



## Background “About Our Parks”

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Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks, two parks administered as one unit, lie in the southern Sierra Nevada, east of the San Joaquin Valley. With elevations from 1,300 to 14,494 feet, these parks contain a range of environments from oak woodlands in the foothills to the stark beauty of high altitude alpine landscapes. Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks form the heart of the second-largest contiguous roadless area remaining in the lower 48 states. The crest of the High Sierra, which defines the eastern border of these parks, is so rugged that it is unbroken by roads for almost 200 miles. This landscape conveys nature’s size, beauty, and diversity – huge mountains, rugged foothills, deep canyons, thick forests, vast caverns, and the world’s largest trees.

Within the two park units lands managed as wilderness comprise more than 96 percent of the parks’ total acreage. Wilderness designation, which protects more than 1,300 square miles of these parks, provides the strongest legal protection afforded to any lands in the United States. National Park Service Management Policies (2006), Section 6.3.4.2, Wilderness Management Planning, requires each park that contains wilderness resources to develop and maintain a wilderness management plan or equivalent planning document to guide the preservation, management, and use of these resources.

The special environments and potential impacts of visitor use at the parks require careful and thorough planning to ensure the preservation of high-quality experiences and resources. The Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks wilderness possesses unique character and opportunities that must be protected through good planning and management.

