members of the wilderness community with each issue
- 41,500 current wilderness maps, 5,000 brochures, more than 30,000 Wilderness Explorer Jr. Ranger activity books, and 3,250 commemorative 50th anniversary magazines were printed and distributed during 2014



Youth Leader Wilderness Scholarship winners and other Youth Summit attendees (sponsored by Ahnu, Osprey, Sierra Club and the Forest Service), most of whom had never attended a conference before, received a primer with tips, advice on how to navigate the conference program, and tangible networking skills.



Scholarship winners led local school children through the Wilderness Awareness Trail, a station-based immersion learning experience.



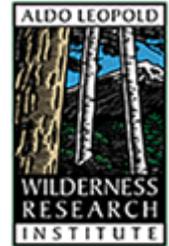
Companies selling 50th anniversary merchandise included Flow397 (apparel), CafePress (various), Custom Sticker Makers (stickers), Eagle River Designs (various), Western Heritage (various), L & H Branding Irons (branding iron), Wilderness Watch (poster), and the Society for Wilderness Stewardship (cookbook).

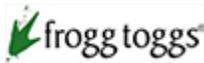
- More than 100,000 50th logo stickers, 3,350 commemorative Monte Dolack wilderness posters, nearly 1,000 Wilderness Ranger Cookbooks, around 200 50th logo shirts, and nearly 1000 50th logo mugs, water bottles, tote bags and other merchandise were sold during 2014
- 30 displays in a free public pool were rented for use at local community events by nearly 80 agency and non-profit offices
- 8 live webinars were broadcast, with one hosted by Orion Magazine reaching 9,000 people via podcast
- Mainstream magazines including Backpacker, High Country News, Orion, National Geographic, Sunset, and Backcountry covered wilderness during 2014; other publications including Alpinist, Kayak Fish, High Country News, National Forest Magazine, Outside Magazine, Society of American Foresters magazine, and American Park Network guides donate advertising space; and nearly 1,500 news articles on the anniversary have been written to date
- The Smithsonian Channel's *Aerial America: Wilderness* episode aired on national television on Sunday, September 7th; the initial screening on Friday, September 5th at the Smithsonian's National Museum of Natural History drew nearly 500 viewers; and nearly 100 DVDs of the episode were mailed out for house party viewings scheduled in September and October

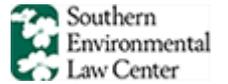
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National Wilderness Conference and 'Get Wild' Festival Exhibitors

Access Fund; Albuquerque Biopark; Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute; American Conservation Experience; Americorps National Civilian Community Corps; Animal Protection of New Mexico; Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center; Aspect Solar - Aspect Technologies, Inc.; Backcountry Horsemen of America; Backcountry Horsemen of New Mexico; Barbara J. Moritsch; Bill's BBQ; Bookworks Albuquerque; Boy Scouts of America, Philmont Scout Ranch; Bureau of Land Management; Castaneda's Kitchen; City ABQ Climbing wall; ConservAmerica; Conservation Lands Foundation; Conserve America; Cottonwood Gulch Foundation; Daniel Richmond - Endangered Species Sand Art; Department of the Interior Federal Credit Union; Eagle River Designs, Inc.; EMT Motion Picture Set Medics, EMT and First Aid Station; Environmental Systems Research Institute; Face painting by Janet Dominguez; Firefighter's United for Safety, Ethics and Ecology FUSEE; Fish and Wildlife Service; Flow397; Forest Service; Free to Breathe; Ft. Union National Monument Encampment; Girl Scouts of New Mexico Trails; Glorieta Camps; Great Basin Institute; Great Old Broads for Wilderness; Great Old Broads for Wilderness - Rio Grande Valley Broadband; Greater Canyonland Coalition (SUWA); Hawks Aloft; How the Environment Works, Sand Art by Daniel Richmond; If You Care; International League of Conservation Photographers; International League of Conservation Writers; Irrational Pie Woodfire Pizza; Jicarilla Apache Nation; Jill Palmer - Free Tibet; Kelly Adirondack Center at Union College; Kleen Kanteen; Leave No Trace, Center for Outdoor Ethics; Mexicanwolves.org; Mojave Desert Land Trust; Montana Wilderness Association; National Cave and Karst Research Institute; National Outdoor Leadership School; National Park Service; National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance; New Mexico Fish and Game Fishing Game; New Mexico Herpetological Society ; New Mexico Volunteers for the Outdoors; New Mexico Wilderness Alliance; New Mexico Wildlife Federation; North Face; Northern Minnesotans for Wilderness; Open Space Alliance - Albuquerque; Orion Magazine; Orion Magazine; Pacific Crest Trail Association; Pew Charitable Trusts; Poudre Wilderness Volunteers; Prairie Dog Pals; Public Lands Foundation; Recreation One Stop; Recreation.gov; Rewilding Institute; Shadows of the Oldwest Encampment; Sierra Club - Borderlands; Sierra Club - Grand Canyon & Rio Grande Chapters; Sierra Club - New Mexico; Sierra Club "Creativity Tree"; Society for American Foresters; Society for Wilderness Stewardship; Southwest Environmental Center; Spot, LLC.; State of Alaska; Student Conservation Association; University of New Mexico Art and Ecology Program (Noel Chilton); University of New Mexico LoboSEEDS; University of New Mexico Press; Wild Flame Project/Madeline Aaron ; Wild Foundation; Wild South; Wild Spirit Wolf Sanctuary; WildEarth Guardians; Wilderness Institute; Wilderness Land Trust; Wilderness Society; Wilderness Volunteers; Wilderness Watch; Wildlands Trekking Company; World Water Monitoring Day (Earth Force); WorthWild.