

Wilderness Stewardship

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Visitor & Resource Protection
Wilderness Stewardship Division
WASO



Program Brief



“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is . . . an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” ~1964 Wilderness Act

Overview

Wilderness is a Congressional designation. When signed into law, the 1964 Wilderness Act created the National Wilderness Preservation System and automatically designated a core of Forest Service areas as Wilderness. The legislation also instructed the Forest Service, Fish & Wildlife Service, National Park Service, and later the Bureau of Land Management to review their lands for wilderness suitability and put forward proposals for Congressional designation. In subsequent legislation, 44.1 million acres of National Park Service lands have been designated as Wilderness. An additional 26 million NPS acres are currently eligible or proposed for potential designation. Together, this acreage represents approximately 83% of the National Park System.

Lands eligible, proposed, or designated as Wilderness within NPS jurisdiction are held to the highest standard of natural, untrammelled conditions. Wilderness resources require special management attention to ensure that wilderness character is maintained to the degree and in the manner specified by Congress. Wilderness character is defined as untrammelled, undeveloped, natural, and offers opportunities for solitude or primate and unconfined recreation.

Wilderness Stewardship Division

The Wilderness Stewardship Division is responsible for the direction and implementation of NPS national wilderness goals, policy, and standards. The Division provides leadership on Wilderness Planning, Wilderness Character monitoring, Minimum Requirement Analysis, Climate Change response, and the Wilderness designation process. The national office tracks current wilderness legislation and responds to Congressional and Interagency inquiries, develops and supports international

relationships, and serves as a liaison between multiple disciplines and directorates.

The Division leads the NPS National Outdoor Ethic program involves coordination and cooperation with two National organizations: Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics and Tread Lightly. The Division works with research and science programs to utilize Wilderness as a benchmark to track changes to the environment

Current Initiatives

Business Plan

- Develop a strategic 3-5 year plan to analyze how to best leverage current resources, develop a national leadership model, and maximize efficiency and relevancy at all levels

Together Wild

- Implement wilderness planning in parks with wilderness resources

Wilderness Character monitoring

- Monitor trends in wilderness character to inform management about impacts to and condition of wilderness areas

Wilderness Fellows

- Partner with university level students to implement wilderness planning and develop the next generation of wilderness professionals

Youth Initiative

- Engage youth in National Park Service leadership through internship career experience

Workforce Development

- Create professional standards for employees working in Wilderness; support standards through training

Contacts

Washington Office Contacts:
1201 Eye St. NW, 10th Floor
Washington DC 20005

Garry Oye
Chief
202.513.7090
garry_oye@nps.gov

Wade Vagias, Ph.D.
Wilderness Planning
202.513.7124
wade_vagias@nps.gov

Ashley Adams
Natural Resource Specialist
202.513.7130
ashley_adams@nps.gov

Arthur Carhart Interagency Wilderness Training Center Contacts

James E. Todd Building
32 Campus Drive
Missoula, Montana 59812-3168

Tim Devine
Training & Development
406.243.4612
tim_devine@nps.gov

Useful Websites

Wilderness.net
(<http://www.wilderness.net>)

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center
(<http://carhart.wilderness.net>)

Public NPS Wilderness Site
(<http://wilderness.nps.gov>)

NPS Wilderness Stewardship
(<http://inside.nps.gov/waso/waso.cfm?lv=2&prg=116>)

Intermountain Region Wilderness Site
(<http://inside.nps.gov/regions/region.cfm?lv=2&rgn=384>)