



Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks Public Scoping Meetings April 25 to 29, 2011

Karen Taylor-Goodrich – SEKI, Superintendent

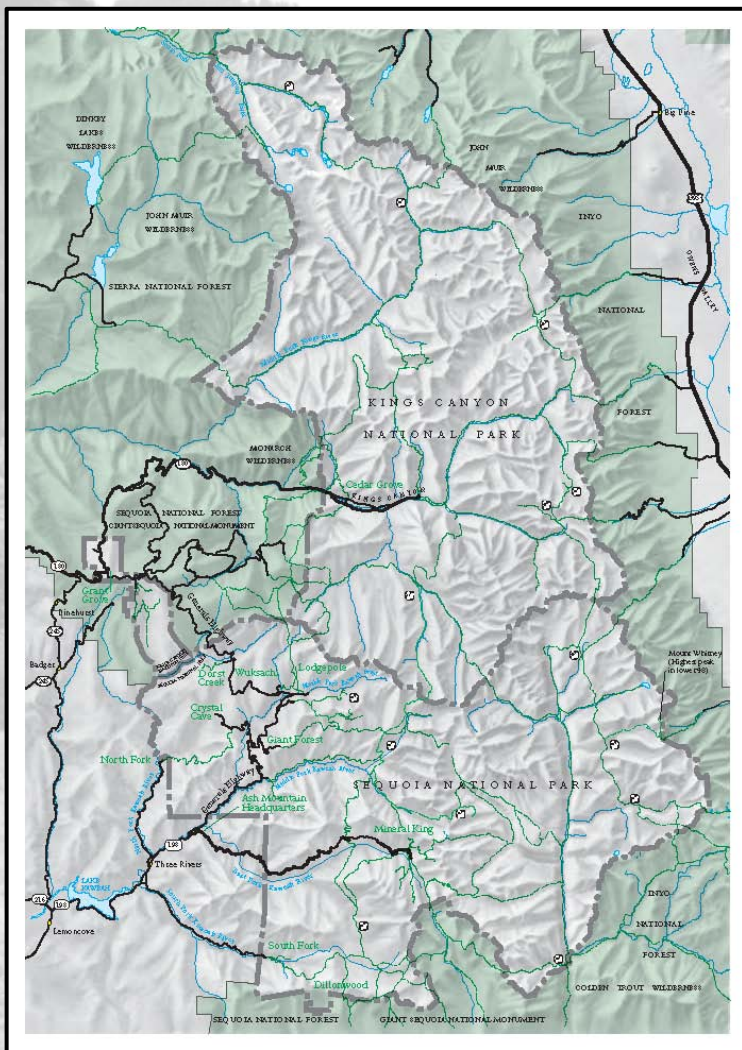
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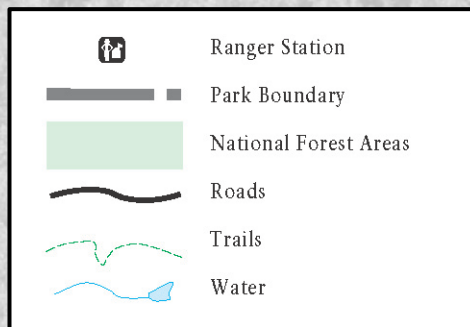
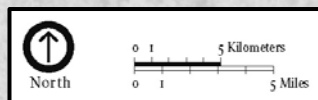
Mark Husbands – EQD, Project Manager



Overview



- Brief synopsis of the history of the Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
- Discussion of why we are planning for Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
- Information on how to comment and the planning timeline





Wilderness Timeline and History

September 25, 1890	Sequoia National Park (NP) is established.
October 1, 1890	General Grant NP is established.
March 4, 1940	General Grant NP is renamed and enlarged as Kings Canyon NP “to preserve its wilderness character.”
September 3, 1964	The <i>Wilderness Act</i> is passed by Congress and signed by the President.
April, 1966	Sequoia and Kings Canyon (SEKI) NPs make initial wilderness recommendations.
March, 1971	Sequoia and Kings Canyon NPs make further wilderness recommendations.
November 10, 1978	Mineral King area is added to Sequoia NP.



Wilderness Timeline and History (continued)

September 28, 1984

The *California Wilderness Bill (PL 98-425)* is passed designating approximately 736,980 acres as the Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness.

March, 1986

SEKI's *Backcountry Management Plan (BMP)* and *Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan (SUMMP)* are approved and enacted.

July/August 1999

NPS issues *Director's Order and Resource Manual 41*, providing the Parks with national guidance on wilderness management.

Early to Late 1990s

SEKI works on consolidating *BMP* and *SUMMP* into a *Wilderness Management Plan (WMP)*. The process is overtaken by the development of the Parks' *General Management Plan (GMP)*. The *Final GMP* is released in 2006 and the *Record of Decision (ROD)*, finalized in 2007.



Wilderness Timeline and History (continued)

May, 2002	New <i>California Wilderness Bill</i> is introduced.
June, 2003	SEKI conducts Wilderness Suitability (Eligibility) Assessments for three areas: Chimney Rock, Mineral King, and Dillonwood. Chimney Rock and Mineral King are classified as Wilderness Study Areas; Dillonwood is not.
September, 2007 (and into the future)	The <i>ROD</i> for SEKI's <i>Final GMP</i> is signed by the Regional Director. The <i>GMP</i> contains broad policy statements regarding the preservation of wilderness, and calls for the development of a comprehensive <i>Wilderness Stewardship and Stock Use Plan</i> .
March 30, 2009	President Obama signs <i>House Resolution 146</i> , the <i>Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009 (PL 111-11)</i> , designating the John Krebs Wilderness, and adding acreage to the existing Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness.



Wilderness Pertinent Legislation and Documentation

National Park Service Organic Act – 1916 (and subsequent)

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Park Enabling Legislations – 1890 through 2001

The Wilderness Act of 1964

The California Wilderness Act of 1984

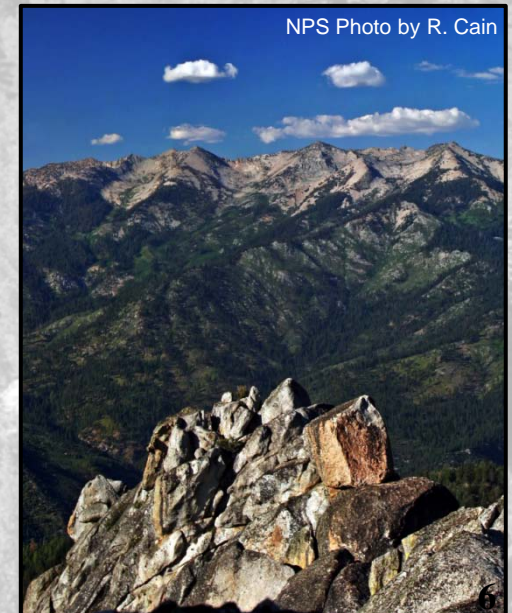
Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009

National Park Service Management Policies (2006)

Director's Order and Reference Manual 41 (1999)

SEKI's Backcountry Management Plan and its supplemental Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan (1986)

Final General Management Plan / EIS and Record of Decision (2006 / 2007)





The National Park Service Organic Act

“to conserve the scenery and the natural and historic objects and the wild life therein and...provide for the enjoyment of the same in such a manner and by such means as will leave them unimpaired for the enjoyment of future generations.”

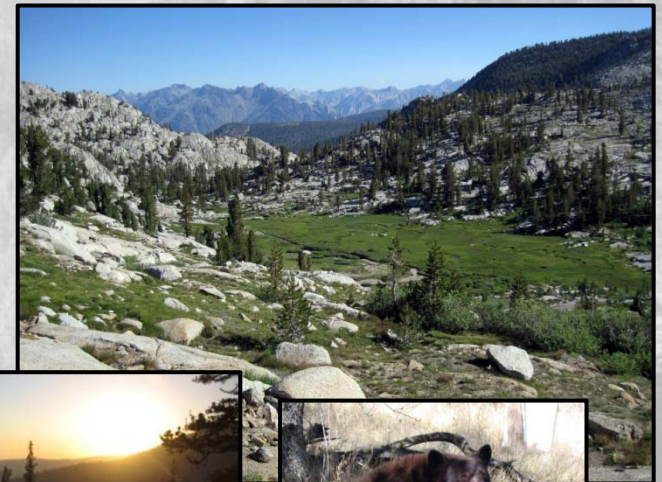
(16 U.S. Code 1, the National Park Service Organic Act)





Sequoia NP Enabling Legislation, 1890

Dedicated and set apart as a public park for the benefit and enjoyment of the people and managed for the preservation from injury of all timber, mineral deposits, natural curiosities or wonders, and for their retention in their natural conditions.





The Wilderness Act of 1964

Wilderness lands are managed under the provisions of the Wilderness Act of 1964 “for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and to provide for the protection of these areas and the preservation of their wilderness character (sec. 2(a)).”





General Management Plan: *Our Guiding Document*

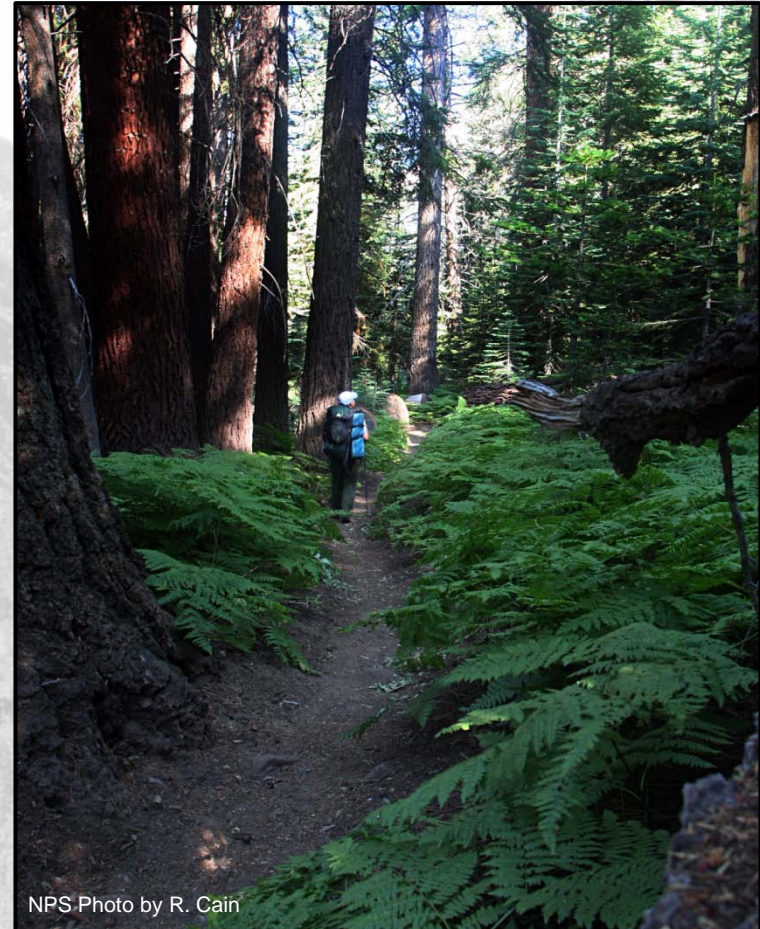
- A public process and approved in 2007
- Establishes the parks' vision and identifies values, defines the parks' significance
- Determines the appropriate amounts of visitation, types of experiences, and facilities
- Establishes desired conditions for natural and cultural resources
- Provides management framework for next 15 to 20 years
- Provides conceptual guidance for wilderness and called for the development of a Wilderness Stewardship Plan



Significance of the Parks

The following features summarize why Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks are significant:

- The largest giant sequoia trees and groves in the world, including the world's largest tree — the General Sherman Tree.
- An extraordinary continuum of ecosystems arrayed along the greatest vertical relief (1,370 to 14,495 feet elevation) of any protected area in the lower 48 states.
- The highest, most rugged portion of the High Sierra, which is part of the largest contiguous alpine environment in the lower 48 states.





Significance (continued)



- Magnificent, deep, glacially carved canyons, including Kings Canyon, Tehipite Valley, and Kern Canyon.
- The core of the largest area of contiguous designated wilderness in California, the second largest in the lower 48 states.
- The largest preserved Sierran foothills ecosystem.
- More than 275 known marble caverns, many inhabited by cave wildlife that is found nowhere else.
- A wide spectrum of prehistoric and historic sites documenting human adaptations in their historic settings throughout the Sierran environments.



National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA)

The purpose of NEPA is “to encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between human beings and the physical environment for present and future generations.”

- NEPA mandates that every federal agency prepare an in-depth study of the impacts of “major federal actions having a significant effect on the environment.”
- It helps public officials make decisions that are based on understanding the impacts and take actions that protect, restore and enhance the environment.
- It ensures that environmental information is available to public officials and citizens before decisions are made and actions are taken.





NEPA Process



Environmental Impact Statement Process

- Public and internal scoping period (Now)
- Development of alternatives
- Analysis of data and preparation of Draft EIS
- Public review of Draft EIS
- Analysis of public comment
- Preparation of decision document and Final EIS
- Public release of Final EIS
- Announcement of decision on proposal



Purpose and Need for the WSP

Purpose

The purpose of this Wilderness Stewardship Plan is to provide for long-term protection and conservation of wilderness character and resource values reflected in the Wilderness Act. The plan will establish appropriate uses and management and will provide an integrated decision-making framework for the stewardship of wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks.



Need

A Wilderness Stewardship Plan is needed to establish goals and objectives for wilderness management. The plan will include desired conditions, resource indicators, and standards beyond which management actions will be taken to reduce human impacts to wilderness resources.



What Will Be In The WSP?

The WSP will provide detailed guidance on a variety of issues including, but not limited to:

- day and overnight use;
- wilderness permitting;
- campfires;
- proper food storage;
- party size;
- camping and campsites;
- human waste management;
- stock use;
- meadow management;
- research activities;
- wildlife management;
- cultural resources; and
- maintenance of trails, bridges, or other necessary infrastructure.





What Will Be In The WSP? (continued)

The WSP will provide detailed guidance on the:

“Minimum requirement” for the administration of areas as wilderness;

An extent necessary determination to determine which commercial services are necessary to fulfill the recreational and other purposes of the parks’ Congressionally designated wilderness areas. (per Sec. 4(d)(5) of the Wilderness Act).



What Will Be In The WSP? (continued)

The WSP will reevaluate existing wilderness-related plans and guidance, such as the *1986 Backcountry Management Plan* and the *1986 Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan*.

The WSP will also provide for more detailed management direction on provisions of the California Wilderness Act of 1984, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act of 2009, the *NPS Management Policies (2006)*...

And current interagency policies regarding the preservation of wilderness character as they relate to wilderness within the parks.

- Untrammeled
- Natural
- Undeveloped
- Provides outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation



Draft Potential Issues and Concerns

Recreation / Visitor Experience

- Use levels / party size / quotas / types of use
- Campfires
- Food storage
- Campsites
- Commercial services / extent necessary
- Human waste
- Stock use
- Linkage to front country activities and facilities
- Wilderness permit fees
- Ranger presence and contact



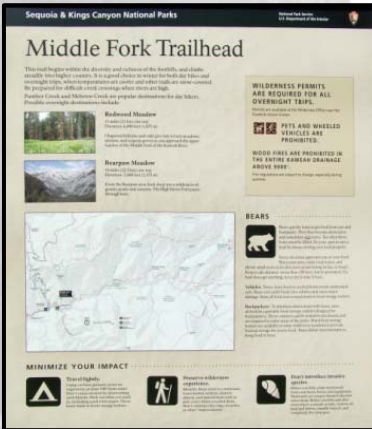
Education

- Leave No Trace (LNT) Program
- Park Programs
- Permits
- Day users and non-traditional users
- Opportunities external to wilderness (visitor centers, trailhead kiosks / waysides)





Draft Potential Issues and Concerns



Park Administration

- Trail management and maintenance
- Facilities / Ranger stations
- Signs
- Minimum requirements / minimum tools (administrative, resource, and research)
- Zoning
- Communications systems

Resource Protection and Management

- Research and Monitoring
- Fire Management
- Water quality
- Endangered species
- Cultural resources
- Soundscape and dark skies
- Non-native species
- External threats and influences (climate change, air quality, etc.)



Important Park Resources

Natural Resources

What natural resource issues do you consider most important to address in the plan?

What are the possible strategies for protection and monitoring of wilderness resources?





Important Park Resources

Physical Resources

What physical resource issues should be addressed?

Which are most important to you?



NPS Photo by R. Cain





Important Park Resources

Cultural Resources

How can we better protect the areas' historic, ethnographic, and archeological resources?

What cultural resource issues should we address?

Which are most important to you?





Important Park Resources

Visitor Use and Experience

What is important to you about recreational use?

What do you think about our wilderness fee structure?

What types of activities do you consider important and appropriate in wilderness? And inappropriate?

How can your visitor experience be enhanced by the National Park Service?





Other Questions to Consider

- What are your thoughts on party/group size, food storage practices, and campfires?
- Are there any areas of the wilderness that warrant special consideration?
- Are there areas that are too crowded? Are there areas where you see unacceptable impacts to wilderness resources?
- What are your thoughts on minimum requirements, i.e. what are appropriate management activities and techniques?
- What are your thoughts about commercial services in wilderness, such as guided hiking, guided stock trips, guided climbing, etc.?
- What other concerns do you have about wilderness at SEKI?

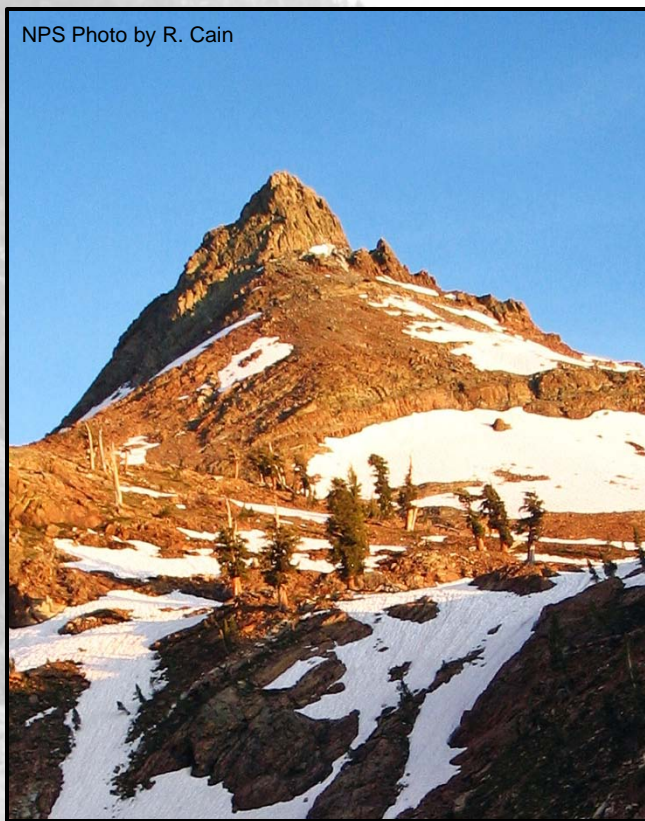


Draft Planning Timeline

Tentative Dates	Planning Phase
March 2011	Internal Scoping
April 2011	Public and Agency Scoping (We are here)
Winter 2011/2012	Alternatives Development
Summer 2012 – Fall 2013	Prepare Draft WSP/EIS
Fall 2013 – Winter 2014 (90 days)	Public Comment on Draft WSP/EIS
Summer 2014	Release of the Final WSP/EIS
Fall 2014	Record of Decision
After Record of Decision	Implementation of Plan



How Can You Get Involved?



Take a moment to write down your comments on the forms provided.

Comment Online

parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild

Mail or Fax Comments

ATTN: Wilderness Stewardship Plan
Karen Taylor-Goodrich

Superintendent

Sequoia & Kings Canyon National Parks

47050 Generals Highway

Three Rivers, CA 93271-9700

Fax: (559) 565-4202

The comment period for scoping began on April 11, 2011 and will end 90 days after publication of the Notice of Intent (NOI).



Next Steps...

For information and links to the project and other documents:
http://www.nps.gov/seki/parkmgmt/wilderness_plan.htm