

North Cascades

Stephen Mather Wilderness

North Cascades National Park
 Ross Lake National Recreation Area
 Lake Chelan National Recreation Area

National Park Service
 U.S. Department of the Interior



An Enduring Legacy of Wilderness

"[I]t is hereby declared to be the policy of the Congress to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness." — Wilderness Act, 1964

The North Cascades National Park Service Complex includes 684,000 acres in three units: North Cascades National Park, Lake Chelan National Recreation Area, and Ross Lake National Recreation Area. Congress has designated 94% of the Complex as the Stephen Mather Wilderness.

Today, as in the past, wilderness is an important part of every American's story. People seek wilderness for many reasons: physical or mental challenge; solitude, renewal, or a respite from modern life; or as a place to find inspiration and to explore our heritage. What draws you to visit wilderness?

The Stephen Mather Wilderness is at the heart of over two million acres of some of the wildest lands remaining—a place "where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...." Untrammelled (meaning "free of restraint," "unconfined") captures the essence of wilderness: a place where the land's natural processes prevail, and the developments of modern technological society are largely unnoticeable. Here, we are visitors, but we also come home—to our natural heritage. It is a place to experience our past and a place to find future respite. This is the enduring legacy of wilderness.

