



National Wilderness Week, 1989

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

When our Nation was founded, much of the land that eventually became part of the United States was unspoiled wilderness, teeming with wildlife and rich in natural resources. But after just 100 years, much of the American frontier had virtually disappeared. Railroads crisscrossed the continent, inviting settlement and industry. The rush for land and resources led to almost unchecked development.

The end of the 19th century, however, marked a turning point in the management of America's natural resources. For the benefit of the entire country, the U.S. Government began to reserve selected public land as National Parks, National Forests, and National Wildlife Refuges. In 1924, the Gila National Forest in New Mexico became the first public land allocated specifically for the purpose of preserving the ecological, geological, scientific, and historic value of the wilderness. Forty years later, the desire to protect our Nation's wilderness resource was codified with the signing of the Wilderness Act on September 3, 1964.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of that Act, which established the National Wilderness Preservation System. This System was the first of its kind in the world. Managed by the Departments of Agriculture and the Interior, the System now includes more than 90 million acres of wilderness in 44 States. The Wilderness Act directs that these acres be managed to "secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness . . . unimpaired for future use and enjoyment." It requires that these areas be "devoted to the public purposes of recreation, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation and historical use."

When the Wilderness Act was passed, many assumed that simply designating an area as wilderness would assure its preservation. However, experience has shown us that preserving these beautiful, untamed lands requires a lasting commitment and cooperation from the public. Every American can demonstrate that commitment by supporting the careful management and protection of our wilderness.

In recognition of the values of wilderness, the Congress by Senate Joint Resolution 67, has designated the week of September 3 through September 9, 1989, as "National Wilderness Week" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this week.

NOW, THEREFORE, I, GEORGE BUSH, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the week of September 3 through September 9, 1989, as National Wilderness Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF, I have hereunto set my hand this fourteenth day of August, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and eighty-nine, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and fourteenth.

George Bush