



## America's Public Lands – These Lands Are Your Lands

America's federal public lands -- owned equally by all Americans -- cover almost a million square miles, or over 618 million acres, more than 25 percent of the U.S. land base.\* About one-sixth of the total has been given the highest form of conservation protection: inclusion by Congress in the National Wilderness Preservation System. America has pioneered the protection of lands and wildlife, inspired by the vision of passing our magnificent natural heritage to future generations. Unfortunately this natural heritage is frequently under attack by those who favor the commercial exploitation of commodity resources on our public lands, or who propose giving away or selling our common natural heritage to the highest bidder.

There are four federal public land systems: the National Forest System, the National System of Public Lands managed by the Bureau of Land Management (also known as "BLM lands"), the National Park System, and the National Wildlife Refuge System. All four land systems include some Wilderness. They are outlined below.

### National Forest System – United States Forest Service

Mission statement -- "Caring for the Land and Serving People."

- \* 193,000,000 acres
- \* 155 National Forest system units in 43 states
- \* 20 national grasslands (four million acres)
- \* 375,000 miles of roads (eight times the mileage of the interstate highway system)
- \* 130,087 miles of trails
- \* 58 million acres identified as "Inventoried Roadless Areas"
- \* Over 66 million Americans rely on National Forest System lands for their drinking water.
- \* Recreation visitors in 2010: 177,000,000
- \* USFS public information: [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

### National System of Public Lands -- Bureau of Land Management

Mission statement – "It is the mission of the Bureau of Land Management to sustain the health, diversity, and productivity of the public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations."

- \* 245,000,000 surface acres [also: 700,000,000 subsurface acres], mostly in 12 western states
- \* Recreation visitors in 2009 -- 58,000,000
- \* In 2000 some of the most pristine BLM lands were included within the National Landscape Conservation System, which now comprises 27 million acres of deserts, canyons, forests, rivers, cultural and archeological sites, and wild landscapes.
- \* BLM public information: [www.blm.gov](http://www.blm.gov)



## National Park System – National Park Service

Mission statement – “The mission of the U.S. National Park Service (NPS) is to conserve the scenery, the natural and historic objects, and the wildlife in United States' national parks, and to provide for the public's enjoyment of these features in a manner that will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

- \* 84,000,000 acres (57,000,000 acres of it in Alaska)
- \* 58 National Parks
- \* 397 units total, in every state and various territories
- \* Recreation visitors in 2010 -- 281,303,769
- \* NPS public information: [www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

## National Wildlife Refuge System – U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Mission statement – “The mission of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is working with others to conserve, protect, and enhance fish, wildlife, plants, and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people.”

- \* 96,000,000 acres (76.8 million acres of it in Alaska)\*\*
- \* 556 National Wildlife Refuges, in all states and various territories
- \* Recreation visitors in 2010 -- 46,000,000
- \* Endangered and threatened species on refuges: more than 280
- \* Refuge System public information: [www.fws.gov/refuges/](http://www.fws.gov/refuges/)

## National Wilderness Preservation System

- \* 109,512,959 acres (58 million acres of it in Alaska), within all four federal land systems
- \* About 5% of U.S. land base (less than 3% in the Lower 48)
- \* 757 Wilderness Areas
- \* National Forest System -- 36,155,817 acres of Wilderness
- \* BLM -- 8,752,349 acres of Wilderness
- \* National Park System -- 43,890,368 acres of Wilderness
- \* National Wildlife Refuge System -- 20,702,488 acres of Wilderness
- \* Wilderness public information: [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net)

More than 57 million people live within 25 miles of federal public lands. With the country's population expected to increase more than 40 percent by 2050, more and more people will seek out our federal public lands for recreation and renewal.

\* Figures do not include lands managed by the Department of Defense.

\*\* Figure does not include over 200 million acres of marine national monuments designated in 2008 by President George W. Bush in the Pacific Ocean for which the USFWS has management responsibilities.

For more information on Wilderness and our nation's public lands, contact:  
Dave Alberswerth, [dave\\_alberswerth@twc.org](mailto:dave_alberswerth@twc.org), (202) 429-2695  
The Wilderness Society, [www.wilderness.org](http://www.wilderness.org), (202) 833-2300

*“The mission of The Wilderness Society is to protect wilderness and inspire Americans to care for our wild places.”*

