

APPENDIX H:

WILDERNESS INFORMATION AND EDUCATION STRATEGY

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WILDERNESS INFORMATION AND EDUCATION STRATEGY

Nearly 97% of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks is designated or managed as wilderness. To experience these parks is to encounter, directly or indirectly, one of the world's premiere wilderness areas. To work for these parks is to serve the missions of both the parks and the wilderness.

Information and education have long been recognized as some of the most effective tools available to meet these missions and support visitor experiences. In this document, the term *education* includes not only curriculum-based work with schools, but also other forms of information sharing done by these parks, such as interpretation, orientation, and outreach.

The parks' staff uses all these techniques to communicate about the many aspects of wilderness: its preservation, the experiences it offers, and its benefits to society. Recognizing that the word wilderness means many things to many people, the parks strive to teach by example and to learn from others. When possible, the parks work to adjust the level, complexity, and type of information shared in order to reach audiences with different characteristics: age, familiarity with relevant concepts and topics, wilderness experience, goals, and interests. The parks offer different levels of participation and connection with wilderness.

This strategy was developed in 2014 in support of the parks Wilderness Stewardship Plan. It is designed to support ongoing efforts to improve, update, and develop new ways to connect with the public about wilderness, and to expand the demographics of the audiences with whom the parks connect regarding wilderness. It is a flexible document, open to revision through trial and error, evaluation, and changing techniques, conditions, or priorities.

STATUS OF CURRENT EFFORTS

A variety of the parks' work groups and programs participate in educating the public and other employees of the parks about wilderness. The Wilderness Office and rangers take the lead with overnight wilderness users, while the interpretive division focuses on wilderness day users, other visitors of the parks, students, and outreach to people outside the parks. They connect with thousands of people every day. These and other efforts of the parks are echoed and magnified by maintenance crews, resource management staff, concession office staff, law enforcement, the parks' partners, volunteers, and many others who are committed to constant improvement of wilderness stewardship by one and all.

As a result, many products already in use in these parks offer information on wilderness guidelines, options, values, and experiences. The sharing takes place one-on-one, through visitor and student programs, and via a variety of materials: handouts, exhibits, trailhead panels, webpages, slide shows, and films (see *Existing Products and Techniques*, below).



*An old saying may be applied to wilderness:
“We conserve what we love. We love what we
understand. We understand what we are taught.”*

To date, this effort has made a difference on the ground: Conditions in the wilderness have improved over the past 30 years, based largely on visitor response to concerted efforts by wilderness rangers and others to encourage minimum-impact techniques (see “Campsite Condition” in the “Wilderness Character” section of “Chapter 3: Affected Environment,” in the WSP/FEIS).

PURPOSE AND NEED FOR A STRATEGY TO ENHANCE CURRENT EFFORTS

The term “wilderness” encompasses an array of landscapes, laws, philosophies, ideals, and experiences. It offers recreation, inspiration, a sense of belonging, solitude, challenge, self-reliance, connections to nature, scenic beauty, and risk. Every visitor meets wilderness on its own terms, and for their own purposes. Helping people, including those who have not yet experienced wilderness, to understand and appreciate the factors that may contribute to *their* relationship with wilderness calls for an equally broad array of tools and techniques for sharing information.

Wilderness in these parks and other areas add value to the shared society, economy, and future, even for those who never set foot in it. Because of this, wilderness needs current and future stewards, people who care about and care for it. It needs people of all ages, varying backgrounds, diverse cultures, and different knowledge and experience who will champion wilderness in a variety of ways. This calls for ongoing efforts to broaden ways in which to connect with people about wilderness and to expand the number and kinds of people who connect to it. It calls for exploring wilderness as a value, not just as a regulated environment.

Another way to reach more and different people is by increasing the number and type of employees who have and can confidently share information about it. Many policy documents direct this effort (see the “References” section, below), including:

Director’s Order #41. Wilderness Stewardship (2013) – Staff education is an integral part of wilderness stewardship. Therefore, wilderness awareness training will be incorporated into all appropriate training programs for park staff, including seasonal staff, cooperating association employees, concessions employees, and volunteers.

Visitor understanding of and compliance with their roles in wilderness stewardship is also critical to successful management. Wilderness management, however, is a complicated balance of laws, uses, protection strategies, and changing conditions. This strategy can help the parks’ staff to tease out the information needed to enhance understanding by their employee and public audiences. By following a series of steps, those park divisions with operational plans that touch on some aspect of wilderness can identify audiences, messages, and methods for imparting information that is critical to their work and related aspects of wilderness.

This strategy is designed to assist development of new information that includes any changes due to adoption of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan as well as refining existing informational materials in order to enhance wilderness stewardship among employees, partners, visitors, and the general public – both traditional supporters and those unfamiliar with wilderness. The strategy aims to support the following goals and desired outcomes:

GOALS

The goal of this strategy is to enhance understanding, enjoyment, and stewardship of wilderness – and its benefits – in a broad range of audiences. More specifically:

- Diverse people feel welcomed and encouraged to connect with wilderness.
- People have incremental, progressive opportunities to discover the value and meaning of wilderness for themselves, in ways that are appropriate to their interests and abilities, and that offer varied levels at which to participate at a rate with which they are comfortable.
- Visitors and staff understand and support wilderness as an important facet of the parks' landscape, experience, and management.
- Wilderness condition and visitor experience improve due to increased understanding and stewardship by visitors, commercial-service users, and staff.



*A visitor reads a wayside titled
“Wilderness” at Panoramic Point
in the Grant Grove area of Kings
Canyon National Park.*

DESIRED GENERAL OUTCOMES

- All employees have easy access to correct information about wilderness and their role in its management.
- Employees embrace the opportunity to learn and share information about wilderness. They know where to find information for themselves, and where to direct others for additional information.
- All employees welcome a wide variety of people to experience wilderness directly or indirectly.
- Each work group provides their contacts with information in varied formats and levels of detail.
- Employees of the parks integrate wilderness stewardship into their jobs and communicate that with coworkers and visitors.
- Visitors and staff recognize and endorse the characteristics of wilderness that call for human restraint, self-reliance, and personal responsibility, and make informed choices regarding their use of, support for, and work in wilderness.
- Visitors and staff have an increased understanding of issues affecting wilderness, in particular, aspects of climate change.

SPECIFIC DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Staff provide information on the spectrum of appropriate uses in wilderness.
- Visitors recognize the spectrum of legal uses in wilderness. The result: they experience neither conflict nor decreased satisfaction when they encounter uses different from theirs but will report illegal uses to a ranger.

- Trail crews, rangers, fire crews and monitors, contractors and researchers, resources staff, volunteers, and others working in wilderness continue to share information with visitors they encounter and explain the wilderness-protection measures that influence their tasks.
- Fire, law enforcement, compliance, and resource/research staff use and communicate the minimum-requirement concept as a positive means for preserving and managing wilderness.
- Concessions Office staff provide current and potential concessioners, contractors, permittees, and commercial use authorization holders with information that clarifies the positive aspects of the parks' requirements and invites them and their clients to partner with the parks in wilderness stewardship.
- Interpretive and educational programs and outreach efforts continue to reach diverse audiences across a range of ages regarding the values and characteristics of wilderness. The parks increase cooperation with organizations to exchange information about shared wilderness trails and visitors (e.g., neighboring wilderness-management agencies, the Pacific Crest Trail Association [PCTA], the John Muir Trail Association [JMTA], and Yosemite National Park).
- Work groups and the public learn and adapt to changes in wilderness management that result from adoption of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan.

THE STRATEGY

In 2013, the parks used a survey to determine the level of knowledge that employees have on wilderness topics. The results of that survey are helping the parks to assess needs for training, experience, or access to information about wilderness. By reviewing the survey results and using the following strategy, work groups can improve how they integrate wilderness information into their jobs and share it with the public.

When initiating or creating any operational plan or SOP, every division should consider whether it has a wilderness component that calls for sharing information about that aspect of the plan:

- 1) Does this plan or operating procedure connect in any way to wilderness on the ground, administratively, or in concept? If so:
- 2) **Identify audiences** (public, partner, and park) that need or would benefit from wilderness information related to this planning effort.
- 3) **Identify work groups**, cooperators, and partners that serve those audiences.
- 4) **Identify information and messages** that each group needs for each of their audiences.
- 5) **Develop materials and methods** to meet these informational needs.
- 6) **Make materials available**, readily and widely, in a variety of formats.
- 7) **Train employees to use new communication technologies** as appropriate and as technologies become available.
- 8) **Develop and submit proposals for projects** that advance the effort to develop another generation of wilderness stewards, in the parks and in the public.

Note: Items 2, 3, and 4 may be interchangeable, depending on the planning process underway.

*Trailhead
orientation, safety
and minimum-
impact guidelines,
plus a touch of
inspiration,
welcome a visitor
at Road's End in
Kings Canyon
National Park.*



USING THE STRATEGY

This strategy supports each work group in reviewing and improving the ways in which they:

- provide wilderness information and management;
- integrate wilderness information into their planning efforts as appropriate;
- develop and provide correct, thorough, and audience-appropriate materials;
- train their employees to use this information; and
- make information widely available to current and potential audiences/contacts.

It calls on each division to be alert to changing conditions – different audiences, resource conditions, wilderness uses, planning efforts, changes in funding or staffing – and to adapt the wilderness information that needs to be dispersed and how best to accomplish that.

It also involves helping people to imagine different aspects of wilderness – to sense its challenge and space, to appreciate its values to the world downstream, to comprehend what it offers to science and education, to embrace the need for self-reliance. To accomplish this, employees are urged to add interest and images to the facts they can offer.

A challenge to incorporating some technologies to enhance information availability involves the minimal amount of connectivity in the parks. The parks expect to be able to incorporate some of these options over time thanks to both local and the parks' efforts to increase internet and telephone access and bandwidth, and to changing technology.

FOR ASSISTANCE

The Division of Interpretation, Education, and Partnerships, as well as the Wilderness Office, are committed to contacting work groups that have connections to wilderness in order to help them implement this strategy and propose needed materials. Also available to help groups to direct their improvement are the results of the survey on employee knowledge of wilderness, conducted in 2013.

The following serve as reference for divisions or work groups to use or build on as they implement the strategy in their operational planning:

1) Identify Audiences —The term audience refers to any group with whom the parks exchange information. They may be visitors, clients, partners, subjects of SARs, cooperators, donors, and other individuals or groups.

A note about diversity from the *NPS Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan*:
Ensuring outreach education for diverse and multicultural audiences is a priority.... The relative lack of minority involvement in wilderness has been identified as a complex problem arising from economic, cultural, and social factors. ...Sequoia, Kings Canyon, and [other parks in California] already offer significant wilderness outreach programs and partnerships specifically targeted to culturally diverse students.

It is important to note that many of the audiences in and living near the parks are immigrants and the children of immigrants. These parks will seek to continue these efforts and increase outreach to even more audiences, including those who never have or are unlikely to experience wilderness. Questions for work groups to consider should include: Do the parks have some materials that address the needs of or provide benefit to all these groups? Do materials need to be available in other languages?

Audiences with whom work groups may interact: These are not only audiences for wilderness information but may be important partners in sharing wilderness-stewardship goals with other audiences:

- Staff of the parks: permanent and temporary
 - Wilderness rangers and crews
 - Interpreters
 - Staff with public contact
 - Staff without regular public contact
- Cooperators/partners:
 - With public contact
 - Others
- Volunteers
- Researchers in wilderness
- Neighboring agencies
- Commercial-use licensees
- Frontcountry concessioners
- Wilderness concessions operations
- Visitors encountered in wilderness:
 - started from the parks' trailheads
 - Started outside the parks' boundaries
- Non-government organizations and partners (including friends groups that work with the public, mass media, and elected officials) (e.g., PCTA and JMTA)
- Special permit requesters:
 - Commercial film permits, events, human-ash dispersal, etc.
- Parks' visitors not going to wilderness
- Other publics, including:
 - Students, teachers
 - Wilderness advocates; Non-supporters
- Neighboring property owners
- Other local residents
 - Cabin permittees, inholders
- Local businesses
- Media outlets
- Wilderness visitors – planning a trip in advance and those ready to leave on a trip:
 - Day-hikers; Long-trippers: PCT, JMT
 - Backpackers; Stock users
 - Solo travelers
 - Informal groups; Formal groups
 - Seeking commercial assistance: guides, stock, shuttles
- Those needing permit variances

2) *Identify Work Groups Involved* —The work of every division relates in some way to wilderness. Work groups know that results improve and work is more satisfying when the audiences they serve have the wilderness information they need. (See “Specific Desired Outcomes” section, above.)

3) *Identify Information and Messages* — Consider:

What wilderness information do you need to perform your job successfully? What information do you wish your audience had?

What information or insight would improve your audience’s satisfaction, safety, understanding, or stewardship? Can the information be offered at varied levels: does everyone need it all?

Types of information and messages:

- Permit information
- Other regulations and policies
- Commercial activity in wilderness
 - filming in wilderness
- The job you do in wilderness (staff)
- Safety – personal responsibility:
 - travel techniques
 - weather conditions
 - sanitation/health
 - fire danger
- The basic concept of wilderness
 - wilderness characteristics and qualities
 - best management practices for protecting each of the qualities
- Use of or reliance on the rapidly evolving suite of electronic equipment available
- Trail and travel options and conditions, including the new trail-classification system
- Ecological/environmental conditions
- Food:
 - storage: regulations, techniques, planning for long-distance travel
 - packaging
- Resources: natural and cultural
 - exotics
 - dark night skies: value/protection
- Sharing wilderness with other users
 - wilderness etiquette
 - climbing/peak registers
- Minimum impact / Leave No Trace[®]
- Fire use



Researchers in wilderness are an example of a group that could be encouraged to share information with visitors they encounter:

What are they studying and why? How do they operate in order to minimize their impacts on wilderness character? Will what they learn influence wilderness management?

These soil cores taken by this researcher are part of the first-ever inventory of soils in the parks.

Consider the benefits of sharing information pertaining to wilderness values other than recreation. Examples of important aspects of wilderness that are of significance to society include:

- Ideas behind the National Wilderness Preservation System;
- Economic/ecological benefits for communities (e.g., ecosystem services, property values);
- Opportunities to enjoy wilderness vicariously;
- Non-recreational purposes of wilderness: scenic, scientific, geological, educational;
- Observed and potential effects of climate change in wilderness;
- Wilderness as a natural laboratory;
- Wilderness influences on U.S. history, character, and culture;
- Cultural values associated with wilderness values and resources such as good air quality, dark skies, scientific discovery and history, challenge, personal freedom, and more.

Messages are most successful when they are accompanied by description, images, and the reasons for regulations. Consider what might help your audience to “get” your message.

In addition, there are many messages that shared by the parks’ employees that have less obvious connections to wilderness: water and air quality, wildlife habitat, dark skies and natural soundscapes, archeology and cultural resources, the parks’ histories, and many more. One of the goals is to look for ways to point out these connections to the parks’ audiences.

Timing of messages: For each audience, there may multiple opportunities for contacting them, and good reasons for using more than one opportunity. In determining how and when to reach each audience, consider which of the following should be addressed:

- Before arrival
- In the frontcountry
- In the wilderness
- Post-wilderness visit while still in park
- Post-visit after leaving the park
- At any time
- Special events (e.g., 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, anniversary of the designation of the parks’ wilderness areas, the centennial of NPS)

4) Develop Materials and Methods — Consider how best to dispense information at different times and locations. Consider possible barriers to communication: age, language, depth of understanding about wilderness, lack of exposure to the concept of wilderness, and so on. Work with the Division of Interpretation and/or the Wilderness Office to fine tune what is needed.



At the wilderness-permit desk in Grant Grove, a child proudly displays Junior Ranger badges earned at many parks – a wilderness steward in the making.

How would your messages be best communicated? Consider:

- Staff trainings
- With permits: wilderness, research
- Written
- Spoken
- Handouts, postings, or signs
- Trailhead panels
- Interpretive/orientational exhibits:
- Indoors / Outdoors
- Travelers Information Station (TIS) broadcast (radio 1610 in SEKI)
- News releases, other media events
- Outreach activities
- In a classroom or on a field trip
- Through another entity:
 - Concessioners,
 - Commercial use licensees
 - Partners/SNHA
 - Neighboring agencies
 - Organizations of wilderness users
- With contracts
- Wilderness concessions operations
- General visitors of the parks
- Online / internet:
 - Is a new webpage needed?
 - Are new links between pages needed?
 - Webcast, podcast

Existing training and materials: Find out what is already available for SEKI. Consider using or adapting existing materials, references, and trainings. Many options are available at low or no cost (see the “Existing Training and Materials” section below).

5) Make Materials Available —

- Identify the outlets for your materials. Make your information widely available. Most information developed can be made available in some format online; check with the Division of Interpretation.
 - What other forms of technology might carry your messages successfully?
 - Develop standard operating procedures that include:
 - Updating materials on a regular basis
 - Distributing them to the outlets identified
 - Maintaining supplies.
 - Including them in annual trainings.

EXISTING TRAINING AND MATERIALS

Many options are available at low or no cost from reliable sources. The Wilderness Office, interpreters, wilderness rangers, and the Sequoia Natural History Association (SNHA – an important partner in these parks) use a number of these consistently for staff training:

- **Wilderness: Gateway to National Park Service Wilderness** (<http://wilderness.nps.gov/>):
 - Wild soundscapes in the national parks
 - Wilderness education and partnership plan
 - K – 12 Wilderness and Land Ethic Curriculum
 - Wilderness education plans toolbox
 - Wilderness Views: interactive multimedia program with accompanying curriculum
- **Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center** (<http://carhart.wilderness.net/>), managed by four federal land-management agencies that manage wilderness. These are used regularly by the parks' Wilderness Office:
 - Wilderness Stewardship:
 - Classroom Courses
 - Online Courses
 - Webinars
 - Core Competencies
 - Wilderness Information Resources: online tools for the natural resource workforce, scientists, educators, students, and the public
 - Wilderness.net
 - Print Resources and Products
 - National Wilderness Preservation System Displays
 - Wilderness Education Resources: online educational materials designed to increase public awareness, knowledge, and understanding of wilderness heritage
 - Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program
 - Distance Education Courses
 - K-12 Curriculum
 - WildLink Project
 - DVD Technical Assistance
- **Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands** (<http://eppley.org>) – at Indiana University, in partnership with NPS. Online and classroom courses: some are free, others are low cost. Carhart Training Center and Wilderness.net also offers some of these courses. Courses include:
 - Understanding American Wilderness
 - Natural and Cultural Resource Management in Wilderness (multiple courses, also on DOI Learn)



Some wilderness enthusiasts start young, but many discover it a bit later in life – sometimes with help from a park employee.

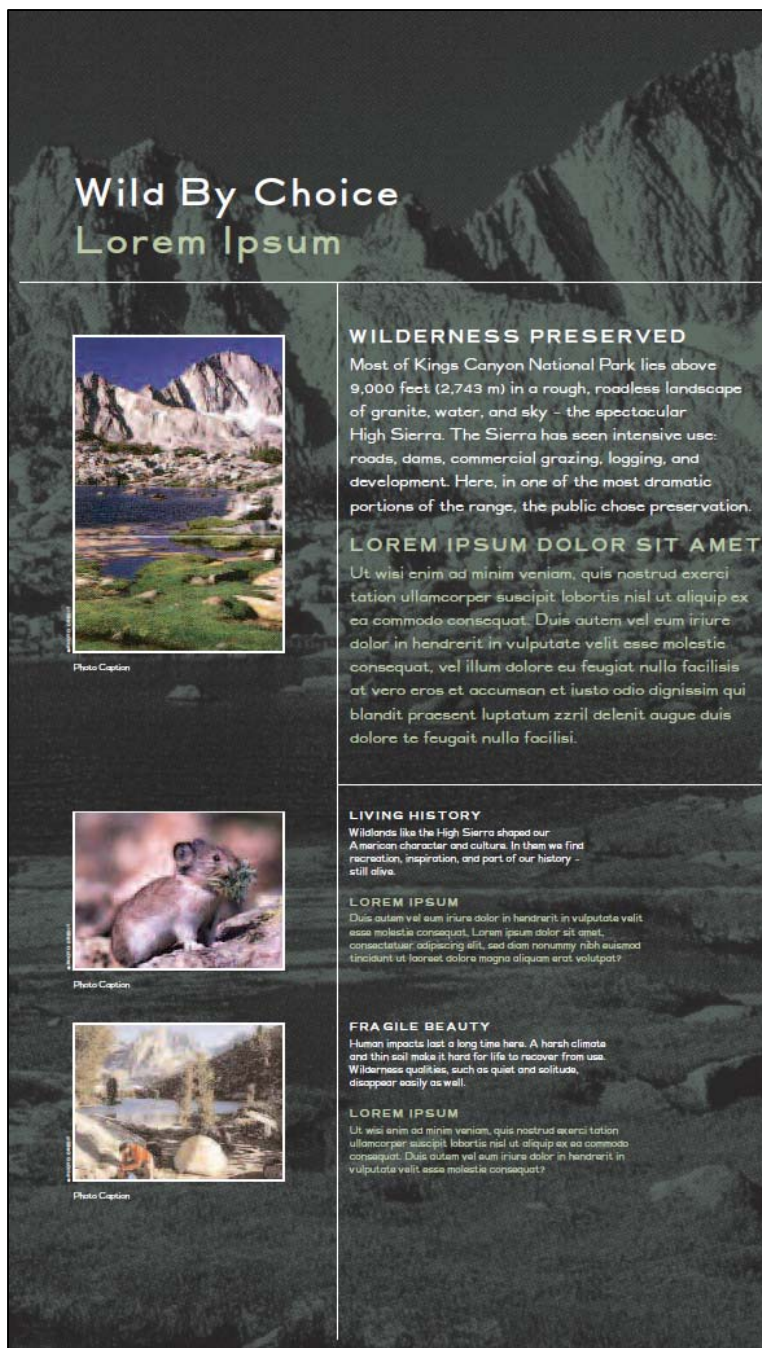
- **Wilderness.net:** Connecting federal employees, scientists, educators, and the public with their wilderness heritage (<http://www.wilderness.net>) – public wilderness-information website based on a collaborative partnership between federal land-management agencies that manage wilderness and the University of Montana:
 - Interagency Classroom Training Courses, including
 - Interagency Wilderness Interpretation & Education Training: Action Planning for the 50th Anniversary and Beyond
 - Regional Wilderness Stewardship Course
 - Online Courses (many are free), including:
 - Wilderness Act
 - Writing a Minimum Requirements Analysis
 - Natural Resource Management in Wilderness (also on DOI Learn)
 - K – 12 Educational Resources and websites for educators, including:
 - Wilderness Investigations
 - Outdoor Explorers Mentoring Program
 - WildLink
 - Wilderness and Land Ethic Curriculum
 - Wilderness Views and Teacher Resources
- **DOI Learn (<http://www.doi.gov/doilearn>)** – U.S. Department of the Interior website links to catalog that includes trainings on wilderness planning, management, resources, interpretation, safety, and first aid. A number of the courses are also offered by the Carhart Center, Eppley, and Wilderness.net.

EXISTING PRODUCTS, TECHNIQUES, AND EXAMPLES

The parks already share many messages on wilderness, wild places, and related values throughout the parks. The following provides a starting point for additional efforts:

EXHIBITS – INDOORS, WITHIN THE PARKS

- **Kings Canyon Visitor Center:** These bilingual exhibits highlight wilderness as an identifying aspect of Kings Canyon National Park, and explore choices that society made in order to preserve it. (Note: The second language shown is place-holder text. Spanish was added before installation.)



Visitor Center, *continued*: One panel explores what might have been on one side, and current management on the other.

A Choice Proposed: Pave Paradise Lorem Ipsum: Dolore Sit Amet




Photo Caption

FRACTURED WILDERNESS

Speed, comfort, and economic development - these were once more rare than unspoiled wilderness. Then by the 1920s, roads crossed the Sierra north and south of Kings Canyon. Soon 'progress' called for yet another road cut through the wild heart of the High Sierra.

LOREM IPSUM SIT DOLORE AMET

El resto della concluan sayo de velarte, calzas de velludo para las fiestas con sus pantuflos de lo mismo, los días de entre semana se honraba con su vellori de lo más fino. Tenía en su casa una ama que pasaba de los cuarenta, y una sobrina que no llegaba a los veinte, y un mozo de campo y plaza, que así ensillaba el rocín como tomaba la podadera.

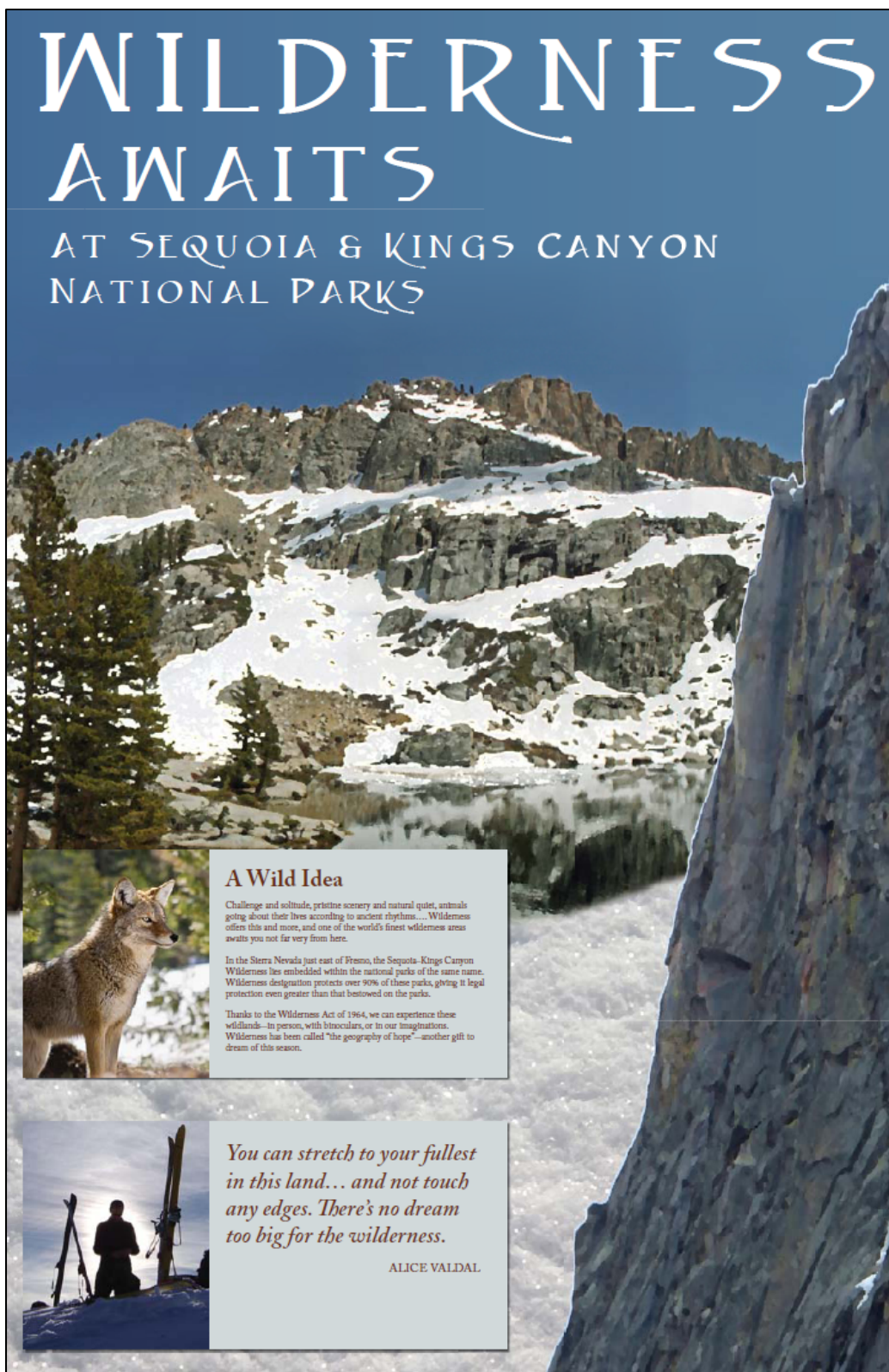
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Visitor Center, continued: Another exhibit in the visitor center offers two journals: one from early explorers in the Kings Canyon high country, and one illustrating the day-to-day life of a modern wilderness ranger.



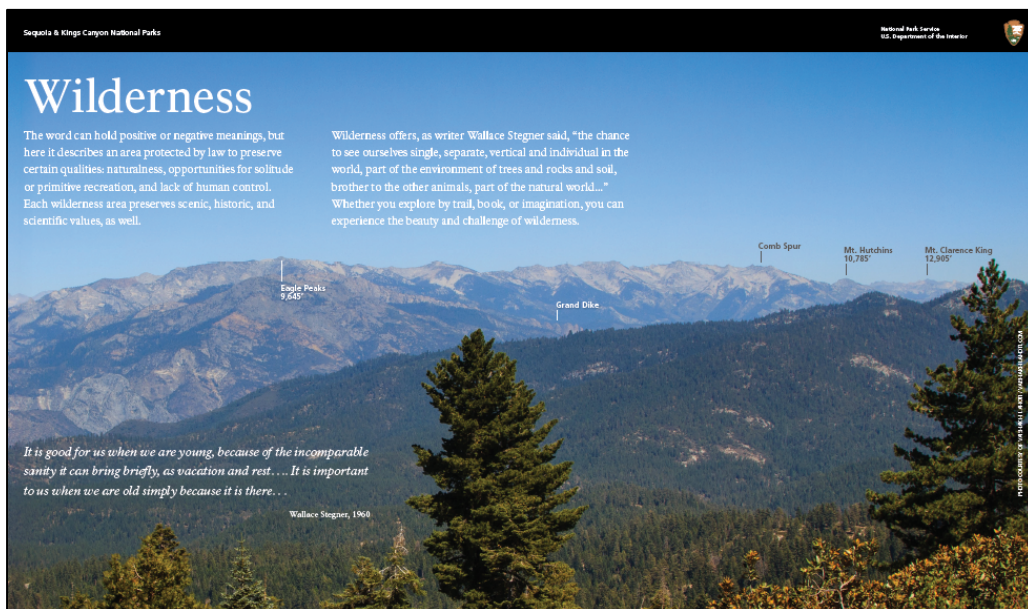
EXHIBITS – INDOORS, OUTSIDE THE PARKS

- **Fresno Airport:** These parks regularly display 6-foot-tall exhibit panels such as this at the airport:

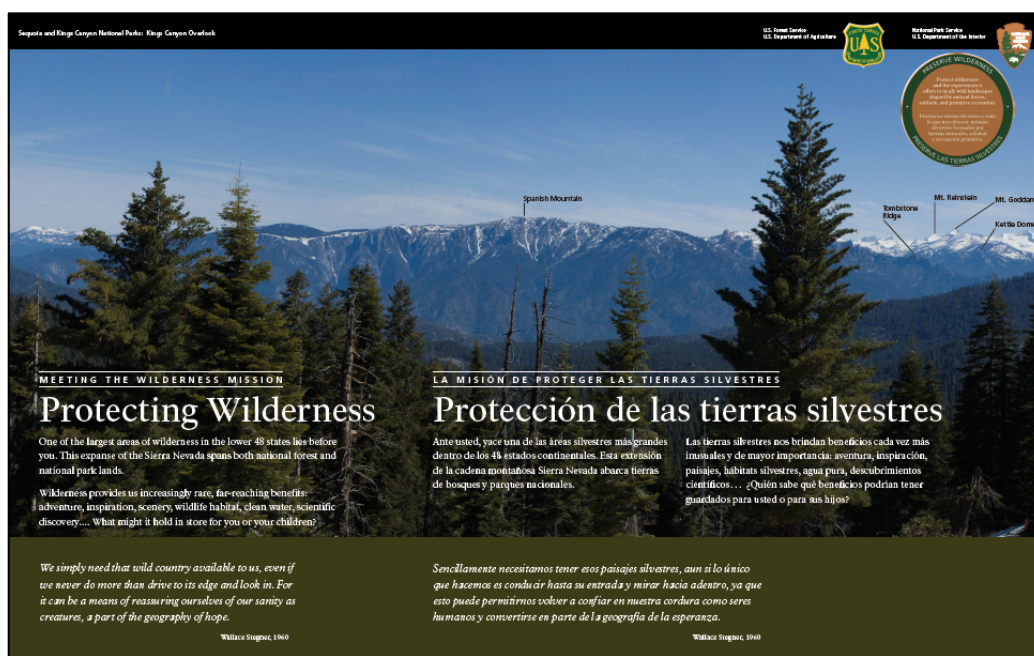


EXHIBITS – OUTDOORS, IN THE PARKS: WAYSIDES AT OVERLOOKS

- Panoramic Point (in the Grant Grove area): Describing the qualities of wilderness and inviting people to experience it in a variety of ways, directly and indirectly.

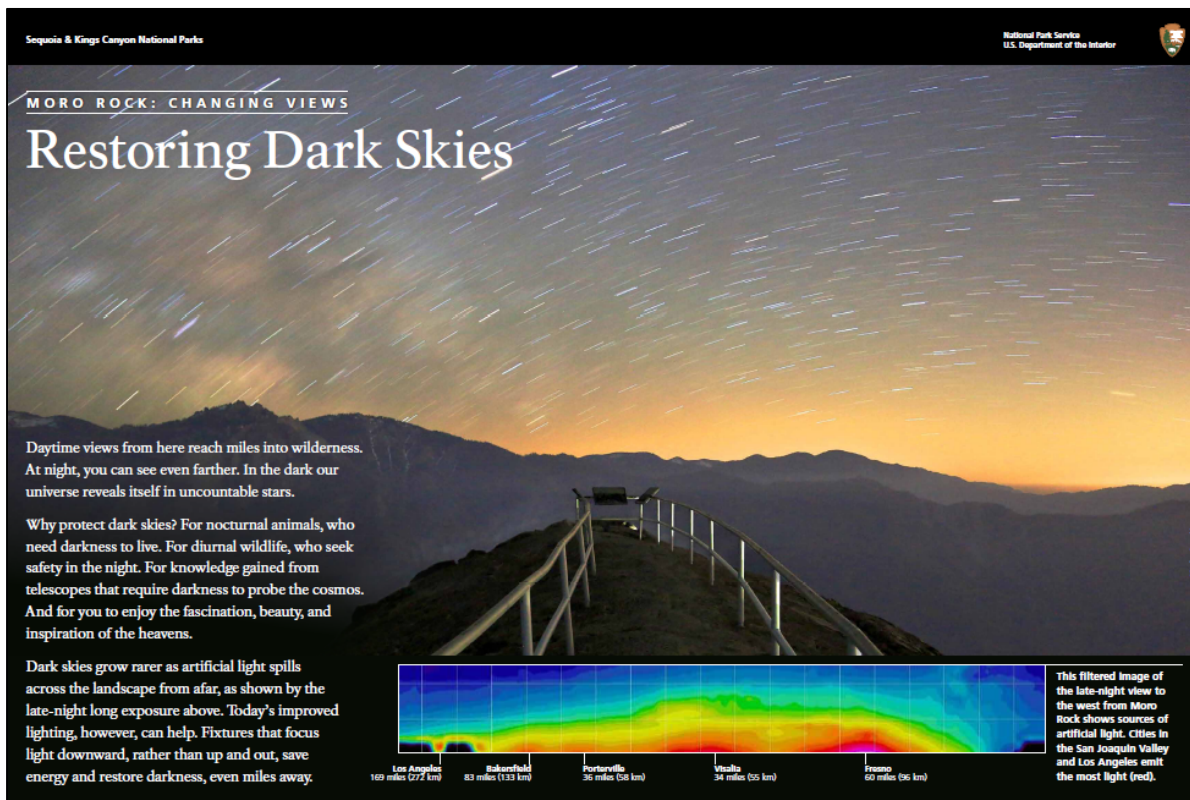


- Kings Canyon Overlook on the Generals Highway (bilingual) – part of a series along the highway the describes the basic mission of the national parks: Wilderness as part of the mission of national parks and national forests, and as a place that is important to people even if they do not go there.



EXHIBITS – OUTDOORS, IN THE PARKS CONTINUED: WAYSIDES ALONG TRAILS AND ROADS

- Moro Rock Staircase on the edge of the Giant Forest: A series of exhibits points out past and future changes of the wilderness views they see from the top of this popular viewpoint.



- Posted inside the parks' shuttle buses: Under development for summer 2014 and beyond, these images will be read by visitors inside the shuttles as they ride to, from, and within Sequoia National Park.



- At the end of Crescent Meadow Road where the High Sierra Trail starts (Sequoia National Park):
Part of a series on people who shaped these parks.

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

SHAPING A PARK

Trailbuilders

You are standing at the start of an amazing footpath that has an inspired story. From here—thanks to hardy trailbuilders in the park's early years—you can hike to the Sierra Nevada's highest peaks.

In the 1920s Congress extended Sequoia National Park eastward from the sequoia groves to the crest of the Sierra Nevada.

Superintendent John White knew that people needed access to the new park area. Rather than build roads, he envisioned a "High Sierra Trail" from the Giant Forest to Mount Whitney.

For his trailbuilding project, White set forth two criteria: minimal damage to the land and as few ups and downs as possible. Despite the steep, rocky terrain, trail crews met his challenge. Using White's route, hikers today can travel from sequoia grove to Sierra crest with remarkable ease for such a rugged landscape.

...the Kern Canyon and High Sierra area should be developed only as a trail park the honk of the motor horn should never echo in [them].

Park Superintendent John White



Susan Thew in the high country

Getting Involved

When a debate began over whether the High Sierra should be added to Sequoia National Park, a local woman took action. Susan Thew hired a photographer and set off into the mountains. Upon returning, she mailed her photos to every member of Congress, showing them the wild beauty that was at stake.

ORIENTATION EXHIBITS – OUTDOORS, IN THE PARKS: AT TRAILHEADS

These reach not only overnight wilderness users, but day hikers and those exploring the aread for the first time. Recent efforts have placed 18 such panels at almost all wilderness trailheads on the west side of the parks. Each has a quote about the essence of wilderness, and information about minimum impact use, safety, regulations, destinations, and designated wilderness as a form of landscape protection.

Trail of Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks
National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Sawtooth Trailhead

Mountain passes and vistas of the remote High Sierra lie ahead. Monarch Lakes, lying on the boundary between granitic and metamorphic rock, create an inviting but chilly destination for hikers and backpackers.

Like most park trails, the Sawtooth Trail leads into designated wilderness. One of the highest forms of protection for public lands, wilderness preserves untamed landscapes for you to experience. Possible destinations include:





Monarch Lakes
4.2 miles (6.8 km) one way
Elevation: 10,400 feet (3,170 m) to first lake

From valley floor to forest to rocky alpine, the trail brings you to Monarch Lakes at the foot of 12,343-foot Sawtooth Peak. Like several other small lakes in this area, Lower Monarch Lake has a small dam.



Timber Gap
2.0 miles (3.2 km) one way
Elevation: 9,450 feet (2,880 m)

The views of Mineral King Valley are superb as you climb. At the gap itself, you stand in a grove of massive red firs.

Travel Lightly

Wilderness permits are required for all overnight trips.
Get permits at Mineral King Ranger Stations.

Pets and wheeled vehicles are prohibited.

Firearms are subject to state and local regulations. Discharge of a firearm is prohibited within Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks.

Wood fires are prohibited in the entire Mineral King area above 7,500 feet (2,286 meters) to protect fragile alpine ecosystems.

Preserve the wilderness experience.
Blend in. Keep noise to a minimum.

Camp on bare ground (never on vegetation) at least 100 feet from water.

Leave Indian artifacts, historic objects, and natural items such as pine cones where you find them.

Don't construct fire rings, trenches, or other "improvements."

Don't introduce invasive species.
Before hiking, clean weed seeds and mud from boots, laces, and equipment.

Wilderness Safety

People traveling in wilderness areas should be very self-reliant. Immediate rescue is rarely possible. **The responsibility to understand natural hazards and travel safely lies with you.**

Plan your trip carefully. Carry a map.
Be prepared: Creek crossings may be hazardous at any time.

Bring drinking water or treat it.
Never drink untreated water from lakes or streams.

Know what to do in an emergency.
Cell phones rarely work in most of the park. Carry and know how to use basic first-aid gear.

Be alert to falling objects. Take note of snapping branches overhead; pay extra attention in windy or snowy conditions.

If you encounter illegal activity, leave the area immediately and notify a ranger.

Store food properly to keep bears wild.

Do not store food or scented items in your vehicle. Store them in metal food-storage boxes or bring them with you.



... where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man...

The Wilderness Act Of 1964

View toward Mineral King Valley from the Sawtooth Trail

NPS Photo by S. Cole



Some wayside panels address specific ways to help protect wilderness character and qualities – in this case, preventing introduction of nonnative seeds. (When final, these panels will be installed in 2014).

Got mud on your boots?

Weed seeds lurk there, too. Spread the seeds and weeds can take over, crowding out native plants and harming wildlife habitat. Stopping escaped weeds is expensive, and sometimes impossible.

Prevent weed infestations and habitat damage. Use this boot brush to clean off your shoes before hiking. Seeds picked from clothes, laces, and gear go into garbage cans.



PUBLICATIONS & PRINTED INFORMATION – IN THE PARKS, ONLINE; FREE, FOR SALE

The parks' newspaper always carries basic information about wilderness permits. Sometimes it covers the topic in more depth. Handouts and other free materials provide additional details.






SEQUOIA & KINGS CANYON

NATIONAL PARKS

& SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST/GIANT SEQUOIA NATIONAL MONUMENT

SUMMER 2009 GUIDE



Crystal Cave Tours / Free Activities • page 3

Road & Safety Tips / Finding Gasoline • page 5

Highlights & Shuttle in Sequoia Park • page 6

Highlights in Kings Canyon & USFS • page 7



page 8 • Facilities & Ranger Programs in Sequoia

page 9 • Facilities & Programs in Kings Canyon & USFS

page 10 • Camping & Lodging / Bears & Your Food

page 12 • Park Road Map

Finally forever wild

What would be the best use for gorgeous slopes and lake basins ringing a beautiful sub-alpine valley in the southern Sierra Nevada?

Debates over how to use public land are common to this country's history. In this case, the area in question is Mineral King, and the history of its potential uses is a long one.

Let's start back in 1873, when one James Crabtree dreamed a dream of riches. In that vision, an Indian chief led him to a place where he should establish a mine. The resulting White Chief Mine soon inspired a rush of silver seekers and the name "Mineral King."

Yet the land yielded nothing in the way of mineral wealth. The name stuck anyway, but it was rich scenery and cool mountain air that continued to draw people after the mines went bust.

Fast forward to 1926. An expansion of Sequoia National Park excluded Mineral King due to the old jumble of mining claims. Instead, it became the "Sequoia Game Refuge," overseen by the U.S. Forest Service. People increasingly sought it out for recreation, idyllic scenery, and mild summer temperatures, and for the lovely lake basins to be explored.

Twenty years later, commercial downhill skiing became an option. Should the rocky basins and valley of Mineral King



Looking across Mineral King Valley from one of the Mosquito Lakes, now protected in the John Krebs Wilderness. Photo © Nick Cam

Valley be transformed with lifts and lodges? Could wealth be wrested from the area this way, rather than by mining?

This on-and-off debate continued until a serious proposal made it to the national stage in 1965, a plan that included 14 ski lifts, two hotels, and a parking garage. People questioned the proposal. Should large roads be blasted through the national park to serve this non-park area? Could ski facilities survive the frequent avalanches that keep this area unusually free of forest?

A national discussion in the courts and public airwaves went on for a decade. It came to an abrupt end when one congressman stood up for preserving Mineral King. Fresno's John Krebs sponsored a bill to add Mineral King to Sequoia National Park. Despite many local objections, the nation agreed with him, and the bill passed.

Still, talk over this area's future did not end. This spring, the name "Mineral King" was again before Congress. Again the discussion involved what its best and highest use might be.

Once again the American people made a decision through their representatives, this time choosing the highest form of preservation for America's public lands — wilderness designation. Named for the man who rose to defend Mineral King 40 years ago, the John Krebs Wilderness now protects its beauty, habitat, and wild experiences for generations to come.

PUBLICATIONS – FOR SALE IN THE PARKS

The parks ensure that bookstores in visitor centers carry books on wilderness for both adults and children. They include biographies of wilderness advocates, trail guides, minimum-impact guides, and history, and continually seek new and different books, maps, and activities on this topic.

AUDIO VISUAL PRODUCTS – IN THE PARKS, FOR SALE, ONLINE

The film *Gem of the Sierra*, shown daily in the Kings Canyon Visitor Center, was created to orient, inform, and inspire people about three outstanding features of Kings Canyon National Parks: its expansive wilderness, deep canyon, and giant sequoias.



ONLINE – WEBSITE AND SOCIAL MEDIA

- Photos and Multimedia: links to a variety of images of the parks' wilderness
- E-hike on Paradise Creek Trail into wilderness.
Another e-hike, on the High Sierra Trail, is planned for completion by fall of 2014.
- 360-degree panorama of wilderness views from Moro Rock.
- Two webcams, at Park Ridge and lower Giant Forest, provide a glimpse into the parks' wilderness.
- A tremendous amount of information about wilderness logistics, guidelines, regulations, and safety is available on line and as printouts in the parks (check for live links):

Overnight backpacking

Trail Descriptions

Day Hiking

Trailhead Availability

Food Storage in the Wilderness

Trail Conditions

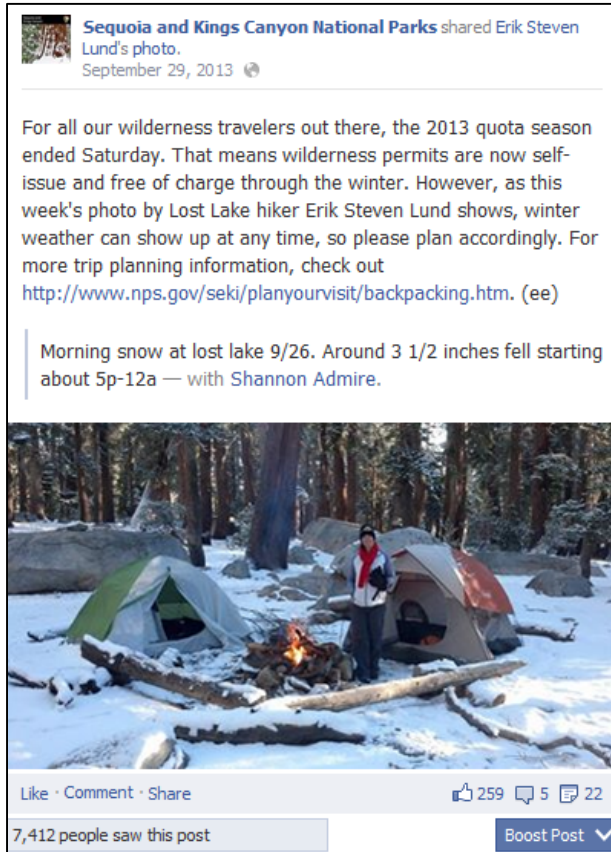
Permit Issuing Hours & Reservations

Wilderness Trip Planner

Permit Reservation Application

Stock Use

SOCIAL MEDIA



A typical post on the parks' Facebook page.

On the parks' Facebook page, the parks' staff and online "visitors" regularly post information related to wilderness. Sometimes a conversation starts between visitors and/or the parks.

For two years, these parks have held a photo contest on their Facebook page. In 2014, "wilderness" became a category in the competition. People entered almost 300 photos overall. Two rounds of voting led to large spikes in *likes*, *reach*, and *visits* (Facebook terms). The first round of voting reached almost 90,000 people. On January 1, 2014, the site had 29,834 likes. On the day of photo judging, there were 32,423 likes – an increase of about 2500 in less than two months. The first round of voting for the overall favorite brought 250 new fans in one day. People new to the idea of wilderness saw the beauty of its manifestation in these parks. People familiar with wilderness shared their experiences and viewpoints through their images, and were willing to share them for future use by the parks.



The winning photo in the wilderness category for the 2014 Facebook Photo contest: Mount Whitney Storm by Daniel Jeffcoach.

PERSONAL SERVICES – WALKS, TALKS, AND PROGRAMS

Programs by the parks' and SNHA staff that invite visitors to touch or focus on wilderness include snowshoe walks, day and night hikes, slide programs, astronomy talks, and special events such as celebrations of wilderness and dark skies. These personal contacts and experiences help people to develop a sense of connection to the untamed parts of the world.



PERSONAL SERVICES – EMPLOYEES IN THE FIELD

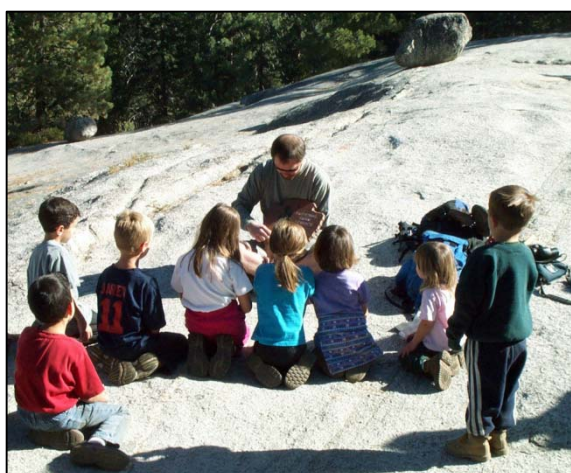
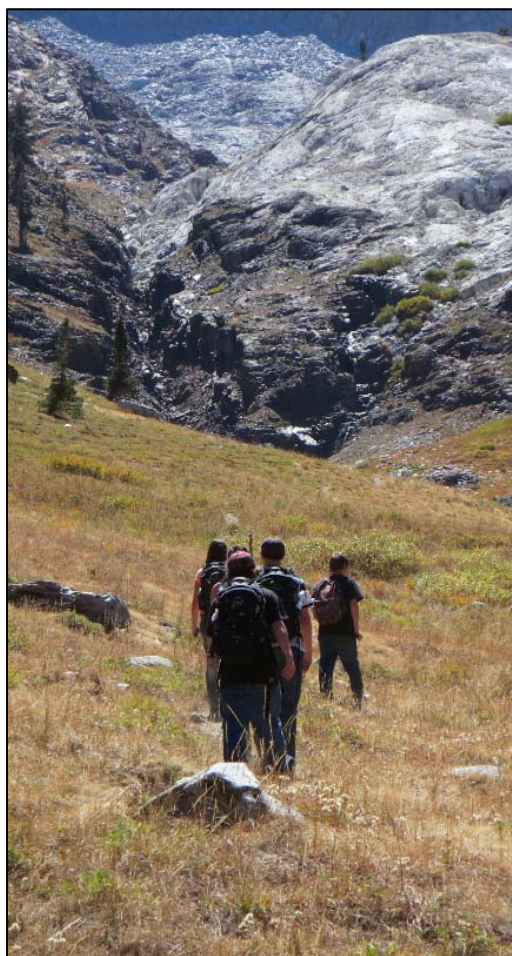
Employees work with people in the wilderness, at trailheads, on dayhikes, and at desks, sharing rules, encouragement, observations, regulations, and wilderness values. That these efforts make a difference is shown by inventories of the condition of campsites in the wilderness show clearly: Outreach to visitors by the parks' staff over the past 30 years has resulted in significant improvement of naturalness and other wilderness qualities (2013 Wilderness Character Assessment. In: *Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Wilderness: Taking Stock of Visitor Perceptions and Trends, Manager Recollections, Long-term Observations and Resource Conditions*. Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute).



PERSONAL SERVICES – EDUCATION IN THE PARKS



School groups of varying ages learn from the parks' education staff, resource management staff, and volunteers. Many students served by the parks' programs are immigrants and the children of immigrants.



PERSONAL SERVICES – EDUCATION IN THE CLASSROOM



Rangers trained in educational techniques regularly visit classrooms in the San Joaquin Valley, part of the popular “Rangers in the Classroom” program.



New digital camera equipment now allows rangers to “visit” classrooms farther away as well as those that cannot afford to make a field trip.



PERSONAL SERVICES – WALKS, TALKS, AND PROGRAMS BY PARTNERS



The Sequoia Field Institute (part of Sequoia Natural History Association – SNHA) offers a variety of programs and skill-building trips into the wilderness.

PERSONAL SERVICES – TRAININGS AND PROJECTS WITH PARTNERS AND VOLUNTEERS



The California Conservation Corps partners with these parks to offer invaluable experiences that build outdoor and other skills as well as self-confidence in young people who spend long stretches of time in the wilderness.

PERSONAL SERVICES – TRAININGS AND PROJECTS WITH STAFF AND VOLUNTEERS



Embracing stewardship of wilderness and demonstrating it to those who pass by (clockwise from top left):

A ranger uses the minimum tool needed for the job; volunteers revegetate a wilderness meadow; and the parks' staff train volunteers, partners, and other staff about wilderness and related topics.

PERSONAL SERVICES – OUTREACH OUTSIDE THE PARKS

Often accomplished through the public information office, this generally refers to reaching beyond the parks' boundaries to share the parks' ideals and issues.

Ongoing efforts encourage local communities to celebrate the wilderness resource of these parks. Outreach is often tied to special events such as National Parks Family Day in Fresno and "First Saturday" in Three Rivers. For the Fresno Airport's annual Christmas gala in 2013, extensive decorations had a wilderness theme (and were kept on display for months).

At citizenship swearing-in ceremonies, people are introduced to the national park concept and more. They learn that they have become citizens of the wide wilderness of these parks. Two of these ceremonies have been held in these parks to date.

REFERENCES: FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS THAT DIRECT WILDERNESS INFORMATION AND EDUCATION EFFORTS

DIRECTOR'S ORDER #41: WILDERNESS STEWARDSHIP (2013)

6.14 Interpretation and Education

The Comprehensive Interpretive Plan for parks with proposed, recommended, or designated wilderness should include and address the primary the parks' interpretive themes that reflect the wilderness. Wilderness significance statements and interpretive themes can be found in the NPS Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan, developed by the Wilderness Leadership Council. Wilderness character, resources, and stewardship should be included in the park's interpretation, education, and outreach programming and should be included as an integral component of the park's long-range interpretive plan and annual implementation plan.

Staff education is an integral part of wilderness stewardship. Therefore, wilderness awareness training will be incorporated into all appropriate training programs for the parks' staff, including seasonal staff, cooperating association employees, concessions employees, and volunteers.

Leave No Trace[®] (LNT) principles and practices will be applied to all forms of recreation management within wilderness. LNT principles should be incorporated into interpretive activities and products such as hikes, talks, brochures, maps, and websites. All commercial guides leading trips into wilderness should attend LNT workshops and be required to incorporate LNT into their trips. The parks' staff who work in wilderness should attend LNT workshops and training.

NPS MANAGEMENT POLICIES 2006

6.4.2 Wilderness Interpretation and Education

In the context of interpretive and educational planning, national park system units with wilderness resources will:

- (1) operate public education programs designed to promote and perpetuate public awareness of and appreciation for wilderness character, resources, and ethics while providing for acceptable use limits;

(2) focus on fostering an understanding of the concept of wilderness that includes respect for the resource, willingness to exercise self-restraint in demanding access to it, and an ability to adhere to appropriate, minimum-impact techniques; and

(3) encourage the public to use and accept wilderness on its own terms—that is, the acceptance of an undeveloped, primitive environment and the assumption of the potential risks and responsibilities involved in using and enjoying wilderness areas.

NPS interpretive plans and programs for wilderness parks will address the primary interpretive themes for wilderness. Education is among the most effective tools for dealing with wilderness use and management problems and should generally be applied before more restrictive management tools.

NPS WILDERNESS EDUCATION AND PARTNERSHIP PLAN (2002)

Interpretation provides opportunities for people to forge intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings inherent in wilderness. The NPS Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan lays out a strategy for identifying audiences, developing services, and delivering those services in a thoughtful and coherent manner.

The primary purposes of the Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan are to:

1. Establish the individual elements of the NPS Wilderness Education Program.
2. Establish a priority for funding and implementation of the elements of the plan.
3. Provide for the continuity of the program through the development of an approved and comprehensive work plan.

The goal of these actions is to broaden awareness and understanding of the idea of wilderness and to inspire appreciation of wilderness values in an increasingly diverse population. Wilderness education and interpretation must reach beyond National Park Service audiences to increase knowledge of the National Wilderness Preservation System and the NPS role in managing wilderness. Desired results include increased public support for wilderness that results in protection of wilderness resources and preservation of wilderness for future generations.

INTERAGENCY UNIFIED NATIONAL STRATEGIC PLAN FOR WILDERNESS EDUCATION (1995)

Educating the public has long been considered an important function of stewardship. In the past, this has largely meant training wilderness visitors in low-impact camping techniques and user ethics. Wilderness education needs to expand beyond instructing visitors to build a shared understanding of the role and value of wilderness to society. The wilderness message needs to reach a much broader spectrum of the American public.

Historically, wilderness training has concentrated on wilderness specialists. The parks must now expand wilderness training to the interdisciplinary staff and line officers to assure all personnel are adequately equipped for their stewardship role.

SEQUOIA AND KINGS CANYON GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN (GMP), 2007

The Parks' Purposes

The purposes of the parks are the reasons why Congress established these areas as part of the national park system. The purpose statements are basic to all other assumptions about the parks and the ways in which the parks should be used and managed. As defined by the parks' managers, the following are the purposes of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, which incorporate the mission statement:

- Protect forever the greater Sierran ecosystem — including the sequoia groves and high Sierra regions of the park — and its natural evolution.
- Provide appropriate opportunities to present and future generations to experience and understand park resources and values.
- Protect and preserve significant cultural resources.
- Champion the values of national parks and wilderness.

The Parks' Significance

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are special and unique places because they have [among other things]: the core of the largest area of contiguous designated wilderness in California, the second largest in the lower 48 states...

The Parks' Primary Interpretive Themes

One of SEKI's primary interpretive themes is: Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks protect a large wilderness area, where natural forces prevail, and which provides significant scientific and social values to the world.

LEAVE NO TRACE®

Federal and State Land Management Agency Partners

The Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics has a memorandum of understanding with the following federal and state land management agencies: National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, USDA Forest Service, US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Army Corps of Engineers and the National Association of State Park Directors. (See *NPS Management Policies 2006*, above.)

