



United States Department of Agriculture
Forest Service



PACIFIC SOUTHWEST REGION

Restoring, Enhancing and Sustaining Forests in California, Hawaii and the Pacific Islands

Sierra National Forest

Wilderness Areas

Sierra National Forest

The Sierra National Forest contains about 528,000 acres of congressionally designated wilderness. The California Wilderness Act of 1984 added almost 227,000 acres to the Sierra's existing wilderness system.

The Sierra's five wildernesses are the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, Kaiser and Monarch. More complete descriptions plus information on access, trails and permit requirements are contained in individual brochures, wilderness maps and on line at: www.fs.usda.gov/sierra

ANSEL ADAMS WILDERNESS

The California Wilderness Act nearly doubled the acreage of the former Minarets Wilderness and changed the name to Ansel Adams. This wilderness is located in both the Sierra and Inyo National Forests and covers about 228,500 (138,660 acres are in the Sierra National Forest).

Ansel Adams is characterized by spectacular alpine scenery with barren granite peaks, steep-walled gorges, and rock outcroppings. Elevations range from 3,500 feet to 13,157 feet, and there are several small glaciers on the north and northeast facing slopes of the highest peaks. There are also a number of fairly large lakes on the eastern slopes of the precipitous Ritter Range. The Ansel Adams Wilderness contains the headwaters of the North and Middle Forks of the San Joaquin River.

DINKEY LAKES WILDERNESS

The 30,000 acre Dinkey Lakes Wilderness was created by the California Wilderness Act of 1984. It lies on the west slope of the Sierra Nevada

southeast of Huntington Lake and northwest of Courtright Reservoir. It is located just west of the new portion of the John Muir Wilderness and is separated from the John Muir by the Dusy/Ershim

Off Highway Vehicle Route. Most of the Dinkey Lakes Wilderness is about 8,000 feet in elevation and Three Sisters Peak is the highest point at 10,610 feet. Vegetation is primarily lodgepole pine and there are many meadows and granite outcroppings. Sixteen lakes are clustered in the west central region of the Wilderness.

JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS

The John Muir Wilderness covers 584,000 acres in the Sierra and Inyo National Forests. It was increased by 81,000 acres in the California Wilderness Act. The John Muir extends along the crest of the Sierra Nevada from Mammoth Lakes southeastward for a distance of about 30 miles, then forks around the boundary of Kings Canyon National Park to the Crown Valley and Mt. Whitney regions. This is a land of snow-capped mountains with hundreds of lakes and streams and beautiful meadows. Elevations range from 4,000 feet to 14,496 feet at Mt. Whitney with many peaks above 12,000 feet. Lower elevation slopes are covered with stands of Jeffrey pine, incense cedar, white and red fir, and lodgepole pine. The higher elevations are barren granite with many glacially carved lakes.

KAISER WILDERNESS

The 22,700 acre Kaiser Wilderness is located immediately north of Huntington Lake, about 70 miles northeast of Fresno.



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Kaiser Ridge divides the Wilderness and provides a commanding view of the central Sierra Nevada. The southern half of the Wilderness is characterized by dense red fir and Jeffrey pine forests which extend up the gradual south slope of Kaiser Ridge. The top of the ridge is in the alpine zone. The descent from Kaiser Ridge into the northern part of the Wilderness is quite abrupt. This northern region is much more open than the south side and contains eighteen small lakes.

MONARCH WILDERNESS

The Monarch Wilderness was created by the California Wilderness Act. It extends across 45,000 acres in the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. The Sierra National Forest portion of the Wilderness (about 21,000 acres) is extremely rugged and difficult to traverse. Steep slopes extend up from the Middle and Main Forks of the Kings River. Elevations range from 2,400 feet to over 10,000 feet. The lower elevations are predominately chaparral-covered with pine stands near the tops of the higher peaks. Rock outcroppings are found throughout the Wilderness.

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