



New Mexico Wilderness Alliance

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What is Wilderness and the Wilderness Act?

- The Wilderness Act of 1964 created America's National Wilderness Preservation System and gave Congress the authority to designate tracts of public land as Wilderness areas, "for preservation and protection in their natural condition." The Wilderness Act states that these lands "shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."
- The Wilderness Act defines wilderness stating that "A 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 its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."
- Wilderness areas can be designated by Congress on America's public lands – land that is already set aside as National Forests, lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management, National Parks, or National Wildlife Refuges. Wilderness areas, like other public lands, belong to all Americans.

Wilderness in New Mexico

- Only 2.1 percent of the land in New Mexico is protected as Wilderness – the second *lowest* of any western state.
- There are only three wilderness areas in New Mexico found on land managed by the Bureau of Land Management – amounting to less than one-tenth of the wilderness currently designated in the state.