What is Wilderness?

On September 3, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Wilderness Act into law. This established the National Wilderness Preservation System and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of federal land for the use and benefit of the American people. Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America’s support for Wilderness, Congress has added more than 100 million acres to this system. The Wilderness Act defines Wilderness as areas where “the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man,” with untrammeled meaning left wild and free from human control or manipulation.

Wilderness designation provides the greatest level of permanent protection for Wilderness values such as adventure, solitude, clean air and water, scenery, wildlife, and scientific understanding of how the natural world works when left alone. Wilderness areas are found in National Parks, National Forests, National Wildlife Refuges, and National Conservation Lands.

Be a Part of the Celebration!

We invite you to be an active part of the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act by joining your community in celebrating your local Wilderness or natural area or by participating in the National Wilderness Conference.

Those organizations, companies, or individuals interested in sponsoring a portion of the national planning efforts should contact:

Lee Lambert, Executive Director Society for Wilderness Stewardship llambert@wildernessstewardship.org 303.670.1642

Get Your Wilderness50!

Shop our CafePress site on wilderness50th.org to have the official 50th anniversary logo printed on everything from shirts to coffee cups. A small percentage of the purchase price goes to support 50th anniversary educational events and programs.

Honoring 50 Years of Preservation, Use, and Enjoyment www.wilderness50th.org
A Local, National Celebration

In 2014, Americans throughout the nation will celebrate “50 Years of Wilderness” — the golden anniversary of the passage of the Wilderness Act of 1964 and the creation of our national Wilderness system. A national team, called Wilderness50, has been organized to plan educational events, projects, programs, and products to raise awareness of Wilderness during the 50th anniversary year. National events and projects include a high-powered media campaign, commemorative printed products, a series of teacher workshops, a national photography contest and photography exhibition, a Washington, D.C. Wilderness week, and a national conference. Locally, communities nationwide will collectively host hundreds of different events, each unique to its community and exemplifying the ways in which community residents value Wilderness.

Wilderness50th.org

The official 50th anniversary website serves as the clearinghouse for information about events celebrating the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act. It provides an interactive map and growing listing of all local, regional, and national 50th anniversary events that are occurring in communities across America.

The website provides access to resources for individuals or community groups interested in hosting or participating in 50th anniversary events through an event planning toolbox: www.wilderness50th.org/toolbox. It also features current stories related to Wilderness, social media connections, and a newsletter signup.

National Wilderness Conference

As the event marking the culmination of the 50th anniversary year, the October 15–19, 2014 National Wilderness Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico, will be a multi-day event including interactive and non-traditional presentations, panel discussions, exhibits, field trips, and pre-conference training opportunities, ending with the public Wilderness Diversity Festival.

Wilderness Forever @ Smithsonian

Beginning in the fall of 2014, millions of visitors to the National Museum of Natural History in Washington, D.C., will experience the professionally juried Wilderness Forever photography exhibition commemorating the establishment of the Wilderness system and bringing together the visions of ordinary Americans depicting the beauty and importance of these special places.

Events in Your Community

The true power of the 50th anniversary lies in the hundreds of local celebrations taking place across America during the entire 2014 year. From symbolic Wilderness Walk marches to stewardship projects, local community events embody the diverse expressions of how different communities value Wilderness.

The American Legacy of Wilderness