

## What is “Wilderness”?



Red Mountain Wilderness Area

Wilderness is a legal designation designed to provide permanent long-term protection and conservation of Federal public lands. Wilderness is defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 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...** Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has

outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.” Once an area is designated wilderness, it is the responsibility of the managing agency to prevent impairment of the area’s wild character.



### What uses occur in BLM-managed wilderness?



Cottonwood Wilderness Area

The uses of wilderness include protection of air and watersheds; maintenance of soil and water quality, ecological stability, plant and animal gene pools, protection of archaeological and historical sites, habitat for wildlife; and livestock grazing. Wilderness provides opportunities for outdoor recreation including hunting, fishing, photography, hiking, horseback riding, guiding and outfitting, scientific study of biological diversity, educational programs, investigating archeology and camping. Wilderness also provides for the exercise of valid existing rights such as water rights, mining claims, mineral leases, and rights-of-way these are controversial issues and I would just delete them.

### Did the new Wilderness Designations Close Roads?

The new wilderness areas include very rugged, mountainous terrain and steep-sided canyons that are generally inaccessible by vehicle and have no roads. Within the 129,300 acres of newly-designated wilderness, less than 10 miles of roads were closed when the 14 new wilderness areas were designated in 2009. Over 1,200 miles of roads on public lands in Washington County remain open to motorized use.

**Recreation** - Wilderness Areas support a wide variety of recreation uses that are consistent with protection of wilderness characteristics. Recreational uses in wilderness include activities such as preservation of opportunities for solitude, hunting, fishing, hiking, horseback riding, backpacking, camping, nature study, photography, and climbing. Bicycles and other forms of mechanical transport are not allowed in Wilderness Areas, since they are prohibited by the Wilderness Act.

Read more at [Bureau of Land Management Wilderness FAQs](#)



Right Fork of North Creek