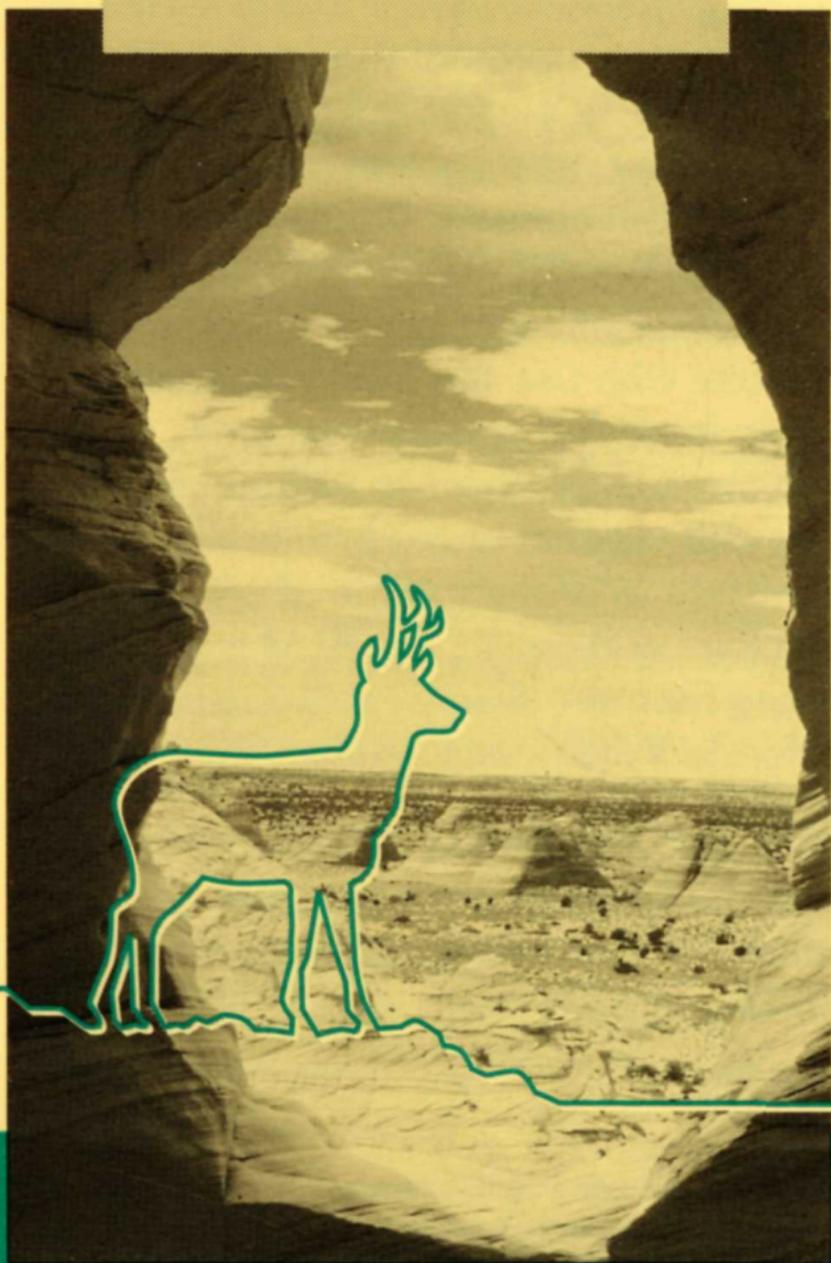


*In The
Meantime...*



**Protecting Your
Wilderness Study Areas**



**U.S. Department of the Interior
Bureau of Land Management**

*"When we see land as a community
to which we belong, we may begin
to use it with love and respect."*

Aldo Leopold

These words of the great naturalist are as meaningful today as when they were spoken at the turn of the 20th century. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) considers it a top priority to instill that sense of community in those who use the 270 million acres of public lands the agency manages. In particular, with regard to wilderness. For love and respect of the land is essential to efforts to protect some of our most precious wildlands. The BLM is currently caring for more than 27 million acres of potential Wilderness Areas.

We need your help to protect these areas until Congress decides whether or not to add them to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

What is Wilderness?

Wilderness Areas are places where our children, and their children, can glimpse a world gone by. In 1964, the Congress created the National Wilderness Preservation System to preserve some of America's wild lands in their natural condition. The System is composed of Federally owned lands designated by the Congress as Wilderness Areas. To qualify for Wilderness designation, areas must offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, scenic, or historic value. In addition, human influence must be substantially unnoticeable.

In 1976, the Congress, with passage of the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA), directed the BLM to study its remaining roadless areas and recommend those that should be designated as Wilderness. Four years later, Congress passed legislation that established a special wilderness study program for BLM lands in Alaska. With one exception, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 directed that these studies be incorporated into the agency's regular land use planning process.

From 1977-1992, the BLM evaluated 860 roadless areas, called "Wilderness Study Areas," or WSAs, encompassing more than 27 million acres in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The BLM has recommended that Congress designate 330 WSAs (9.7 million acres) as Wilderness Areas and release all or part of 654 WSAs (16.9 million acres) for other uses. However, until Congress passes laws to that effect, the BLM must protect the wilderness characteristics of all the WSAs.

By law, management of WSAs is less restrictive than management of Wilderness Areas but activities that would impair land suitability for wilderness designation are prohibited. The following is a list of do's and don'ts for WSAs:

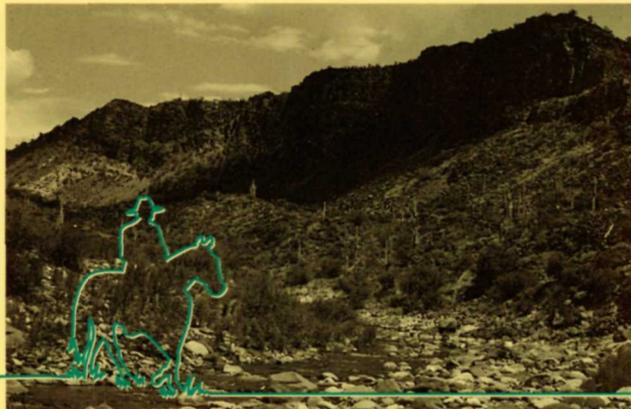
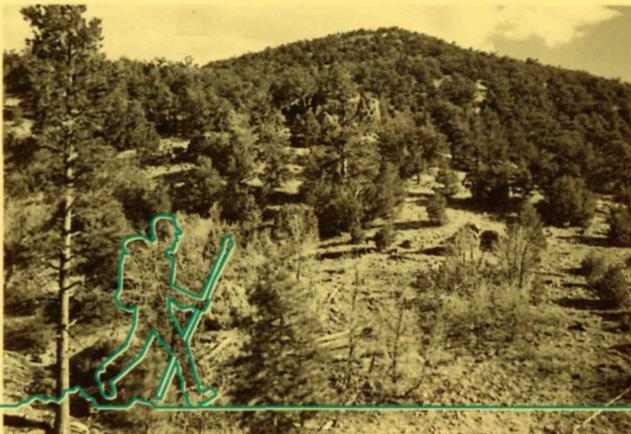
Recreation

Most recreation activities, including hiking, cross-country skiing, river running, horseback riding, and rockhounding are allowed in WSAs. You may also fish, hunt, and trap where permitted by State and Federal regulations.

Because erosion is a severe problem in the soft soils of the arid West, all motorized travel is limited to existing roads and trails. Cross-country travel is prohibited.

Primitive camping is allowed in WSAs. The BLM encourages campers to follow "Leave No Trace" practices when camping in WSAs. For more information, contact the nearest BLM office.

When recreating in WSAs, please remember to "Leave only Footprints and Take Only Memories."



Off-Highway Vehicles (OHVs)

Motorized and mechanized vehicles are allowed in WSAs with certain restrictions. OHVs, including trail and mountain bikes, are limited to existing roads and trails and to designated sand dune or snow areas. Cross-country travel is prohibited.

River Running

Motorized and non-motorized boats are allowed on rivers in WSAs. Permits are required for boating on approximately 1/4 of the rivers the agency manages. Check with the nearest BLM office to obtain permit information.

Commercial Outfitting

Specific regulations apply to outfitters and guides operating in WSAs. Contact the nearest BLM office for more information.

Wood Cutting

Gathering of dead and downed trees for campfires is allowed. Larger quantities of firewood may be collected with a BLM permit. Standing trees may not be cut for either personal or commercial use.

Wildlife

Wildlife habitat improvement structures such as fences, guzzlers, springs, and wells may be installed if they are substantially unnoticeable and enhance wilderness characteristics. Motorized vehicles may be used on roads and trails to maintain existing wildlife projects but any new structures should be maintained without the use of motor vehicles.

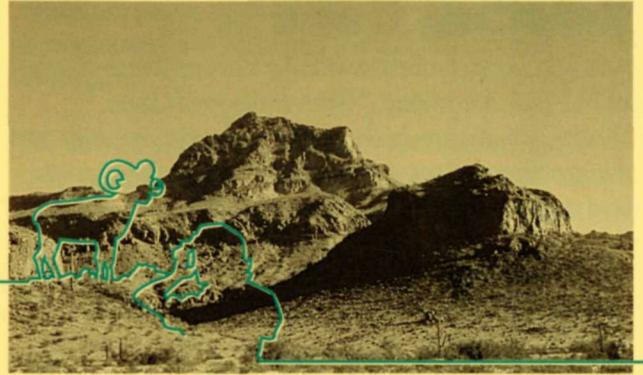
Cultural and Paleontological Resources

Artifacts, paleontological resources, and historic sites on all public lands, including WSAs, are protected by law. It is illegal to deface or remove any site or object with scientific, cultural, or historic significance.

Cultural and paleontological resource inventories, studies, and research that involve surface examination, or limited subsurface sampling, may be allowed. Salvage of archaeological and paleontological sites, stabilization, reconstruction, and restoration of historic structures, and excavations may also be permitted. Anyone wishing to conduct these types of activities in WSAs must apply for a permit at the nearest BLM office.



Human-caused wildfires upset the balance of nature. Before visiting a WSA, contact a local BLM office for fire conditions and restrictions. Help protect your WSAs by being careful with fire.



Lands and Realty

Generally, public lands included in WSAs may not be sold, leased, exchanged, or otherwise disposed of unless specific criteria can be met. Some use authorizations and rights-of-way may be issued under strict limitations or special conditions.

A number of State and private land parcels lie within the boundaries of WSA's and the owners of such lands may continue to use them for a wide variety of purposes. Please respect the rights of these landowners.

Fire Management

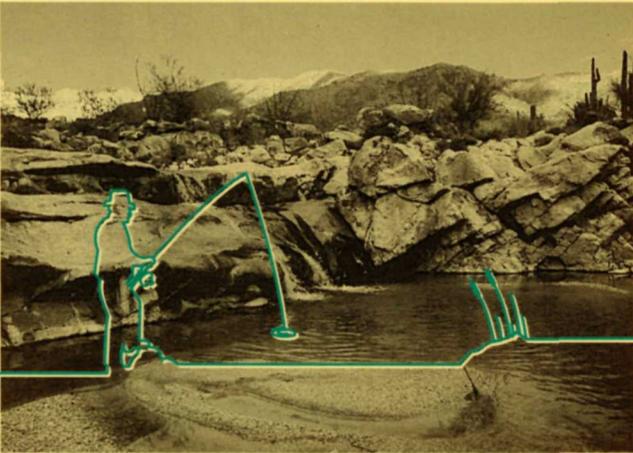
Wherever possible, fire is allowed to play its natural role in the environment and in some cases, wildfires that start in WSAs are not actively suppressed. In other cases, the BLM may conduct controlled burning for wilderness management purposes. The agency will perform rehabilitation, or clean-up, of fire suppression impacts if necessary to restore wilderness characteristics. However, some lands may be allowed to return to their former condition by natural processes.

Existing Uses

Activities conducted in WSAs before the passage of FLPMA are called "Grandfathered Uses."

These activities, which include grazing, mining, and mineral leasing may continue in the same manner and degree as they occurred in 1976.

All structures and installations constructed before 1976 may be maintained to keep them in working or serviceable condition. Any plans to alter facilities or change the condition of an area must be submitted to the BLM for approval in advance.



Mining

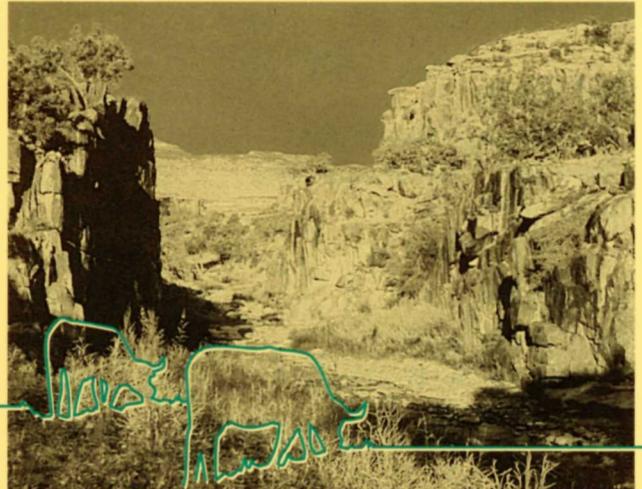
Most mining operations on the public lands are subject to provisions of the 1872 Mining Law. Only mineral activities that occurred before 1976 may continue in the same manner and degree in which they occurred at that time. Miners determined by the BLM to hold valid claims filed before passage of FLPMA may fully develop those claims even if wilderness characteristics are impaired. Miners must contact the nearest BLM office before starting any mineral development activities in WSAs that have not been previously authorized.

Detailed plans of operations and environmental compliance are required for mining operations in WSAs.

All leases for other minerals such as oil, gas, and potash, issued in WSAs before 1976, may operate according to the terms and conditions of the lease. No new leases will be issued in WSAs. New sales of, or permits for, common varieties of rock, stone, gravel, sand, and other such types of materials will not be made in WSAs.

Grazing

Domestic livestock grazing may continue in the same manner and degree as it took place during 1976. Range management facilities such as fences, wells, and other water developments may be maintained subject to certain restrictions and requirements. Some livestock grazing uses or practices may be allowed to change under special circumstances.



Before you visit a WSA...

Contact or stop by the nearest BLM office. Detailed maps are available and employees can provide tips and answer any questions to help make your stay safe, enjoyable, and compatible with WSA requirements.

For more information about activities in WSAs, contact any of the following offices to ask questions or to request a copy of the BLM's *Interim Management Policy and Guidelines for Lands Under Wilderness Review*.

Alaska

222 West 7th Avenue, #13
Anchorage, AK 99513-7599
(907) 271-5555

Arizona

3707 North 7th Street
Phoenix, AZ 85011
(602) 640-5504

California

2800 Cottage Way, E-2841
Sacramento, CA 95825-1889
(916) 978-4754

Colorado

2850 Youngfield Street
Lakewood, CO 80215-7076
(303) 239-3600

Eastern States

7450 Boston Boulevard
Springfield, VA 22153
(703) 440-1713

Idaho

3380 Americana Terrace
Boise, ID 83706
(208) 384-3000

Montana

222 North 32nd Street
Billings, MT 59101
(406) 255-2888

Nevada

850 Harvard Way
Reno, NV 89520-0006
(702) 785-6466

New Mexico

1474 Rodeo Road
Santa Fe, NM 87502-0115
(505) 438-7400

Oregon

1300 NE 44th Avenue
Portland, OR 97208-2965
(503) 280-7027

Utah

324 South State Street
Salt Lake City, UT 84111-2303
(801) 539-4001

Wyoming

2515 Warren Avenue
Cheyenne, WY 82003
(307) 775-6256

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