



WILDERNESS WATCHER

The Quarterly Newsletter of Wilderness Watch

Volume 24 • Number 2 • Summer 2013

Isle Royale Wolves: Will We Resist the Temptation to Tinker?

By Kevin Proescholdt

Isle Royale Wilderness, the remote 132,018-acre island wilderness in Lake Superior, faces a new challenge to its wilderness character. A decline in wolf numbers and the population's genetic variability may soon lead the National Park Service (NPS) to this point as early as this fall: allow the wolves to die out naturally, or import new wolves. How the NPS decides this issue will say much about how much it values unmanipulated, untrammelled Wilderness.

Isle Royale National Park and Wilderness is actually an archipelago with one main island (45 miles long and nine miles wide) and a surrounding fleet of over 450 smaller islands. Native cultures have visited the island for 4,500 years and the Ojibwe called it "Minong," the good place. Much later, French visitors renamed the island to honor their king.



*Isle Royale Wilderness, Michigan
Photo: National Park Service*

Reserve. Isle Royale has no roads or motor vehicles, so access to the island is via boat or float plane, typically from either Michigan's Upper Peninsula or from Grand Portage, Minnesota. Though closest geographically to the Canadian Province of Ontario (14-15 miles), Isle Royale is part of Michigan.

At the end of the 19th century, neither wolves nor the moose they now prey on lived on Isle Royale. The predator-prey dynamic then revolved around woodland caribou and Canada lynx. That earlier wildlife dynamic helps show that species have appeared and disappeared on Isle Royale over time.

Moose arrived on Isle Royale in the early 20th century, probably by swimming from Ontario, and lived there for four or five decades before wolves first appeared. Wolves were first confirmed present on Isle Royale in 1951, though wolf tracks had been reported several years earlier. Wolves most likely crossed over on an ice bridge from the Ontario mainland during the winter. Beginning in 1959, researchers led by Durward Allen of Purdue University began studying the predator-prey relationship between wolves and moose, a world-renowned study that has continued until today, documenting the rises and falls of wolf and moose populations over time. The scientific knowledge gained from this study has brought immense new understanding about predator-prey relationships.

Isle Royale Wolves continued on page 3

In This Issue...

Isle Royale Wolves Conservation Director's Message	Page 1
In Congress	Page 2
In the Courts	Page 4
On the Watch	Page 6
...and More	

Isle Royale became a National Park in 1940 and, in 1976, Congress designated about 99 percent of the national park as the Isle Royale Wilderness. In 1980, Isle Royale was also designated an International Biosphere

message from the Conservation Director



Those of us working to protect Wilderness and keep it wild face many challenges today. We have a House of Representatives that is hostile to Wilderness. Good wilderness designation bills get blocked, bad bills that deliberately harm Wilderness or gut the National Wilderness Preservation System advance. The federal wilderness-management agencies sometimes make bad decisions that degrade Wilderness. Even some conservation organizations take positions and lead campaigns that threaten authentic Wilderness, either due to ignorance or political expediency. As you'll note from reading this newsletter, the list of challenges goes on and on.

Yet all of us who cherish truly wild and untrammelled Wilderness know that the struggle is well worth it. We know the values of wild unmanipulated landscapes apart and distinct from our modern civilization. These areas are alive and vibrant and undeveloped because we allow them to evolve as they may. We may have hiked through alpine meadows, paddled along wild waterways, wandered through slickrock canyons, or reveled in the evening howl of a wolf. We know that protecting Wilderness is worth it, worth the scorn of our opponents or the condescension of erstwhile colleagues. And so we hold true to protecting our great National Wilderness Preservation System under the provisions of the visionary 1964 Wilderness Act.

As part of our work, Wilderness Watch has developed a new tool to help track wilderness bills in the current Congress. It is a running tally of bills (currently more than 45), pointing out the bad bills and their flaws, along with the good bills. We periodically update it, and we encourage you to check it out on our website at www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Wilderness_Legislation_113th_Congress.pdf

Wilderness Watch relies heavily on you, our members, supporters, and donors. Many of you serve as our eyes and ears on the ground, alerting us to problems, urging us to take a look at this management plan or that proposal, asking us to fight one bad bill or another. You are also incredibly generous, providing the bulk of the funds we need since, as an activist organization, many foundations shy away from us to instead fund uncontroversial groups, some of which collaborate with the very interests that undermine Wilderness. We are very grateful for all of your backing.

With your unwavering support, we'll continue to fight to protect the National Wilderness Preservation System as the wild untrammelled lands that future generations of Americans deserve to know and treasure themselves. It is a great vision we pursue, and one well worth the struggle. Thanks for helping us in this noble quest! 🐾

—Kevin Proescholdt



The Wilderness Watcher is the quarterly newsletter of Wilderness Watch, America's leading conservation organization dedicated solely to protecting the lands and waters in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

Board of Directors

Louise Lasley, WY *President*
Gary Macfarlane, ID *Vice-Pres.*
Joe Fontaine, CA *Secretary and Treasurer*
Janine Blaeloch, WA
Fran Mauer, AK
Bob Oset, MT
Howie Wolke, MT
Jerome Walker, GA

Senior Advisor

Stewart M. Brandborg

Executive Director

George Nickas

Conservation Director

Kevin Proescholdt

Membership & Development

Jeff Smith

Communications & Outreach

Dawn Serra

Advisory Council

Magalen Bryant
Dr. Derek Craighead
Dr. M. Rupert Cutler
Dr. Michael Frome
Dr. Roderick Nash

Wilderness Watch

P.O. Box 9175
Missoula, MT 59807
Phone: (406) 542-2048
www.wildernesswatch.org
wild@wildernesswatch.org

But the wolves of Isle Royale today face a number of problems. They have declined in number to one pack of under 10 individuals. No new wolf pups were apparently born this year, and the genetic variability of the remaining wolf population has flattened over the decades due to inbreeding. The wolves on Isle Royale could die out.

This decline is not unexpected. One of the basic principles of island biogeography tells us that species go extinct at a far higher rate on islands than on the mainland. Lots of species have most likely disappeared over the millennia on Isle Royale, and this is part of the evolution of the island. Isle Royale isn't unique in this regard; rather, it's part of being a wilderness island.

The NPS will soon decide what, if anything, it will do about the wolf population of Isle Royale. Rolf Peterson, the principal Isle Royale wolf biologist, advocated in a May *New York Times* commentary that the NPS should transplant new wolves from the mainland to save the population and provide new genetic variability. But this proposal raises a host of questions about the appropriateness of this human manipulation of the wildlife in this National Park and Wilderness.

While Wilderness Watch appreciates the scientific knowledge gained from over 50 years of studying wolves and moose on Isle Royale, we firmly believe that humans should resist the temptation to transplant more wolves to Isle Royale for the following reasons:

1. Exaggerated Symbolism of the Isle Royale Wolves. Isle Royale has immense value and meaning beyond its well-publicized wolves. Isle Royale became a National Park before the wolves arrived, and the park and Wilderness will continue even without wolves. Even if the wolves die out, that dynamic would be part of the evolution of Isle Royale and Isle Royale itself will continue on.

2. Scientific Research Will Continue. Ecological studies on Isle Royale will continue to provide new scientific insights, whether the wolves survive or become extirpated. Regardless of the outcome of the wolf population, continuing research can shed new light on questions of genetic variability in the context of island biogeography. If wolves die out, how will the moose population respond? Will genetic variability in moose also flatten over time? Will the moose population revert to the boom-and-bust cycles of the 1920s to 1950, or will something else occur? Will wolves naturally re-colonize Isle Royale on their

own, even if the frequency of ice bridges has declined with recent warmer winters?

3. Slippery Slope of Manipulation. If humans start transplanting wolves to Isle Royale, we start on a slippery slope that may have no end. Additional wolves will almost certainly be needed on the island after the first installment, to "freshen up" the gene pool again. With a warming climate, Isle Royale may eventually lose its moose population, too. Will we then import moose to Isle Royale in perpetuity to keep the wolves fed? And what of the lynx and caribou that inhabited the island before the wolves and moose?

4. Wilderness. The 1964 Wilderness Act defines Wilderness as "untrammelled" or unmanipulated. This means that we allow Nature to call the shots, even if that might lead to extirpation of the wolves, either temporarily or permanently. This is the very essence of Wilderness,

that humans must treat Wilderness with humility and restraint. The current debate over the potential loss of wolves indicates the fairly short-sighted approach of most land management practices that are often based on human lifetimes, not millennia. Because Wilderness is forever, we need to look beyond the short timeframe of human lifetimes. We need to allow these natural processes to play out over much longer time spans, "to make it possible for those areas from the eternity of the past to exist on into the eternity of the future," as Wilderness Act author Howard Zahniser once eloquently described it.

Members can contact Isle Royale National Park now, even though no formal public comment period has yet opened. Include the following points:

1. Tell the NPS that you favor non-intervention with the Isle Royale wolves.
2. Urge the NPS to prepare an environmental impact statement (EIS) should it decide to pursue translocating wolves to the island.
3. Ask to be placed on the park's contact list for the formal comment period on the wolf issue.

Isle Royale National Park
800 East Lakeshore Drive
Houghton, Michigan 49931-1896
ISRO_wildlife@nps.gov
(906) 482-0984 - phone



In Congress: Wilderness Under Siege Once More

Border Threats

The Senate recently passed the new immigration bill, S. 744. Officially called the “Border Security, Economic Opportunity, and Immigration Modernization Act,” the bill contains extensive problematic provisions and more than \$1.5 billion to build more border walls and increase border security measures along the U.S. border with Mexico. The bill also expands the authority of the Secretary of Homeland Security to waive any laws that he or she chooses. On the Senate floor the bill was further amended to create a massive militarization of the borders. Wilderness Watch supported amendments by Sen. Ron Wyden (D-OR) to protect conservation lands, but in the mad rush to pass the immigration bill all conservation measures have been thrown out the window. Wilderness Watch has urged Senators to remove the Secretary of Homeland Security’s authority to waive laws like the Wilderness Act to build fences, barriers, towers, roads, and other infrastructure along the borders. To make matters worse, Rep. Rob Bishop has reintroduced his terrible Border Bill from last year, now H.R. 2398. The bill would waive 15 federal laws, including the Wilderness Act, within 100 miles of all international borders, and open up all federal land in those zones to development, roads, and construction by the Department of Homeland Security.

Sportsmen’s Bill

In the House, Rep. Daniel Benishek (R-MI) has reintroduced a new version of his disastrous 2012 Sportsmen’s Heritage Act. This bill passed the full House of Representatives last year, and would have eviscerated the 1964 Wilderness Act and protections for every Wilderness in the nation. This year’s version, H.R. 1825, called the “Recreational Fishing and Hunting Heritage and Opportunities Act,” has slightly lessened the damage from last year but would still gut protections for every Wilderness in the U.S. The House Natural Resources Committee passed this bill on June 12th by a 28 to 15 vote.

Others

On a more positive note, several good wilderness designation bills without damaging special provisions passed the full Senate on June 19th, including bills to designate the Sleeping Bear Dunes Wilderness along Lake Michigan in Michigan, the Alpine Lakes Wilderness addition in Washington, and the Devil’s Staircase Wilderness in Oregon. Another bill to re-name Mount McKinley in Alaska as Denali (the name originally given it by Alaska Native Americans) has passed the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. To see Wilderness Watch’s chart of more than 40 wilderness bills in the current Congress, visit: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Wilderness_Legislation_113th_Congress.pdf 🐾

In the Courts

Court rules for helicopter, against Wilderness

Federal Judge Donald Molloy recently ruled the Forest Service (FS) could authorize a private irrigation company to use a helicopter to transport less than 700 pounds of materials for a minor repair to the Fred Burr High Lake Dam in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness in Montana. Wilderness Watch argued that the company should be required to haul in the materials with pack stock or by foot. The FS had rejected the pack stock alternative claiming it would require upgrading the final one-and-a-half-mile of trail to the lake, despite the fact irrigators and many recreationists routinely access the lake with stock. Wilderness Watch also suggested the materials could be carried on foot over the last mile and a half since the heaviest items would weigh less than 25 pounds. The FS refused to consider this option.

In his order, Molloy echoed the Forest Service argument that the use of a helicopter will have less impact than the use of pack stock, ignoring that motorized access is prohibited while pack stock use is not. Molloy’s ruling, like the decision of the FS, reflects a disturbing line of

reasoning that is creeping into many agency decisions; that a prohibited use like motor vehicles or aircraft is preferable to an allowable use, like pack stock, if the prohibited use will have “less impact.” Such flawed reasoning has led to significant increases in motorized use in the Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness and other Wildernesses in recent years. Wilderness Watch is appealing Molloy’s ruling to the Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals.

Fish stocking case goes to mediation

On July 17, Wilderness Watch executive director, George Nickas met in court-ordered mediation with officials of the California Dept. of Fish and Wildlife to discuss our lawsuit challenging the State of California’s program of stocking fish in naturally fishless Wilderness lakes. While the discussion didn’t resolve the case, it did prove fruitful and could lead to better protection for native biodiversity through reductions in the stocking program. A decision in the lawsuit will remain on hold pending further discussions. Joining WW at the mediation were our attorney, Pete Frost, and our co-plaintiff, Felice Pace. 🐾

In Memoriam

Wilderness Watch notes the passing of two important people to the history of Wilderness protection in America.

Fran Heinselman

Frances Brown Heinselman of Kenyon, Minnesota, died on June 5. She was a life-long wilderness supporter, a key leader in the struggle to pass the 1978 Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) Act through Congress, and a long-time member of Wilderness Watch. Fran was 90.

In 1942 at the age of 19, Fran married Miron L. “Bud” Heinselman. In 1966, Bud received an appointment with the U.S. Forest Service’s North Central Forest Experiment Station to study the unlogged “virgin” forests of the BWCAW. Fran often accompanied Bud as his unpaid research assistant. Together they visited every part of the canoe country and came to know it quite well.

But all was not well with the BWCAW. The Forest Service was allowing logging in the same virgin forests that Bud desperately raced to study. Copper-nickel mining threatened the area, as did motorboat and snowmobile use. In 1974, Bud and Fran decided that Bud should take early retirement from the Forest Service so both of them could throw themselves into the many efforts to save the BWCAW.



Fran and Bud Heinselman (center) celebrated passage of the BWCAW Act with Congressmen Bruce Vento (left) and Phillip Burton.

In May 1976, Bud and Fran helped found the Friends of the Boundary Waters Wilderness, a coalition dedicated to pushing new legislation through Congress to save the BWCAW as a Wilderness. Bud was elected Chair, and Fran was in the thick of things helping to organize the effort, creating and managing a mailing list and developing a new national campaign. Though Bud was often appropriately given much credit for chairing the Friends, Fran was always there, a calming and steadying influence doing the day-to-day tasks out of the spotlight.

In 1977, as the national campaign to save the Boundary Waters heated up, Bud and Fran moved to Washington, D.C., to coordinate the Friends’ national campaign. Their work paid off in 1978, when Congress finally passed the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act.

After the Act passed, life returned to normal for Fran and Bud. They continued taking canoe trips into the BWCAW and Quetico, including three-week trips in the fall. Both

of them continued their strong passion and commitment for the Boundary Waters and Wilderness Watch their whole lives.

Thanks, Fran! 🌿

Richard Costley

Richard “Dick” Costley died in June 2012 at the age of 100. Costley was a retired Forest Service (FS) professional whose first job in Wilderness began in 1934 following in the footsteps of Aldo Leopold in the Gila Wilderness (Costley later studied under Leopold at the Univ. of Wisconsin). After various stints that included the Teton Wilderness and Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Costley was appointed Director of Recreation, just weeks before Congress passed the Wilderness Act. He was immediately charged with implementing the new law and soon formed a task force that included Bill Worf (who later co-founded Wilderness Watch) to write the policies and regulations for implementing the Act.

In a 1976 speech recalling those efforts, Costley described how difficult it was for FS employees to come to terms with the Wilderness Act. “I now think our major hang-up was coping with this simple fact: many of



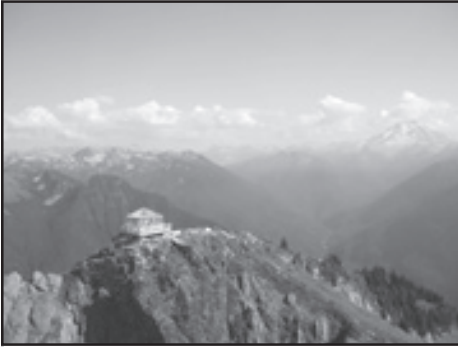
The task force formed by Dick Costley at work writing the first wilderness policies and regulations, October, 1964.

us—without ever saying so—probably started our task on the premise that we were drafting regulations and instructions on how to select, designate, and administer another kind of Recreation Area,” he said. Costley noted that it took weeks of debate and discussion before it became obvious that, “Congress had clearly identified Wilderness as a distinct and unique resource of land. That was not the same as a recreation area.” Elsewhere he described how each of the task force’s “practical” forest managers were forced to become more “pure” as they studied the Act and its legislative history, and gauged what would be required to preserve an enduring and unimpaired Wilderness system.

While unknown to many in the wilderness community today, Dick Costley played a critical role in setting the wilderness administration ship to sail after passage of the Wilderness Act. His leadership established a strong posture for the agency’s wilderness program in those early years. We were truly honored by his long-time membership and support for Wilderness Watch. 🌿

On the Watch

Green Mountain Lookout Removal--Deja Vu All Over Again*



In comments submitted in June Wilderness Watch emphasized that the Forest Service (FS) must abide by the Wilderness Act in removing the illegal Green Mountain Lookout replica in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington. The FS, using motorized means including helicopter flights, rebuilt this lookout in 2009. Wilderness Watch successfully sued. In 2012, the court found that the new building and the use of motorized equipment violated the Wilderness Act and that the structure needed to be removed. The judge recognized it had not been used for fire detection for decades and has no wilderness purpose.

Now the FS seems to think two wrongs make a right and proposed that helicopters be used to remove the lookout. We strongly oppose this unnecessary intrusion in the Wilderness. We suggested that doing the work by nonmotorized means is the only appropriate action. The FS recognizes that such an alternative is viable, and the agency included it in their project scoping letter. WW also reminded the agency that the original lookout was built without motorized equipment.

The plan to prepare a full environmental impact statement for this project is an extraordinary waste of time and money. Since the FS recognizes the project can be done without motorized equipment, we suggested the agency pursue a non-motorized option and conduct whatever shorter environmental analysis is needed for that. This would bring administration of the Wilderness into compliance with the judge's order in a much more timely and less expensive manner.

The Forest Service wants to relocate the lookout to Circle Peak, which sits in a roadless area and would be visible from many parts of the Wilderness. Wilderness Watch suggested the structure be donated to a museum or rebuilt at a nearby ranger station or local community where more people could enjoy it.

The Forest Service should use this opportunity to prove it can still properly administer wilderness using traditional skills and nonmotorized means. WW intends to make sure the agency is up to the challenge. 🌀

*Apologies to Yogi Berra

WW Urges BLM to Strengthen Owyhee Wilderness Plan



Photo: John McCarthy

Wilderness Watch recently urged the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) to strengthen its proposed Owyhee and Bruneau-Jarbridge Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River Management Plan. The six separate Owyhee wildernesses consist of nearly 520,000 acres in 12 to 14 units separated by unimproved roads. The plan also includes several wild and scenic rivers in southwestern Idaho's remarkable Owyhee canyon country. The BLM only considered two options, minimal management and the proposed action.

The BLM's proposed option has significant flaws—it approves prohibited actions like motorized use, it promotes extensive habitat changes ostensibly and ironically to improve naturalness, it fails to adequately deal with the impacts of livestock grazing, and it authorizes a whole host of commercial enterprises without analysis of whether they are necessary or proper.

Wilderness Watch supports the minimal management alternative with some additional protective measures to preserve the areas' wilderness character. We suggested setting use limits and monitoring campsites, which can show some of the most easily recognized impacts from recreation use. We also told BLM it needs to recognize and address the impacts caused by livestock grazing. Over the broad Owyhee region, the amount of forage allocated to livestock is many times that of wildlife. This has caused serious impacts in the Wildernesses of the remarkable Owyhee canyon country. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Owyhee.pdf 🌀

A Bad Deal for the Izembek Wilderness



Photo: Christine Sowl (USFWS)

In the last *Watcher*, we reported that former Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar had not yet released a final Record of Decision on a proposed land exchange and 20-mile road through the Izembek Wilderness in Alaska. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service rejected the plan in March, but Wilderness Watch is disappointed to report that U.S. Sen. Lisa Murkowski (R-AK) struck a deal with former Sec. Salazar later in March, requiring the FWS to conduct additional reviews. (In return for the favor, the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee voted to advance Sally Jewell's nomination for Sec. of Interior.) Further controversy surrounds the issue as it has been speculated that the road's real purpose is to move seafood for commercial export, not just for medical evacuations as is commonly stated. We'll keep you posted. 🐾

Towering Wilderness Fight

Wilderness Watch and Public Employees for Environmental Responsibility (PEER) have been working for more than a decade to convince the National Park Service (NPS) to remove AT&T's microwave tower on Mormon Peak in Death Valley National Park in California. Mormon Peak is located within the 3.1 million-acre Death Valley Wilderness. We have argued that the tower violates the Wilderness Act because it's a commercial enterprise and a structure. Our efforts are beginning to pay off. A letter from NPS Regional Director Christine Lehnertz announced the agency will undertake an analysis and environmental review this year to examine options for the tower, including relocating it outside of Death Valley Wilderness. We'll keep you posted when the NPS review is open for public comment. Read WW/PEER's letter: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Mormon_Peak_Wilderness_Violation_ltr_2_19_13.pdf 🐾

Lake Clark Wilderness Threatened by National Park Service Proposal



Photo courtesy of wilderness.net

Wilderness Watch, led by its Alaska Chapter, is voicing concerns about the National Park Service's (NPS) Preferred Alternative Newsletter for Lake Clark National Park and Preserve in Alaska, which includes the 2.6 million-acre Lake Clark Wilderness. Lake Clark Wilderness includes rainforests along the Cook Inlet, and the Chigmit Mountains (known as Alaska's Alps), home to moose, brown and black bears, wolves, wolverines, red foxes, Dall sheep, and caribou. Our comments included the following:

- The proposed "backcountry" zones create a less-protected zone in Wilderness, a violation of both legal mandates and NPS policy;
- The NPS's proposal to place visitor facilities and potentially build or restore cabins in designated Wilderness destroys wilderness character and violates the Wilderness Act;
- The proposed "front country" zones will allow development in critical bear habitat. WW is recommending that front country be eliminated from the coastal sedge meadows and these areas be designated critical habitat subject to specific management plans with corresponding regulations to assure resource protection.
- The NPS needs to have a plan to restore wilderness character in areas impacted by visitor use.

The NPS proposal is in conflict with the purposes for which Lake Clark NP was established, with federal law, and with NPS policy. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Lake_Clark.pdf 🐾

WW Challenges Commercial Pack Stock Plan for Pasayten and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wildernesses*



Photo: Steve Boutcher

The Pasayten and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wildernesses in Washington form part of a million-acre Wilderness complex in the North Cascades. One of the wildest regions left in the lower 48 states, it has been identified as a key recovery area for grizzlies, wolverine, and other solitude-seeking species. Unfortunately, the Forest Service's (FS) administration of the Pasayten and Lake Chelan-Sawtooth Wildernesses has fallen short. Some commercial pack stock operators in particular have been allowed to cause excessive damage in the backcountry, to bring in too many stock, to retard natural restoration of past damage, and to exceed the level of impact allowed by forest plan standards. But the FS, in its recently approved commercial pack stock management plan, has opted to change the standards to allow much more damage to the backcountry, plus a substantial

increase in commercial use, both contrary to the rules of the Wilderness Act. Wilderness Watch has challenged the new management plan. Read our appeal: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Pasayten_Appeal.pdf 🌀

**After this piece was written, the Forest Supervisor withdrew her decision as a result of WW's appeal. The FS will likely release a draft supplemental EIS.*

Olympic Wilderness Plan Launched



Photo: George Wuerthner

The Olympic Wilderness in Washington is one of the lower 48's largest Wildernesses and could be one of the wildest if the National Park Service (NPS) chooses the right course in its upcoming wilderness stewardship plan. Its rugged nature makes cross-country travel challenging, requiring stamina and in some instances skills in traversing snow and ice fields. Wilderness Watch encouraged the NPS to take this unique opportunity to produce a plan that commits to fulfilling the letter, spirit, and intent of the Wilderness Act. While that may require a change from current operations in the Olympic Wilderness, the agency has the opportunity and duty (and one would hope, the vision) to come up with such a plan for this remarkable area.

In our scoping comments, we urged the NPS to remove the shelters and other buildings that are not necessary to manage the area as wilderness, or to allow the truly old structures (as opposed to the rebuilt structures) to naturally fade away. We also encouraged the Park Service to develop a range of alternatives that will protect wilderness character through careful monitoring, by allowing natural processes to prevail, by prohibiting motorized and mechanized use, and by only allowing proper outfitting and guiding use as well as visitor levels. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Olympic_Wilderness_SP.pdf 🌀

Nipping it in the Bud?

Wilderness Watch is recommending that the Forest Service refrain from using herbicides to control non-native invasive plants in the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in Minnesota. The agency has identified a total of 14.3 acres of invasive plants throughout the 1.1 million-acre Wilderness, meaning the infestations are still relatively small, but many of the identified species are not easily hand-pulled due to rhizome-like root structures. We oppose starting even limited herbicide use since such use would be a new manipulation or trammeling of the Wilderness that could be expanded in the future and continue indefinitely. We instead backed an alternative that calls for expanded use of manual treatments since that will better protect wilderness character. Read our letter: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_BWCAW_NNIP.pdf 🌀

WW Opposes Teton to Snake Fuels Management Project



Photo: Howie Wolke

Wilderness Watch is opposing a Forest Service (FS) fuels management project in the Palisades Wilderness Study Area (WSA) in Wyoming. The project has important implications for the Wilderness System since the legislation designating the Palisades WSA states the FS must protect the area's wilderness character, the same standard for Wilderness under the Wilderness Act. The FS proposes extensive manipulation using prescribed fire and mechanical fuels reduction. The agency could potentially turn the Palisades WSA into a heavily manipulated, managed forest. In our scoping comments, we let the agency know that the proposed manipulation would destroy the area's wilderness character, a violation of both the 1964 Wilderness Act and the 1984 Wyoming Wilderness Act, which created the Palisades WSA. The plan could involve motor vehicle use, which would also violate both laws. We also requested that the FS conduct additional environmental analyses. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Teton_to_Snake_scoping.pdf 🌿

Merced River Plan Fails to Protect Wilderness



Photo: Steve Dunleavy

Wilderness Watch has weighed in on the Merced Wild and Scenic River Draft Comprehensive Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement (DEIS) (California). We let the National Park Service (NPS) know that by keeping the High Sierra Camps, the preferred alternative fails the Wilderness Act (which prohibits structures), Park Service policy, the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, the California Wilderness Act of 1984, and the National Park Service Organic Act. We also raised concerns that the DEIS lacks important information on the impacts from existing trails and from commercial packstock operations, fails to consider measures to prevent packstock from spreading weeds, expands commercial uses in contrast with the Wilderness Act's intent to limit them, and defers management decisions until after problems

arise rather than proactively protecting Wilderness. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Merced_River.pdf 🌿

BWCAW Named Most Endangered



Photo: Kevin Proescholdt

This spring, American Rivers named the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness (BWCAW) in northeastern Minnesota to its list of the 10 Most Endangered Rivers in the nation. American Rivers specifically notes that the South Kawishiwi River is threatened by proposals to develop new copper-nickel mines. The copper-nickel ore is found in sulfide-bearing ore bodies which, when exposed to air and precipitation, form sulfuric acid. Acid mine drainage from the mines' waste rock would eventually drain into the South Kawishiwi River. This river flows out of the 1.1 million-acre BWCAW, past the area of intense mineral exploration, and back into the Wilderness at Fall Lake. Fall Lake flows into Basswood Lake on the international border between the BWCAW and Ontario's Quetico Provincial

Park, and then along the border via popular wilderness border lakes as Crooked Lake and Lac La Croix. For more information, see www.americanrivers.org/endangered-rivers/2013/boundarywaters/ 🌿

Re-Wilding the Everglades



Photo: Mark Kinzer

Wilderness Watch, along with seven other organizations (including the South Florida Wildlands Association), is recommending that the National Park Service (NPS) strengthen its proposed new General Management Plan (and Wilderness Stewardship Plan) for Everglades National Park in Florida. At 1.3 million acres in size, the iconic Marjory Stoneman Douglas Wilderness comprises 93 percent of the Park. Even though this is the largest Wilderness east of the Rockies, it is not well-protected.

Our comments focused on ways to protect and improve the area's wilderness character. One of our recommendations calls for making the famed 99-mile Wilderness Waterway a truly non-motorized wilderness route, whereas now it is open to motorized boats. We urged the NPS to limit airboats to designated routes in the East Everglades Wilderness addition and provide only non-motorized access in the Shark River Slough. We also asked NPS to exchange the right-of-way corridor (the East Everglades Power Line) owned by Florida Power and Light for land outside the Park. Read our comments: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/Comments_EvergladesNP_GMP_EIS_Wilderness_Study.pdf 🌿

Wilderness Watch Pushes to Fix Flaws in National Parks Wilderness Directive

Wilderness Watch, along with several other conservation groups, has sent a letter to National Park Service (NPS) Director Jon Jarvis, voicing concerns over a new NPS directive purportedly designed to protect national park Wilderness, but which does the opposite in some very important respects. The NPS is updating Director's Order #41 (DO 41) for consistency with its 2006 wilderness stewardship policy revisions. DO 41 deals with wilderness stewardship, including management of NPS recommended Wilderness. While this order is only a subset of wilderness stewardship policy, it allows some activities contrary to the Wilderness Act.

We are asking Director Jarvis to rescind DO 41 to remedy flaws that will otherwise lead to controversy and litigation. DO 41 inappropriately allows the placement of permanent fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness, and carves road corridors out of Wilderness for unpaved roads up to 100 feet (which fragments Wilderness by facilitating more construction along unpaved roads). It contains confusing direction on preserving cabins, shelters, and other "cultural resources," plus inappropriate language regarding Native American rights of access. Read our letter to Director Jarvis: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/NPS_DO41.pdf. Read our news release: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/NPS_DO41_Flaws.pdf 🌿

More Helicopters Proposed for Glacier Peak Wilderness

Wilderness Watch has voiced concerns with the Forest Service (FS) plan to authorize extensive helicopter use on two projects in the Glacier Peak Wilderness in Washington: the operation of USGS South Cascade Glacier Research Station and a maintenance project on Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail.

The FS is proposing to issue a 20-year permit for the station's continued operation. Past operations have included the use of aircraft, permanent structures, and permanent installations. It is unclear whether these activities have been subjected to NEPA requirements or reviewed for their consistency with the Wilderness Act. WW urged the FS to prepare an environmental assessment (EA) and to reduce the impact of the research activity on the Glacier Peak Wilderness.

We also let the FS know of our concerns regarding the plan to use helicopters to shuttle trail crews and tools to repair a section of the Pacific Crest National Scenic Trail. Our concerns include: the FS claim that crews would need to walk 25 miles, when the actual distance is about half that, using the Suiattle River Road (closed to the public) and pack stock; the agency's failure to explain why it can't use pack stock to transport tools and supplies; and the proposal to use a helicopter and power drill when viable wilderness-compatible alternatives exist. Read our letter on both projects: www.wildernesswatch.org/pdf/WW_Comments_Darrington_Scoping_6_2013.pdf 🌿

The Less Traveled Trail

By Jeff Smith



There was a fork in the trail a ways back and most wilderness organizations veered toward Washington, D.C., to play the inside game, pretending their lobbying would successfully compete with the gargantuan special interests on K Street.


Wilderness Watch never got that memo.

As our name suggests, we're more concerned with staying outside—in Wilderness itself. We took the less traveled trail. And to us, it's not a game. It's a place of the heart.

Don't get me wrong. We travel to D.C. when necessary, keep tabs on bills that will damage Wilderness, and testify in hearings. We also protect Wilderness through our detailed comments on specific proposals, through lawsuits contesting bad management decisions, and by joining with many organizations and individuals to make sure our elected officials feel a grassroots groundswell.

We have a clear vision that stretches back to the movement's founders and stays true to Wilderness the incontrovertible way the Wilderness Act defines it: self-willed land without motors, cell towers, helicopters, Homeland Security surveillance stations and drones, and heavy-handed management. This is the place where the phone doesn't work. You go there if you're prepared—with good boots and an existential awareness of the risks. One of our board members, Howie Wolke, reminds us it's called F-R-E-E-D-O-M.

Our vision also stretches forward to a more crowded and technologically suffocated world where the threats to Wilderness will increase. We believe the way to defend Wilderness in the future—as now—is being grounded in the wild and representing thousands of members who are also grounded, who know the stakes, and who are with us in this all-out effort.

Which is the long way of saying thank you for becoming a member and staying with us. 

LOVE THE WILDERNESS? Help Us Keep It Wild!
Yes! I would like to make a contribution and help defend Wilderness!

Here is an extra donation to help protect Wilderness!

\$250 \$100 \$50 \$30 \$ _____

I would like to become a member!

\$30 \$50 \$500 \$15 \$ _____
Regular Contributor Lifetime Living Lightly Other

My check or money order is enclosed.

Please charge my: Visa MasterCard

Card # _____

Exp. Date ___ / ___ / ___

Please send information about the **Wilderness Legacy Donor Program.**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State/Zip: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____
(to receive our monthly e-mail update)

Please make checks payable to: "Wilderness Watch"

Mail to:
P.O. Box 9175 Missoula, MT 59807



NON-PROFIT
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Missoula, MT
Permit No. 569

Wilderness Watch
P.O. Box 9175
Missoula, MT 59807
p: (406) 542-2048
www.wildernesswatch.org

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED



Printed on 100% recycled,
unbleached paper

On our Blog

We encourage you to regularly visit Wilderness Watch's blog. You'll find it on our home page. Our commentaries cover all things "Wilderness."

Here's an excerpt from a recent blog post:

Wilderness: What and Why **By Howie Wolke**

A few years ago, I led a group through the wilds of northern Alaska's Brooks Range during the early autumn caribou migration. I think that if I had fourteen lifetimes I'd never again experience anything quite so primeval, so simple and rudimentary, and so utterly and uncompromisingly wild. If beauty is in the eye of the beholder, this beheld my eye above all else. Maybe that trek—in one of the ultimate terrestrial wildernesses

remaining on Earth—is my personal yardstick, my personal quintessence of what constitutes real wilderness among a lifetime of wilderness experience. The tundra was a rainbow of autumn pelage. Fresh snow engulfed the peaks and periodically the valleys, too. Animals were everywhere, thousands of them, moving across valleys, through passes, over divides, atop ridges. Wolves chased caribou. A grizzly on a carcass temporarily blocked our route through a narrow pass. It was a week I'll never forget, a week of an ancient world that elsewhere is rapidly receding into the frightening nature-deficit technophilia of the twenty-first century.

Visit our website to link to our blog:
www.wildernesswatch.org 

Wilderness Watch's blog: www.wildernesswatch.wordpress.com