



**NATIONAL  
CONSERVATION  
LANDS**

# Wilderness Areas

## BLM's National Conservation Lands

### What is a Wilderness?

The Bureau of Land Management's National Conservation Lands comprise more than 27 million acres located primarily in the West; these lands are recognized for their spectacular ecological, cultural, historic, recreational, and scientific value. National Conservation Lands include approximately 8.7 million acres of Wilderness in 221 units containing some of the wildest and most remote lands in America.

These lands are part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, established by the Wilderness Act of 1964. The Act established long-term preservation and protection to areas on federal lands that were largely undeveloped, natural, and unconstrained by human activity, and which provided outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. Wilderness lands, mostly made up of areas over 5,000 acres, consist of rugged mountain ranges, broad valleys, and desert plains that include the surviving remnants of the vast natural landscape that once covered all of North America. Along with the BLM, Wilderness lands are managed by the U.S. Forest Service, National Park Service, and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service.



Paria Canyon-Vermilion Cliffs Wilderness, Arizona

### By the Numbers



Table Rock Wilderness, Oregon

State	# of	Acreage
Arizona	47	1,396,826
California	87	3,842,755
Colorado	5	205,814
Idaho	7	517,362
Montana	1	6,347
Nevada	45	2,055,709
New Mexico	5	170,163
Oregon	8	247,993
Utah	18	260,373
Washington	1	7,140
<b>TOTAL*</b>	<b>221</b>	<b>8,707,774</b>

\*Total does not double count the 3 units that are located in multiple states.

### BLM Wilderness Facts

- Wilderness accounts for 3% of the BLM's total acreage in the United States.
- BLM Wilderness provides ecological, economic, and social health benefits including habitat for wildlife, unique recreation opportunities, clean air and watersheds, soil stability, and protection of historic sites.
- All BLM Wilderness areas are open for non-motorized recreation, including hunting, fishing, horseback riding, hiking, rafting, and camping.
- Consistent with the Wilderness Act and designating legislation, livestock grazing continues in areas where it occurred prior to wilderness designation.
- The first BLM-managed Wilderness was the 6,347-acre Bear Trap Canyon unit of the Lee Metcalf Wilderness in Montana, designated in 1983.
- The BLM manages the largest number of desert Wilderness units, more than any of the four federal land management agencies.
- At 5 acres, the smallest BLM Wilderness is the Rocks and Islands Wilderness in California while the largest is Nevada's nearly 315,000-acre Black Rock Desert Wilderness.



Cache Creek Wilderness, California

[www.BLM.gov/NLCS](http://www.BLM.gov/NLCS)