

Limits of Acceptable Change: What is Wilderness?

As a visitor to the wilderness, you should be aware that you are entering a primitive environment. You will be faced with the challenge of being entirely self-sufficient for whatever time you elect to remain there. There will be no shelters, campgrounds, water spigots, restrooms, nor detailed trail signs. You will be traveling on foot or on horseback because no motorized vehicles are permitted in these areas. Before you enter the wilderness, ask yourself if you truly want a wilderness experience.

Feel free to explore and discover the natural attractions wilderness has to offer, but please tread lightly so that nature may endure and replenish. You will probably be able to locate and follow the more popular trails in the area, even though they are not marked, but you should know how to read a topographic map and use a compass.

Wilderness travel is a skill that must be learned and practiced. It is best to develop this skill by using less primitive trails in the national forest working up to a wilderness trip. Perhaps the most important part of your trip will be the time spent at home planning, provisioning, and practicing. The wilderness offers a rewarding experience to those who go fully prepared.

Leave No Trace.

As more people seek to escape the mechanized world and experience nature on its own terms, the wilderness is becoming more impacted from our visits. To ensure that future visitors can have the same high quality wilderness experience, each person must take responsibility to minimize the impact of their visit.

Some important things you can do:

- Carry out everything you bring in.
- Don't leave trash that may spoil another person's visit.
- Use a stove instead of building a fire.
- If a campfire is necessary, keep it small and tend to it at all times.
- Use small dead and down material for fires.
- Never cut or damage live trees.
- Bury human waste at least 200 feet from water sources.
- Refrain from taking rocks, wildflowers, antlers, and artifacts

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Protection of wilderness will never be gained simply by issuing a set of rules and regulations. It must come with love and understanding of the land. Protection of wilderness is a personal ethic. Some mark is left in the wilderness each time we visit, but each of us can make sure this mark is a small one.