



## 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act 1964-2014

<http://www.wilderness.net>

**50 YEARS OF AMERICAN WILDERNESS:** 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 758 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

### **What is Wilderness:**

The Act defines wilderness as "an area of undeveloped Federal land *retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements...and which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable*;...has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;...and may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, or historical value."

### **Human Activities in Wilderness:**

Activities permitted in lands designated as wilderness include:

- Scientific research and nature study
- Hiking, backpacking, wildlife viewing, photography, and camping
- Horseback riding and guiding for horse and pack trips
- Float trips, canoeing, kayaking
- Wheelchairs (including certain motorized wheelchairs)

- Livestock grazing and related facilities, where previously established
- Control of fire, and insect and disease outbreaks
- Mining on pre-existing, valid claims
- Continued use of tracts of private or state lands within the boundaries of some wilderness areas, with reasonable access

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Total **Cherokee National Forest** acres: **656,000**

Current wilderness acres: 66,600

Recommended wilderness acres: 19,556

