



National Parks

~

America's Wilderness

*"Plans to protect air and water,
wilderness and wildlife
are in fact plans to protect man."*

Stewart Udall

*"If future generations are to remember us more with gratitude than
sorrow, we must achieve more than just the miracles of technology.
We must also leave them a glimpse of the world as it was created,
not just as it looked when we got through with it."*

Lyndon B. Johnson



America's Wilderness

The Wilderness Act was signed into law by President Lyndon Johnson on September 3, 1964. Since that initial designation of 9 million acres of federal lands as Wilderness, the National Wilderness Preservation System has grown to 107 million acres in 44 states. The four federal land management agencies manage these lands (see Table 1), with the National Park Service responsible for 43 million acres.

To be considered Wilderness, land must meet the five characteristics of Wilderness outlined in the Wilderness Act:

- The earth and its community of life are untrammeled by humans, where humans are visitors and do not remain,
- The area is undeveloped and retains its primeval character and influence without permanent improvements or human habitation,
- The area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of humans' work substantially unnoticeable,
- The area is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions, and
- The area offers outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Table 1: Acres in the National Wilderness Preservation System

Agency	Wilderness Acres	Percent of All Wilderness Acres
Bureau of Land Management	7,796,842	7.3%
Fish & Wildlife Service	20,702,350	19.3%
Forest Service	35,479,099	33.0%
National Park Service	43,536,647	40.5%
Total	107,514,938	100.0%

Eligible wilderness

In addition to the 43 million acres of designated Wilderness, another 26 million acres of eligible wilderness are within 38 National Park units. Over the last 35 years, Presidential recommendations for an additional 5.7 million acres of Wilderness have been sent to Congress. The 26 million acres of eligible wilderness are located in 16 states (see **Error! Reference source not found.**). Thirteen units and the majority of these acres are located in Alaska. Of the remaining 25 units in the lower 48 states, most of these sites (18) are in the western U.S., including six in Utah. There are two in the upper Midwest, one in Texas, and four in the southeast.

Table 2: National Park Service Units with Acres Eligible for Wilderness Designation

State	NPS Unit	Acres Eligible For Wilderness	State	NPS Unit	Acres Eligible For Wilderness	
Alaska	Aniakchak NM & P	602,779	Minnesota	Voyageurs NP	124,994	
	Bering Land Bridge NP	2,690,179		Montana	Bighorn Canyon NRA	8,108
	Cape Krusenstern NM	633,587	<u>Glacier NP*</u>		<u>927,550</u>	
	Denali NP&P	3,726,343	Total: 2 units		935,658	
	Gates of the Arctic NP & P	1,052,561	North Carolina		Cape Lookout NS	2,990
	Glacier Bay NP & P	62,790			New Mexico	El Malpais NM*
	Katmai NP & P	643,448		Oregon		Crater Lake NP*
	Kenai Fjords NP	668,165	Tennessee		Great Smoky Mountains NP*	390,500
	Kobuk Valley NP	1,494,500		Texas	Big Bend NP*	538,250
	Lake Clark NP & P	1,240,280	Utah		Arches NP*	61,547
	Noatak NPr	757,175		Bryce Canyon NP*	20,810	
	Wrangell-St. Elias NP & P	3,174,000		Canyonlands NP*	260,150	
	<u>Yukon-Charley Rivers NP</u>	<u>2,220,576</u>		Capitol Reef NP*	179,815	
Total: 13 units	18,966,383	Cedar Breaks NM*		4,830		
		<u>Glen Canyon NRA*</u>		<u>588,855</u>		
Arizona	Grand Canyon NP	1,109,257	Total: 6 units	1,116,007		
Colorado	Colorado NM*	13,842	Wyoming	Grand Teton NP*	135,680	
	<u>Dinosaur NM*</u>	<u>205,672</u>		<u>Yellowstone NP*</u>	<u>2,032,721</u>	
	Total: 2 units	219,514		Total: 2 units	2,168,401	
Idaho	Craters of the Moon NM*	346,800		Grand Total: 36 units	26,150,457	
Kentucky	Cumberland Gap NHP*	12,191				
Maryland	Assateague Island NS*	440				
Michigan	Sleeping Bear Dunes NL	7,128				

Guide to Abbreviations

NHP	National Historic Park	NL	National Lakeshore
NM	National Monument	NMPr	National Monument and Preserve
NP	National Park	NPPr	National Park and Preserve
NPr	National Preserve	NRA	National Recreation Area
NS	National Seashore	* previously recommended to Congress	

Designating new Wilderness

Designating new Wilderness on lands already under National Park Service management should be acceptable to most Americans. Common obstacles to new Wilderness designation include removing land from potential economic use, cost of management, and public support. However, these three obstacles are essentially moot in this case.

First, resource extraction, development, and any other uses leaving permanent traces on these lands are already prohibited; National Park Service management policy 6.3.1 states “The National Park Service will take no action that would diminish the wilderness eligibility of an area possessing wilderness characteristics...” (NPS Management Policies 2006, page 80).

Second, because these lands are already managed as wilderness under existing funding, official Wilderness designation will require minimal additional funding.

Third, these lands eligible for wilderness but not yet designated include the most popular National Parks in the country and any wilderness proposal including these parks would likely be extremely popular with the American public.

The two most visited National Parks, and seven of the top eleven, have minimal or no designated Wilderness but millions of acres of eligible wilderness (see **Error! Reference source not found.**).

The public is also likely to support new Wilderness designation of Park Service lands now because of high awareness and concern around climate change.

Table 3: Popular National Parks with minimal wilderness acreage

National Park	2007 Visitation	Rank in Visitation	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Existing Wilderness Acres
Great Smoky Mountains	9,372,253	1	390,900	-
Grand Canyon	4,413,668	2	1,139,077	-
Yellowstone	3,151,343	4	2,032,721	-
Grand Teton	2,588,574	8	156,000	-
Glacier	2,083,329	11	930,910	-

Wilderness and climate change

Since 2007, the American public has become more aware of climate change and its potential impacts. Wilderness areas, whether officially designated or just eligible, are an important contributor in the study of climate change and in mitigating potential climate change impacts.

Wilderness areas are relatively free of human impacts and provide important baseline information in climate change research. As the Western Mountain Initiative puts it, "...because national parks and wildernesses ... have experienced minimal human disturbance, effects of environmental changes on ecosystems can be inferred with fewer confounding influences than on intensively managed lands."

Table 2 includes a small sample of the types of research projects conducted on NPS lands related to climate change. These examples demonstrate the importance of Wilderness areas to science and understanding climate change.

The studies:

- Provide information not available anywhere else,
- Can act as experimental controls,
- Are large enough to observe species' longitudinal or altitudinal movement in response to changes in climate, and
- Can help understand carbon sequestration.

Wilderness areas will also play important roles in mitigating climate change impacts. They protect the water quality of many rivers that provide drinking water to small and large cities across the country.

In the west, where climate change is expected to bring increased rainfall and flooding, intact river systems that exist in Wilderness areas are less prone to flooding.

Wilderness areas will also help protect biodiversity; they tend to be large, intact ecosystems that can provide corridors and elevation gradients necessary for species migration.

If the 26.5 million acres of wilderness are already managed as Wilderness and provide many of the benefits of Wilderness, why bother making it Wilderness? Designating these wilderness areas will ensure their long-term protection, help understand and mitigate the potential impacts from climate change, and represent a strong, symbolic move on behalf of the American people towards protecting our natural heritage.

Table 2: A sample of research projects conducted in National Parks related to climate change.

National Park	Name of Research Project
Great Smoky Mountains National Park	<p>A pilot study of Individual-tree and Ecosystem Level Carbon Sequestration in Low Elevation, Mixed-Mesophytic Forests of the Great Smoky Mountains.</p> <p>The research will reveal the influence of climate on productivity at the tree and ecosystem level to address questions related to carbon sequestration.</p>
Everglades National Park	<p>Resiliency of Corals to Changing Saturation State: A field study.</p> <p>The research will try to understand how increased levels of atmospheric CO₂ will affect the calcification of corals.</p>
Olympic National Park	<p>Consequences of Altered Precipitation for Carbon Sequestration & Biogeochemical Cycling in Temperate Forests.</p> <p>The research will try to examine carbon sequestration and how sequestration rates might change as the precipitation levels change due to climate change.</p>
Rocky Mountain National Park	<p>Paleoenvironmental Baseline Research and Longterm Climate Change Modeling in Rocky Mountain National Park.</p> <p>The research will generate baseline data to develop a model of past interrelated climatic/paleoenvironmental and human land use patterns through time. The model will help guide management strategies of the Park's cultural and natural resources.</p>
Denali National Park	<p>A shrubby future for Denali? Investigation on the effect of recent warming on alpine shrubs in Denali National Park and Preserve.</p> <p>The research hopes to gather data that can be used to predict changing vegetation patterns as a result of a changing climate.</p>
Glacier and North Cascades National Parks	<p>Response of Western Mountain Ecosystems to Climatic Variability and Change: The Western Mountain Initiative.</p> <p>The overarching objective of the Western Mountain Initiative is to understand and predict the responses, emphasizing sensitivities, thresholds, resistance, and resilience, of Western mountain ecosystems to climatic variability and change.</p>



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Alaska's Eligible Wilderness

Alaska has the majority of NPS lands eligible for Wilderness. These areas are spread across 13 different NPS units and are in some of most remote areas of the state; many are only accessible by plane or boat. These units also provide unparalleled experiences to visitors. They contain impressive mountain ranges, rugged coastline, pristine waterways, and abundant wildlife. Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve includes three migratory corridors for caribou and parts of the Brooks Range. Katmai National Park and Preserve has world-renown fishing and is home to large populations of brown bears.

The impacts of climate change have been more pronounced in the northern latitudes, and many of these units are living laboratories for research trying to understand potential changes ahead, not just for the area, but for the world.

Senators:

Mark Begich (D)
Lisa Murkowski (R)

Representative:

Don Young (R)



Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve, southwest Alaska.

Acres of eligible wilderness:

18,966,383

Acres of existing wilderness:

32,979,406

Total acres of existing and eligible wilderness:

51,945,789

Number of NPS units in Alaska:

16

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness:

13

Park Service Unit	Number of Visitors, 2007	Acreage of Unit	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Existing Acres of Wilderness	Total Eligible and Existing Wilderness Acres
Aniakchak National Monument and Preserve	26	602,779	602,779	-	602,779
Bering Land Bridge National Preserve	796	2,698,919	2,690,179	-	2,690,179
Cape Krusenstern National Monument	745	649,085	633,587	-	633,587
Denali National Park and Preserve	458,308	6,075,030	3,726,343	2,124,783	5,851,126
Gates of the Arctic National Park and Preserve	10,942	8,472,506	1,052,561	7,167,192	8,219,753
Glacier Bay National Park and Preserve	438,211	3,283,246	62,790	2,664,876	2,727,666
Katmai National Park and Preserve	82,634	4,725,188	643,448	3,384,358	4,027,806
Kenai Fjords National Park	284,604	669,983	668,165	-	668,165
Kobuk Valley National Park	847	1,669,813	1,494,500	174,545	1,669,045
Lake Clark National Park and Preserve	5,549	4,030,025	1,240,280	2,619,550	3,859,830
Noatak National Preserve	1,384	6,569,904	757,175	5,765,427	6,522,602
Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve	61,085	13,175,901	3,174,000	9,078,675	12,252,675
Yukon-Charley Rivers National Preserve	11,567	2,183,173	2,220,576	-	2,220,576
Total: 13 Units	1,356,698	54,805,552	18,966,383	32,979,406	51,945,789



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Arizona's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Grand Canyon National Park

Grand Canyon is the 2nd most visited National Park, with over 4.4 million visitors in 2007. Most of these visitors would be surprised to find out that in this majestic park, there are no designated wilderness areas. Grand Canyon is primarily known for its spectacular mile deep gorge, cut by the Colorado River. In addition to this geologic wonder, it has nearly every habitat found in the Southwestern United States, including montane forest and Mojave desert. These habitats are home to a large diversity of plants and animals, including the California condor and seven threatened and endangered species.



Grand Canyon National Park is one of few places in the world where there are free-flying California condors.



Grand Canyon National Park

Acres in Grand Canyon National Park:

1,218,375

Acres of eligible wilderness:

1,109,257

Acres of potential* wilderness:

29,820

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

1,139,077

Number of NPS units in Arizona:

26

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 2 (Glen Canyon NRA is included in Utah's brief.

Senators:

Jon Kyl (R)

John McCain (R)

Representative:

Trent Franks (R-2nd District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Colorado's Eligible and Potential Wilderness

225,000 acres of land in the Colorado and Dinosaur National Monuments is also eligible for Wilderness designation. Dinosaur National Monument is home to dramatic canyon scenery and still-embedded dinosaur fossils viewable by visitors. Colorado National Monument's plateau and canyon country is home to sheer-walled canyons, towering monoliths, desert bighorn sheep and golden eagles.

Dinosaur National Monument's headquarters are in Colorado but the monument itself is in both Utah and Colorado.

Senators:

- Ken Salazar (D)
- Mark Udall (D)

Representatives:

- John Salazar (D-3rd District): Colorado and Dinosaur National Monuments
- Jim Matheson (D-Utah's 2nd District): Dinosaur National Monument



Split Mountain Canyon, Dinosaur National Monument

Acres of eligible wilderness: 219,514
 Acres of potential* wilderness: 5,992
 Acres of existing wilderness: 219,514
 Acres of existing wilderness: 0
 Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness: 315,506
 Number of NPS units in Colorado: 17
 Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 2

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."



Indian Paintbrush, Colorado National Monument

Park Service Unit	Number of Visitors, 2007	Acreage of Unit	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Acres of Potential* Wilderness	Existing Acres of Wilderness	Total Eligible, Potential* and Existing Wilderness Acres
Colorado National Monument	395,260	20,534	13,842	937	-	14,779
Dinosaur National Monument	230,914	205,672	205,672	5,055	-	210,727
Total: 2 Units	626,174	226,206	219,514	5,992	-	315,506



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Idaho's Eligible Wilderness in Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve is located in south central Idaho. Initially created in 1924 and further expanded in 2000, the Monument and Preserve includes an amazing demonstration of the volcanic history of the area. Solidified rivers of lava, projectile lava droplets or "bombs," monoliths and craters, lava tubes, and imprints of tree in cooled lava are just a few examples of the geologic activity that occurred over the last 15,000 years, including the most recent eruptions around 2,000 years ago.

Craters of the Moon is jointly managed by NPS and the Bureau of Land Management; NPS manages 464,304 acres and the BLM is responsible for approximately 250,000 acres.



A solidified river of lava at Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve.



Craters of the Moon National Monument and Preserve

In 1970, Congress designated 43,243 acres of the National Monument as the Craters of the Moon Wilderness, the first Wilderness area in the National Park Service.

Number of visitors, 2007

221,672

Total acres

464,304

Acres of eligible wilderness:

346,800

Acres of existing wilderness:

43,243

Total eligible and existing wilderness acres:

390,043

Number of NPS units in Idaho:

9

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 2 (Yellowstone is included in Wyoming's brief)

Senators:

Mike Crapo (R)

James Risch (R)

Representatives:

Mike Simpson (R-2nd District)



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Kentucky, Tennessee and Virginia's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Cumberland Gap National Historic Park

Cumberland Gap National Historic Park is named for the gap in the Appalachian Range that allowed easier travel to westward Native Americans, explorers, and pioneers. The park includes historic settlements and was the site of Civil War battles; ruins from Civil War fortifications are still present.

The park also includes lush Appalachian forests. It is home to two endangered species, including the Indiana bat that roosts in some of the 24 limestone caves found in the park. The many bluffs and overlooks provide excellent vantage points to observe the fall hawk migration.

Cumberland Gap National Historic Park includes parts of three states: Kentucky, Tennessee, and Virginia. Its headquarters are located in Kentucky.

Number of visitors (2007):

994,985

Total acres:

20,516

Acres of eligible wilderness:

12,191



Acres of potential* wilderness:



A historic homestead in Cumberland National Historic Park

1,900

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

14,091

Senators:

Jim Bunning (R-KY)

Mitch McConnell (R-KY)

Lamar Alexander (R-TN)

Bob Corker (R-TN)

Mark Warner (D-VA)

Jim Webb (D-VA)

Representatives:

Harold Rogers (R-KY, 5th District)

Zach Wamp (R-TN, 3rd District)

Rick Boucher (D-VA, 9th District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not “qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions.”



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Maryland's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Assateague Island National Seashore

Assateague Island is a barrier island along the Atlantic Coast with sandy beaches, salt marshes, maritime forests and coastal bays. The island landscape is constantly changing and shifting under the combined forces of ocean currents, strong winds, and storm events. It is a vital stop along the Atlantic flyway for thousands of birds and has been designated a World Biosphere Reserve by the United Nations.

Despite its close proximity to major metropolitan centers, Assateague Island National Seashore has 440 acres with Wilderness characteristics and another 4,760 acres that are potential Wilderness. Currently in Maryland, there is no designated Wilderness; Assateague Island National Seashore would be the first.

The NPS manages 39,000 acres of Assateague Island National Seashore; an additional 14,000 adjacent acres are managed by USFWS as Chincoteague National Wildlife Refuge.



Assateague Island National Seashore is home to wild horses descended from the domesticated horses of early settlers. It is one of few places in the United States where visitors can observe wild horses.



Salt Marsh at Assateague Island National Seashore.

Number of visitors (2007):

2,110,918

Total acres:

39,727

Acres of eligible wilderness:

440

Acres of potential* wilderness:

4,760

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

5,200

Number of NPS units in Maryland:

23

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 1

Senators:

Benjamin Cardin (D-MD)

Barbara Mikulski (D-MD)

Representatives:

Frank Kratovil (D-1st District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not “qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions.”



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Michigan's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore

The Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is along the eastern shore of Lake Michigan. Although the Lakeshore is long and narrow, it still has excellent representations of several northern hardwood and conifer forest types, abandoned farm site meadows, wetlands, lakes, streams, bogs and glacially caused landforms. These landforms include the feature for which the Lakeshore was named, the immense sand dunes (some over 200 feet tall), high bluffs, and dune plateaus that provide spectacular vistas of Lake Michigan.

The Lakeshore is home to many plants and animals, including the endangered piping plover shorebird and the pitcher's thistle plant.



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Lakeshore is home to the highest concentration the endangered piping plovers. In 20 years of active management, the number of breeding pairs has increased from 17 in 1986 to 59 in 2005.



Sleeping Bear Dunes National Seashore.

Number of visitors (2007):

1,134,314

Total acres:

71,291

Acres of eligible wilderness:

7,128

Acres of potential* wilderness:

23,775

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

30,903

Number of NPS units in Michigan:

5

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 1

Senators:

Carl Levin (D-MI)

Debbie Stabenow (D-MI)

Representatives:

Dave Camp (R-4th District)

Peter Hoekstra (R-2nd District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Minnesota's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Voyageurs National Park

Voyageurs National Park is the only National Park in Minnesota and is located along the Canadian border. Unlike most Parks where either vehicle or foot is the primary mode of travel, Voyageurs National Park is primarily accessible with watercraft—the park is a mosaic of land and water. In the winter, the many lakes in the park freeze over and become travelways for cross country skiers, snowshoers, snowmobilers, and wildlife. A popular winter activity is following wildlife tracks, including wolf tracks, in the snow.

The area is comprised of a variety of ecological systems, including fire-dependent forests, hardwood forests, peatlands, fens, marshes, rocky outcrops and lakeshore environments.

The glacial history of the park left behind more than lakes, wetlands, and rocky outcrops. It also exposed rocks over two billion years old; these rocks are older than the rocks exposed at the bottom of the Grand Canyon.



Voyageurs National Park is one of few parks in the lower 48 states where wolves can be found.



Showy ladyslippers, the Minnesota State Flower, are common in Voyageurs National Park.

Number of visitors (2007):

220,650

Total acres:

218,200

Acres of eligible wilderness:

124,994

Acres of potential* wilderness:

2,442

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

127,436

Number of NPS units in Minnesota:

4

Number of units with eligible or potential
wilderness: 1

Senators:

Amy Klobuchar (D-MN)

Yet to be determined

Representatives:

James Oberstar (D-8th District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not “qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions.”



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Montana's Eligible and Potential Wilderness

Glacier National Park is the 11th most visited National Park in the country and even though it's mountains, lakes and glaciers have inspired millions of visitors, none of it is designated Wilderness. Over 90% of the park contains the necessary Wilderness characteristics to be designated Wilderness. Its diverse habitats are home to wildlife rarely found in the lower 48 states, including grizzly bear, wolverine, gray wolf and lynx. There are five endangered or threatened animal species and 30 plant species endemic to the region found in the park.

Due to climate change, scientists predict that by 2030 there may not be any glaciers left in Glacier National Park.

Bighorn Canyon NRA is primarily in Montana but also includes land in Wyoming. It offers a diverse landscape of forest, mountains, upland prairie, deep canyons, broad valleys, lakes and wetlands. It is home to its namesake, bighorn sheep, and to wild horses.



Lake McDonald in Glacier National Park

Acres of eligible wilderness:
935,658
Acres of potential* wilderness:
3,360
Acres of existing wilderness:
None
Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:
939,018
Number of NPS units in Montana:
7
Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 3 (Yellowstone NP is included in Wyoming's brief)

Senators:
Max Baucus (D-MT)
Jon Tester (D-MT)
Representative:
Dennis Rehberg (R-MT)
Senators John Barrasso (R-WY) and Mike Enzi (R-WY) and Rep. Cynthia Lummis (R-WY) also represent Bighorn Canyon NRA.



Bighorn Canyon National Recreation Area

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."

Park Service Unit	Number of Visitors, 2007	Acreage of Unit	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Acres of Potential* Wilderness	Existing Acres of Wilderness	Total Eligible, Potential* and Existing Wilderness Acres
Bighorn Canyon NRA	213,063	120,296	8,108	-	-	8,108
Glacier National Park	2,083,329	1,013,322	927,550	3,360	-	930,910
Total: 2 Units	2,296,392	1,133,618	935,658	3,360	-	939,018



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

North Carolina's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Cape Lookout National Seashore

Cape Lookout National Seashore includes some of the barrier islands that make up North Carolina's Outer Banks. The Seashore is a 56 mile long stretch of barrier islands, consisting mostly of wide, bare beaches with low dunes covered by scattered grasses, flat grasslands bordered by dense vegetation, and large expanses of salt marsh alongside the sound. Wind, waves, and currents are continually at work reshaping these low-lying islands. There are no roads to the Seashore—it is only accessible by ferry.

Four species of sea turtle visit the Seashore, including the endangered loggerhead sea turtle which nests on the sandy beaches of the Seashore. Other endangered species that can be found on the Seashore include the piping plover shorebird and seabeach amaranth plant.



The Cape Lookout Lighthouse at Cape Lookout National Seashore

Number of visitors (2007):

860,602

Total acres:

28,243

Acres of eligible wilderness:

2,990

Acres of potential* wilderness:

2

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

2,992

Number of NPS units in North Carolina:

8

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 2 (Great Smoky Mountains NP is included in a separate brief)

Senators:

Richard Burr (R)

Kay Hagan (D)

Representative:

Walter Jones (R-3rd District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not “qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions.”



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

New Mexico's Potential and Eligible Wilderness El Malpais National Monument

El Malpais is a volcanic area with lava flows, cinder cones, pressure ridges and complex lava tubes that dominate the landscape. Some lava flows within the Monument are only 800 years old.

Much of the area appears devoid of life, but the high desert environment is home to a diversity of animals and plants. Prehistoric ruins, ancient cairns, rock structures, and homesteads still exist across the monument.

The Continental Divide National Scenic Trail passes through the northern part of the Monument.

El Malpais National Monument is surrounded by the 263,000 acre El Malpais National Conservation Area, managed by the Bureau of Land Management. This area includes the West Malpais and Cebolla Wildernesses, which totals almost 100,000 acres.

Senators:

Jeff Bingaman (D-NM)

Tom Udall (D-NM)

Representative:

Harry Teague (D-2nd District)



One of the many lava tubes found in El Malpais National Monument.



El Malpais National Monument. Photo courtesy of Bryce Chackerian.

Number of visitors (2007):

110,639

Total acres:

114,277

Acres of eligible wilderness:

84,886

Acres of potential* wilderness:

11,161

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:

96,047

Number of NPS units in New Mexico:

13

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 1

* Potential wilderness areas do not “qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions.”



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Oregon's Eligible Wilderness in Crater Lake National Park

Crater Lake National Park was the 6th National Park and is the only National Park in Oregon. It is located at the crest of the Cascade Mountains in southern Oregon. Even though there is no designated Wilderness within the park, it borders both the Mt. Thielsen and Sky Lakes Wildernesses.

Crater Lake lies inside a caldera, or volcanic basin, created when the 12,000 foot high Mount Mazama collapsed 7,700 years ago following a large eruption.

Winter snow, averaging 533 inches per year, supplies the lake with water. There are no inlets or outlets to the lake. Crater Lake, at 1,943 feet (592 meters) deep, is the seventh deepest lake in the world and the deepest in the United States. Its fresh water is some of the clearest found anywhere in the world.

The park is home to three threatened species, including the northern spotted owl.

Senators:

Jeff Merkley (D)
Ron Wyden (D)

Representative:

Greg Walden (R-2nd District)



Wizard Island in Crater Lake National Park

Number of visitors (2007):

468,958

Total acres:

183,224

Acres of eligible wilderness:

127,058

Acres of existing wilderness:

None

Number of NPS units in Oregon:

6

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 1



Panoramic view of Crater Lake



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Tennessee and North Carolina's Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Great Smoky Mountains National Park is the most popular National Park in the country with over 9.3 million visitors. However, none of the half million acres in the park are designated as Wilderness, even though the park contains the largest block of deciduous, temperate, old-growth forest remaining in North America. The United Nations recognized the park as an International Biosphere Reserve.

The Great Smoky Mountains are among the oldest mountains in the world, formed perhaps 200-300 million years ago. The park and these mountains are rich in biological diversity. No other area of equal size in a temperate climate can match the park's diversity of plants, animals, and invertebrates. There are 30 salamander species in five families, making this one of the most diverse areas on earth for this order. There are over 100 native tree species found in the park, more than any other park in the United States. The Appalachian Highlands Science and Learning Center supports science research in the park and making the research accessible to the visiting public by including the community in research projects.



Elk were native to the southern Appalachians but were extirpated in the early 1800s. In 2001, NPS began a reintroduction program in Great Smoky Mountain National Park and the herd is now up to 95 animals.



Sunset over Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Number of visitors (2007):
9,372,253

Total acres:
522,052

Acres of eligible wilderness:
390,500 (however, the 1982 General Management Plan identified 464,544 acres as proposed wilderness)

Acres of potential* wilderness:
400

Acres of existing wilderness:
None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:
390,900

Number of NPS units in Tennessee:
7

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 2 (Cumberland Gap NHP is included in a separate brief)

Senators:

Lamar Alexander (R-TN), Bob Corker (R-TN)
Richard Burr (R-NC), Kay Hagan (D-NC)

Representatives:

Phil Roe (R - TN, 1st District)
John Duncan (R-TN, 2nd District)
Heath Shuler (D-NC, 11th District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Texas' Eligible and Potential Wilderness in Big Bend National Park

Big Bend National Park, known for its river canyons, desert landscapes, and rugged mountains, has no designated Wilderness. The park's southern boundary, the Rio Grande River, is the border with Mexico, which has protected the lands that border Big Bend.

Big Bend has more species of bats (22) than any other national park. One of these, the Mexican long-nosed bat, is an endangered bat species. It is one of five endangered animal and plant species found in the park.

In addition to more bats species than any other park, there are more types of birds, cacti, and tropical butterflies in Big Bend than any other national park in the United States. The park is the northernmost range of many tropical plants and animals, and the southernmost range for many northern species. In addition, ranges of typically eastern and typically western species of plants and animals come together or overlap here.



Big Bend National Park



One of many river canyons in Big Bend National Park

Number of visitors (2007):	364,856
Total acres:	801,163
Acres of eligible wilderness:	538,250
Acres of potential* wilderness:	44,750
Acres of existing wilderness:	None
Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:	583,000
Number of NPS units in Texas:	12
Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness:	1
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Senators:	John Cornyn (R) Kay Bailey Hutchinson (R)
Representative:	Ciro Rodriguez (D, 23rd District)

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Utah's Eligible and Potential Wilderness

Utah's National Parks are famous for their stunning red rocks, amazing arches and canyons, and inspiring desert landscapes. However, there are no NPS lands in Utah designated as Wilderness.

Millions of visitors come to Utah's National Parks, Monuments and Recreation Areas. Glen Canyon NRA attracts almost 2 million visitors per year alone. Total visitation of the six parks with eligible or potential Wilderness is almost 5.5 million.

Most visitors come to these parks for the geologic wonders and scenery, but a large diversity in animals and plants make these parks their home. At least eight species of plants and animals listed as threatened or endangered spend part of their life within at least one of these parks.

Senators:

- Robert Bennett (R-UT)
- Orrin Hatch (R-UT)
- Jon Kyl (R-AZ): Glen Canyon NRA
- John McCain (R-AZ): Glen Canyon NRA

Representatives:

- James Matheson (D-UT, 2nd District)
- Ann Kirkpatrick (D-AZ, 1st District): Glen Canyon NRA



Bryce Canyon National Park

- Acres of eligible wilderness: 1,116,007
- Acres of potential* wilderness: 79,776
- Acres of existing wilderness: None
- Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness: 1,195,783
- Number of NPS units in Utah: 13
- Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 6 (Dinosaur National Monument is included in the Colorado brief)

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."

Park Service Unit	Number of Visitors, 2007	Acreage of Unit	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Acres of Potential* Wilderness	Existing Acres of Wilderness	Total Eligible, Potential* and Existing Wilderness Acres
Arches National Park	860,181	76,679	61,547	8461	-	70,008
Bryce Canyon National Park	1,012,563	35,835	20,810	-	-	20,810
Canyonlands National Park	417,560	337,598	260,150	18,270	-	278,420
Capitol Reef National Park	554,907	241,904	179,815	4,050	-	183,865
Cedar Breaks NM	514,871	6,155	4,830	-	-	4,830
Glen Canyon NRA	1,894,114	1,254,117	588,855	48,995	-	637,850
Total: 6 Units	5,254,196	1,953,288	1,116,007	79,776	-	1,195,783



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

Wyoming's Eligible and Potential Wilderness

Wyoming is home to the 4th and 8th most visited National Parks in the country, Yellowstone and Grand Teton National Parks. Yellowstone was the first park to be established, and is arguably the most famous National Park. Yet none of the 2.2 million eligible or potential acres within the parks has been designated Wilderness. There are already over 2 million acres of National Forest lands designated as Wilderness surrounding these parks, including the Absaroka-Beartooth, Jedediah Smith, and Teton Wildernesses.

These parks are part of the Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem, which is considered one of the few remaining, nearly intact, temperate ecosystems on earth. Yellowstone is home to the largest concentration of mammals in the lower 48 states and both parks are home to grizzly bears and wolves; few other parks in the lower 48 states have these large predators. Yellowstone is the only place in the lower 48 states where a population of wild bison has persisted since prehistoric times.

The area is famous for its geology and geothermal activity. Yellowstone contains approximately half of the world's hydrothermal features, the most famous of which is Old Faithful.

Senators:

John Barrasso (R-WY)
Mike Enzi (R-WY)

Representative:

Cynthia Lummis (R-WY)



The Teton Range of Grand Teton National Park

Acres of eligible wilderness:
2,168,401

Acres of potential* wilderness:
20,320

Acres of existing wilderness:
None

Total acres of eligible and potential wilderness:
2,188,721

Number of NPS units in Wyoming:
7

Number of units with eligible or potential wilderness: 3 (Bighorn Canyon NRA is included in Montana's brief)

Yellowstone National Park crosses into both Montana and Idaho. See those briefings for their Congressional delegations.

* Potential wilderness areas do not "qualify for immediate designation due to temporary nonconforming or incompatible conditions."

Park Service Unit	Number of Visitors, 2007	Acreage of Unit	Acres Eligible for Wilderness	Acres of Potential* Wilderness	Existing Acres of Wilderness	Total Eligible, Potential* and Existing Wilderness Acres
Grand Teton National Park	2,588,574	309,995	135,680	20,320	-	156,000
Yellowstone National Park	3,151,343	2,219,791	2,032,721	-	-	2,032,721
Total: 2 Units	5,739,917	2,529,786	2,168,401	20,320	-	2,188,721

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



Garry Oye, Chief
Wilderness Stewardship Division

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