



Wilderness Act

The Wilderness Act was signed into law by President Lyndon B. Johnson on September 3, 1964, and established the National Wilderness Preservation System. Since then, over 100 million acres have been added to the System, which is administered by the four federal land management agencies (Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, Fish and Wildlife, and Park Service), including over 704,000 acres of Yosemite National Park.

Wilderness is a federal designation and protection for wild lands “to assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States... leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition.”

The Act states that “wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor...”

By definition, wilderness is, “*An area of undeveloped federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or habitation, and which:*

- *Generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with man’s imprint 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, scenic, or historical value.”*

Wilderness lands are managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964 “for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner that will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and to provide for the protection of these areas and the preservation of their wilderness character (sec. 2(a) 1964 Wilderness Act).”