

Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

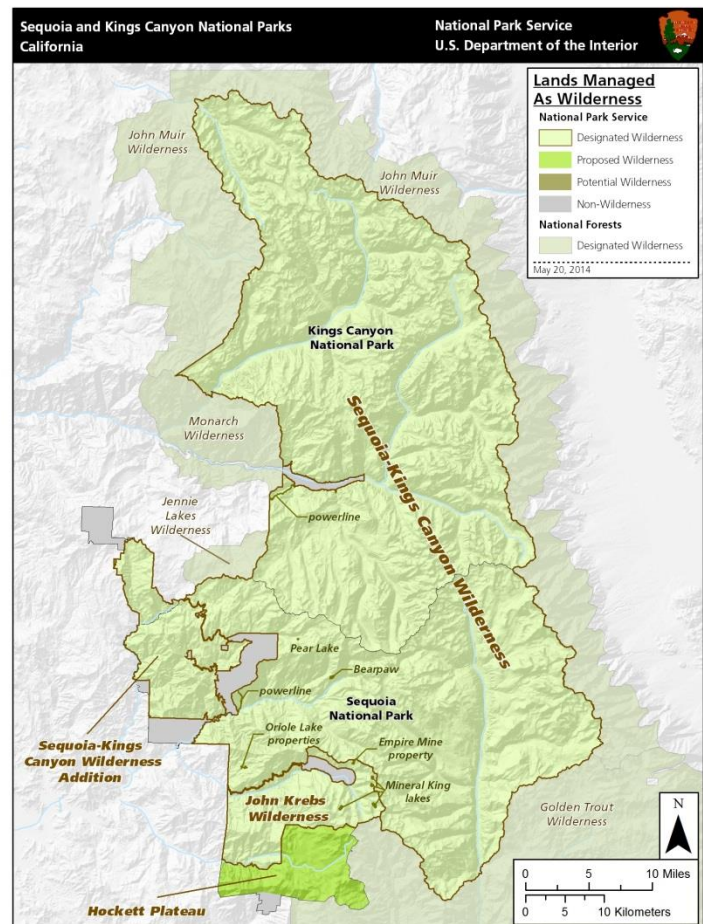


Wilderness in Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

The California Wilderness Act of 1984 designated the Sierra Crest portion and other parts of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks as the Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness. In 2009, the Omnibus Public Land Management Act expanded the Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness to include the North Fork Kaweah area and the Redwood Canyon area, and also designated the John Krebs Wilderness in Sequoia National Park.

These wilderness areas are managed under the provisions of the national 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.”

The parks’ total designated wilderness is 808,078 acres – more than 93% of all lands in these parks. Additional acres are managed as wilderness according to law and policy, which results in nearly 97% of all park lands being managed as wilderness. These wilderness areas form the core of the largest expanse of contiguous wilderness in California.



What makes this wilderness special?

People from around the world value and visit the wilderness within these parks. Its superlative scenic landscapes, including glacially carved canyons, broad lake basins, lush meadows, and sheer granite peaks are the hallmarks of the most rugged portion of the High Sierra. The wilderness also contains other unique and outstanding resources: giant sequoia trees, ancient pines, a wide variety of wildlife (including rare species such as the Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep), and outstanding cave resources. The headwaters of four major river systems originate in this wilderness.

Thousands of people visit the wilderness each year. Many spend a few hours there, and many spend weeks exploring. This wilderness provides diverse, outstanding opportunities for activities: hiking and backpacking, horseback riding and packing, mountaineering, fishing, boating, and other recreational, educational, and inspirational activities. Nearly 650 miles of trail, including the High Sierra Trail and portions of the famous John Muir and Pacific Crest trails, thread through the wilderness. The open nature of the Sierra’s high-elevation basins also makes these expanses well suited for cross-country travel.

People who cannot visit also value wilderness for many reasons: protection of water, air quality, and wildlife habitat; its beauty, scientific, and legacy value for their children; and just knowing it exists.

What is the Wilderness Stewardship Plan?

Currently, park wilderness is managed under the 1986 Backcountry Management Plan and 1986 Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan. These plans have guided the parks in effectively managing visitor use in wilderness for nearly 30 years. However, a new plan is needed to establish more specific goals and objectives for visitor use and certain administrative actions in wilderness. A number of issues were not addressed in the 1986 plans. The Wilderness Stewardship Plan and draft environmental impact statement (WSP/DEIS) analyze a range of approaches for updated management of this wilderness.



When completed, the plan will establish a framework for managing the parks' wilderness to meet these critical objectives:

- Preserve wilderness character;
- Provide opportunities for and encourage public use and enjoyment of the wilderness (in accordance with the Wilderness Act and other laws and policies);
- Improve conditions in areas where there may be unacceptable levels of impacts on wilderness character; and
- Protect the natural and cultural resources within wilderness.

Project Schedule

June 27 - August 25, 2014	60-day public review of Wilderness Stewardship Plan / Draft Environmental Impact Statement. NPS will conduct public meetings to inform the public about the plan and offer opportunities for discussion
Fall 2014	Review public input and update Wilderness Stewardship Plan
Spring 2015	Release of Final Wilderness Stewardship Plan/EIS

How can I be involved?

We recommend that you visit the National Park Service *Planning, Environment, and Public Comment* (PEPC) website at: <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> to read the WSP/DEIS and supplemental information and maps that will be helpful in your review. The public meeting times and locations are also provided on this website, or by calling (559) 565-3102. We encourage you to use the PEPC website to submit your written comments on the plan. Written comments will also be accepted by mail or hand delivery, or by fax to:

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