

Wilderness: Issues and Legislation

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Summary

The Wilderness Act of 1964 established the National Wilderness Preservation System and, in it, Congress reserved for itself the authority to designate federal lands as part of the system. As of September 9, 2022, the system consisted of over 112 million acres in 803 units, managed by four federal land management agencies (FLMAs): the Forest Service (FS) in the Department of Agriculture and the National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Department of the Interior (DOI). The act also directed the Secretaries of Agriculture and the Interior to review certain lands for their wilderness potential. Wilderness is managed to preserve its natural condition. Roads, structures, motorized access, and most commercial activity generally are prohibited in wilderness, although there are exceptions.

Bills to designate wilderness areas are typically introduced and considered in each Congress. Such designations are not amendments to the Wilderness Act but generally refer to the act for management guidance and sometimes include special provisions. The 116th Congress considered many bills to add to the wilderness system, and one was enacted into law, designating 1.3 million additional acres in four states of both new wilderness areas and additions to existing areas. To date, dozens of bills have been introduced in the 117th Congress to designate additional wilderness areas, though none have been enacted.

Wilderness designations can be controversial. Advocates propose wilderness designations to preserve the generally undeveloped conditions of the areas. Opponents express concern that such designations prevent certain uses and potential economic development in rural areas. The potential benefits or costs of wilderness designations are difficult to value or quantify. Thus, wilderness deliberations commonly focus on trying to maximize the benefits of preserving pristine areas while minimizing potential opportunity costs. These debates often focus on the extent and location of specific proposed changes to the National Wilderness Preservation System introduced in each Congress—such as whether to designate additional wilderness acres, modify existing wilderness boundaries, or other changes.

Wilderness debates also may focus on management and use of wilderness. Most wilderness bills direct management of designated wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act. However, proposed legislation may seek to allow otherwise-prohibited activities in the area or to address uses not contemplated in the Wilderness Act. Sometimes, wilderness debates focus on management and use of one specific unit; other times, the debates focus on management across the entire system. For example, the 117th Congress has considered legislation to authorize mechanized transport in all designated wilderness areas, which is prohibited in most circumstances.

Controversies regarding management of other protected areas related to wilderness also have been the subject of legislation. BLM *wilderness study areas* (WSAs) and FS *inventoried roadless areas* (IRAs) are currently subject to wilderness-like protections and often have been the subject of debate. BLM is required by law to protect the wilderness characteristics of its WSAs until Congress determines otherwise, leading Congress to frequently address WSAs in legislation, often to release them from this protection. IRAs are designated by regulations, which have frequently been changed or subject to legal challenges, leading Congress to sometimes consider addressing IRA management in law.

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The Wilderness Act of 1964 (P.L. 88-577, 16 U.S.C. §§1131-1136) established the National Wilderness Preservation System as a system of undeveloped federal lands, which are protected and managed to preserve their natural condition.¹ The act initially designated 54 wilderness areas containing 9.1 million acres of federal land within the national forests. Since then, Congress has passed more than 100 subsequent laws designating additional wilderness areas.² As of September 9, 2022, the National Wilderness Preservation System totaled 803 areas, spanning approximately 112 million acres.³ Many believe that certain areas should be designated to protect and preserve their unique value and characteristics, and bills are usually introduced in each Congress to designate wilderness areas. Others oppose such legislation because commercial activities, motorized access, and roads, structures, and facilities generally are prohibited in wilderness areas.

This report provides background on wilderness designation and management, information on wilderness legislation in the 116th and 117th Congresses, and a discussion of issues in the wilderness debate—some pros and cons of wilderness designation generally, proposed legislation, and a discussion of wilderness study area designations and protections and related issues. This report is updated periodically to track the status of legislation to designate new wilderness (see **Table 1**) or to release wilderness study areas (WSAs; see **Table 2**). Tables of legislation from the 116th Congress appear in the **Appendix**.

Wilderness Designations and Prohibited and Permitted Uses

In the Wilderness Act, Congress reserved for itself the authority to designate federal lands as part of the National Wilderness Preservation System. This congressional authority is based on the Property Clause of the Constitution, which gives to Congress the “Power to dispose of and make all needful Rules and Regulations respecting the Territory or other Property belonging to the United States.”⁴ Designated wilderness areas are part of existing units of federal land administered by four federal land management agencies—the Forest Service (FS) in the Department of Agriculture and the National Park Service (NPS), Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), and Bureau of Land Management (BLM) in the Department of the Interior (DOI). Thus, statutory provisions for these agencies’ lands, as well as the Wilderness Act and subsequent wilderness statutes, govern the administration of the designated wilderness areas.

Wilderness designations can be controversial because the Wilderness Act (and subsequent laws) restricts the allowed uses of the land within designated areas. In general, the Wilderness Act prohibits commercial activities, motorized access, and roads, structures, and facilities in wilderness areas. Specifically, Section 4(c) states

Except as specifically provided for in this Act, and subject to existing private rights, there shall be no commercial enterprise and no permanent road within any wilderness area designated by this Act and, except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in

¹ P.L. 88-577, 16 U.S.C. §1131.

² Subsequent wilderness statutes have not designated wilderness areas by amending the Wilderness Act; instead, they are independent statutes that typically direct management in accordance with the Wilderness Act, but also may provide for unique management guidance.

³ See CRS Report RL31447, *Wilderness: Overview, Management, and Statistics*, by Anne A. Riddle and Katie Hoover.

⁴ Art. IV, §3, cl. 2.

emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.⁵

This section thus prohibits most commercial resource extraction (such as timber harvesting) and motorized entry except for “minimum requirements” to administer the areas and in emergencies.⁶ However, Section 4(d) provides numerous exceptions, including (a) possible continued use of motorboats and aircraft where uses are already established; (b) measures to control fires, insects, and diseases; (c) mineral prospecting conducted “in a manner compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment”; (d) water projects; (e) continued livestock grazing; and (f) certain commercial recreation activities. Subsequent wilderness statutes have included additional provisions for administering those individual wilderness areas, including exceptions to the general Wilderness Act prohibitions. Wilderness designations are permanent unless revised by law. Congress has statutorily removed lands from several wilderness areas, commonly to adjust boundaries.

Nonconforming Uses or Conditions⁷

Lands do not have to be untouched by humans to be eligible for statutory designation as wilderness. Specific statutes designating wilderness areas may terminate or accommodate any existing uses or conditions that do not conform to wilderness standards (commonly referred to as *nonconforming uses*). Many previous wilderness designations have directed immediate termination of nonconforming uses, whereas other bills have directed the agencies to remove, remediate, or restore nonconforming conditions or infrastructure within a specified time frame.

Alternatively, many nonconforming uses and conditions have been permitted to remain in designated wilderness areas. The Wilderness Act explicitly allows continued motorized access by aircraft and motorboats in areas where such uses were already established. The Wilderness Act also permits motorized access for management requirements and emergencies, and for fire, insect, and disease control. Numerous wilderness statutes have permitted existing infrastructure (e.g., cabins, water resource facilities, telecommunications equipment) to remain and have authorized occasional motorized access to operate, maintain, and replace the infrastructure. A few statutes have also allowed new infrastructure developments within designated wilderness areas. Although such authorizations are usually for a specific area, some statutes have provided more general exemptions, such as for maintaining grazing facilities or for fish and wildlife management by a state agency in all areas designated in the statute.

Various existing wilderness statutes have included special access provisions for particular needs. For example, several statutes have included provisions addressing possible military needs in and near the designated areas, particularly for low-level military training flights. Similarly, statutes designating wilderness areas along the Mexican border commonly have allowed motorized access for law enforcement and border security.

⁵ 16 U.S.C. §1133(c).

⁶ The Wilderness Act did not further define what activities would qualify as a minimum requirement necessary for administration or emergency response. Each agency has developed different guidelines and policies to determine whether a specified activity would qualify, commonly referred to as a minimum requirements analysis.

⁷ For a discussion on uses in wilderness statutes, see CRS Report RL31447, *Wilderness: Overview, Management, and Statistics*, by Anne A. Riddle and Katie Hoover.

Other statutes have contained provisions allowing particular access for tribal, cultural, or other local needs. Several statutes have included provisions authorizing the agencies to prevent public access, usually temporarily and for the minimum area needed, to accommodate particular needs.

Debate Surrounding Wilderness Designations

Proponents of adding new areas to the National Wilderness Preservation System generally seek designations of specific areas to preserve them in their current condition and to prevent development activities from altering their wilderness character. Most areas protected as or proposed for wilderness are undeveloped, with few (if any) signs of human activity, such as roads and structures. The principal benefit of a wilderness designation is to maintain such undeveloped conditions and the values that such conditions generate—clean water, undisturbed wildlife habitats, natural scenic views, opportunities for nonmotorized recreation (e.g., backpacking), unaltered research baselines, and, for some, the knowledge of the existence of such pristine places.

Opponents of wilderness designations generally seek to retain development options for federal lands. The potential use of lands and resources can provide economic opportunities through extracting and developing the resources, especially in the communities in and around the federal lands. The principal cost of a wilderness designation is the lost opportunity for economic activity (*opportunity costs*) resulting from resource extraction and development. While some economic activities—such as grazing and some recreation—are allowed to continue within wilderness areas, many are prohibited. The potential losses for some resources—such as timber harvesting—can sometimes be estimated, since the quality and quantity of the resource can be measured. However, for other resources—particularly minerals—the quality and quantity of the unavailable resources are more difficult to assess, and thus the opportunity costs are less certain.

The potential benefits and opportunity costs of wilderness designation can rarely be fully quantified and valued. Thus, decisions about wilderness generally cannot be based solely on a clear cost-benefit or other economic analysis. Rather, deliberations commonly focus on trying to maximize the benefits of preserving pristine areas and minimize the resulting opportunity costs. However, individuals and groups who benefit from wilderness designations may differ from those who may be harmed by lost opportunities, increasing potential conflict and making compromise difficult.

Issues and Legislation in the 117th Congress

Congress typically addresses several issues when drafting and considering wilderness bills. These issues include the general pros and cons of wilderness designation—generally and regarding identified areas of interest—and specific provisions regarding management of wilderness areas to allow or prohibit certain uses.

Bills Designating Wilderness Areas

The first step in developing legislation to designate wilderness areas is to identify which areas to designate. The Wilderness Act specified that wilderness areas are “at least 5,000 acres of land or ... of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition,”⁸ but no minimum size is required for designations made under new legislation. As a result, wilderness

⁸ 16 U.S.C. §1131(c).

areas have taken all shapes and sizes; the smallest is the Pelican Island Wilderness in Florida, with only 5.5 acres, and the largest is the Mollie Beattie Wilderness (Arctic National Wildlife Refuge) in Alaska, with 8.0 million acres.⁹ Areas may be identified through agency analysis of their lands' potential for wilderness designation, a process which may be specified in law or conducted in accordance with the agency's inventory and/or land use planning laws. Areas also are sometimes identified by local stakeholders, who identify and advocate for protection of a specific area.

Many wilderness statutes have designated a single area, or even a single addition to an existing area. Others have designated dozens of new areas or additions in a single statute. Some bills address a particular area, while others address all likely wilderness areas for a state or region (e.g., the California desert, the northern Rockies), usually for one agency's lands, although occasionally for two or more agencies' lands in the vicinity. Typically, the bill references a particular map for each area, and directs the agency to file a map with the relevant committees of Congress after enactment and to retain a copy in relevant agency offices (commonly a local office and/or the Washington, DC, headquarters). Wilderness bills may or may not specify the acreage of the proposed designation in the bill text.

Numerous bills to designate wilderness areas usually are introduced in each Congress. Such bills may focus exclusively on wilderness designations, may relate to federal land management in general (i.e., may also address non-wilderness management issues or other land designations), or may address wilderness as part of a broad suite of issues (for example, agricultural policy bills or *farm bills*). Through the legislative process, Congress may change the legislative vehicle through which wilderness provisions are considered: for example, committee action may combine multiple wilderness bills or wilderness provisions originally introduced in stand-alone bills may be added to broad omnibus legislation (i.e., appropriations bills). For example, the 116th Congress passed one law, designating a total of 1.3 million acres in four states, drawing from dozens of introduced bills; many of the wilderness areas designated in that law were first introduced through stand-alone bills.¹⁰ That law also considered multiple other land designations and federal land management issues. See **Table A-1** and **Table A-2** for a list of wilderness provisions introduced and bills enacted into law in the 116th Congress.

In the 117th Congress, as of the date of this report, over 30 bills had been introduced to expand the National Wilderness Preservation System. To date, the 117th Congress has not enacted any laws that designated wilderness. Legislative action on wilderness in the 117th Congress has focused on incorporation of multiple wilderness bills into the House version of the FY2022 National Defense Authorization Act (which did not pass into law) and into the FY2023 National Defense Authorization Act (which remains under consideration). See **Table 1** for a list of wilderness bills introduced in the 117th Congress and a description of their status as of September 15, 2022.

⁹ For more information on issues regarding the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, see CRS Report RL33872, *Arctic National Wildlife Refuge (ANWR): An Overview*, by Laura B. Comay, Michael Ratner, and R. Eliot Crafton.

¹⁰ P.L. 115-334, P.L. 115-430.

Table 1. 117th Congress: Bills to Designate Wilderness

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
199 named areas in the following regions: Great Basin (44 areas), Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (49 areas), Moab-La Sal (17 areas), Henry Mountains (11 areas), Glen Canyon (9 areas), San Juan-Anasazi (15 areas), Canyonlands Basin (14 areas), San Rafael Swell (20 areas), Book Cliffs/Uinta Basin (20 areas)	America's Red Rock Wilderness Act	H.R. 3780; S. 1535	UT	—	8,550,500	H.R. 3780 introduced 06/08/2021 S. 1535 introduced 05/10/2021
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness (1,559,538)	Arctic Refuge Protection Act of 2021	S. 282 ; H.R. 815	AK	—	1,559,538	H.R. 815 introduced 02/04/2021; S. 282 introduced 02/08/2021
Bob Marshall Additions (47,206), Mission Mountains Additions (4,462), Scapegoat Additions (27,392)	Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act	S. 1493	MT	—	79,060	S. 1493 introduced 04/29/2021
Mount Olympus Addition (326)	Bonneville Shoreline Trail Advancement Act	H.R. 2551 S. 1222	UT	—	326	H.R. 2551 hearings held 11/09/2021 S. 1222 hearings held 6/16/2021
Caliente Mountain (35,116), Soda Lake (13,332), Temblor Range (12,585), Chumash Additions (23,670), Dick Smith Additions (54,036), Garcia Additions (7,289), Machesna Mountain Additions (8,774), Matilija Additions (30,184), San Rafael Additions (23,969), Santa Lucia Additions (2,921), Sespe Additions (14,313), Diablo Caliente (17,870).	Central Coast Heritage Protection Act PUBLIC Lands Act	H.R. 973 S. 1459	CA	House provisions included as §403 of H.R. 803, §5562 of H.R. 4350, and Division I, §301 of H.R. 7900. The PUBLIC Lands Act (S. 1459) also includes the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 878) and the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 693). See corresponding table entries.	Total H.R. 973: 244,059 Total S. 1459: 532,515	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 1459 hearings held 10/19/2021

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Cerro de la Olla (13,103)	Cerro de la Olla Wilderness Establishment Act	H.R. 2522 S. 177	NM	Provisions included as §701 of H.R. 7900.	Introduced: 13,103 Last Action: 12,898	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 177 introduced 02/02/2021
Ptarmigan Peak Additions (6,896), Holy Cross Addition (3,866), Hoosier Ridge (5,235), Tenmile (7,624), Eagles Nest Addition (9,670), Lizard Head Addition (3,141), Mount Sneffels Additions (19,700), McKenna Peak (8,884)	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	H.R. 577 S. 173	CO	Provisions included as §§712 and 732 of H.R. 803, §§5612 and 5632 of H.R. 4350, and §§7112 and 7132 of H.R. 7900. In H.R. 7900, the Mount Sneffels Addition has been divided into two areas, the Liberty Bell and Last Dollar Additions, and the Whitehouse Additions.	Introduced: 65,016 Last Action: 62,980	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 173 introduced 02/02/2021.

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Maroon Bells Addition (316), Redcloud Peak (38,217), Handies Peak (26,734), McIntyre Hills (16,481), Grand Hogback (10,282), Demaree Canyon (25,624), Little Bookcliffs (28,279), Bull Gulch (14,886), Castle Peak (12,016) Assignment Ridge (19,240), Badger Creek (23,116), Beaver Creek (35,251), Grape Creek (32,884), North Bangs Canyon (13,351), South Bangs Canyon (5,144), The Palisade (26,624), Unaweeep (19,776), Sewemup Mesa (37,637), Platte River Addition (31), Roubideau (17,587), Norwood Canyon (12,102), Cross Canyon (24,475), McKenna Peak (21,220), Weber-Menefee Mountain (14,270), Dolores River Canyon (33,351), Browns Canyon (17,922), San Luis Hills (10,527), Table Mountain (23,559), North Ponderosa Gorge (10,844), South Ponderosa Gorge (12,393), Diamond Breaks (33,168), Papoose Canyon (4,782), West Elk Addition (6,695) Cain Mountain (6,386), Desatoya Mountains (7,766)	Colorado Wilderness Act (Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act) Lander County Land Management and Conservation Act	H.R. 803 S. 1411	CO NV	The Colorado Wilderness Act was renamed the Protecting America's Wilderness and Public Lands Act and amended to include the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 878, S.1459), the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 973 , S.1459), the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 693 , S.1459), the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (H.R. 577, S.173), the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 999, S.455), and the Virginia Wilderness Additions Act of 2021 (S.1000). See respective table entries. The wilderness designations in H.R. 803 described at left were subsequently included in H.R. 4350 and Division I, §102 of H.R. 7900.	Introduced: 628,784 Latest action total: 1,361,905 14,142	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 1411 introduced 04/28/2021

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
89 named areas in California (34), Colorado (41), and Washington (14)	National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of FY2022	H.R. 4350	CA, CO, WA	H.R. 4350 was amended to include the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 878, S.1459), the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 973, S.1459), the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 693, S.1459), the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (H.R. 577, S.173), the Colorado Wilderness Act (H.R. 803), the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 999, S.455). See respective table entries.	1,361,905	H.R. 4350 passed House 09/23/2021. Congress adopted the Senate version of the FY2022 NDAA (P.L. 117-81), which does not contain any wilderness provisions.
90 named areas in California (34), New Mexico (1), Colorado (41), and Washington (14)	National Defense Authorization Act (NDAA) of FY2023	H.R. 7900	CA, CO, NM, WA	H.R. 7900 was amended to include the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 878, S.1459), the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 973, S.1459), the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 693, S.1459), the Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy Act (H.R. 577, S.173), the Colorado Wilderness Act (H.R. 803), the Cerro de la Olla Wilderness Establishment Act (H.R. 2522, S. 177), and the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 999, S.455). See respective table entries.	1,365,893	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Clan Alpine Mountains (128,362), Desatoya Mountains (32,537), Cain Mountain (two areas, 7,664 and 12,339), Fox Peak (8,592), Burbank Canyons (12,392), Bluewing (24,900), Selenite Peak (22,822), Mt. Limbo (11,855), North Sahwave (13,875), Grandfathers (35,339), Fencemaker (14,942)	Northern Nevada Economic Development, Conservation, and Military Modernization Act of 2021	H.R. 5243	NV	Cain Mountain and Desatoya Mountain also are included in S. 1411. The acres differ substantially and it is unclear how the legislative provisions in the two bills relate.	325,619	H.R. 5243 introduced 09/14/2021
Many named areas (S. 1276: 450 areas, H.R. 1755: 451 areas) in the Greater Glacier/Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (19), Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (59), Salmon/Selway Ecosystem (S. 1276: 91, H.R. 1755: 88) Greater Cabinet/Yaak/Selkirk Ecosystem (47), Greater Hells Canyon Ecosystem (5), Islands in the Sky (111) and Wilderness in Biological Connecting Corridors (S. 1276: 118, H.R. 1755: 122)	Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act	S. 1276 H.R. 1755	ID, MT, OR, WA, WY	—	S. 1276: 23,395,000 H.R. 1755: 23,516,000	S. 1276 introduced 04/21/2021 H.R. 1755 introduced 03/10/2021

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Black Butte River (11,155), Chancelulla Additions (6,382), Chinquapin (27,164), Elkhorn Ridge Addition (37), English Ridge (6,204), Headwaters Forest (4,360), Mad River Buttes (6,097), Mount Lassic Addition (1,288), North Fork Eel Addition (16,342), Pattison (29,451), Sanhedrin Addition (112), Siskiyou Addition (23,913), South Fork Eel River Addition (603), South Fork Trinity River Addition (26,115), Trinity Alps Addition (61,187), Underwood (15,068), Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Additions (11,243), Yuki Addition (11,076)	Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act	H.R. 878	CA	Provisions included as §231 of H.R. 803, §5531 of H.R. 4350, and Division I, §231 of H.R. 7900. The PUBLIC Lands Act also includes the provisions of the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 973) and the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 693). See respective table entries.	Total H.R. 878 Introduced: 257,797 Total H.R. 878, Latest Action: 259,959 Total S. 1459: 532,515	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 1459 hearings held 10/19/2021
Wild Rogue Additions (59,512)	Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act Wild Rogue Conservation and Recreation Enhancement Act	S. 1589 H.R. 7509	OR	—	59,512	S. 1589 introduced on 5/12/2021; placed on Senate legislative calendar on 3/2/2022; H.R. 7509 introduced on 4/14/2022
Mount Hood Additions (5,427), Salmon-Huckleberry Additions (2,156)	REC Act of 2022	H.R. 7665	OR	—	7,583	H.R. 7665 introduced 05/06/2022
Condor Peak (8,207), San Gabriel Addition (2,032), Sheep Mountain Addition (13,726), Yerba Buena (6,694)	San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act	H.R. 693	CA	Provisions included as §523 of H.R. 803, §5593 of H.R. 4350, and Division I, §423 of H.R. 7900. The PUBLIC Lands Act also includes the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 878) and the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 973). See respective table entries.	H.R. 693: 30,659 S. 1459: 532,515	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 1459 hearings held 10/19/2021
	PUBLIC Lands Act	S. 1459				

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Shawnee (289,000)	Shawnee Wilderness Designation Act	H.R. 3176 S. 1606	IL	—	289,000	H.R. 3176 introduced 5/13/2021; S. 1606 introduced 5/13/2021
Skidmore Fork (5,079), Ramseys Draft Addition (6,963), Lynn Hollow (3,574), Little River (12,461), Beech Lick Knob (5,764),	Shenandoah Mountain Act of 2022	S. 3911	VA	—	33,841	S. 3911 introduced 03/23/2022
Bridge Canyon addition (10,137), Eldorado addition (3,878), Ireteba Peaks addition (19,521), Muddy Mountains addition (44,942), Nellis Wash addition (30,211), South McCullough addition (31,120), Spirit Mountain addition (699), Mount Stirling (73,011), Overton (23,227), Twin Springs (9,684), Scanlon Wash (22,826), Hiller Mountains (14,832), Hell's Kitchen (12,439), South Million Hills (8,955), New York Mountains (14,114), Piute Mountains (7,404), Sheep Range (435,277), Las Vegas Range (150,823), Gass Peak (33,424), Desert Bighorn (285,749), Pintwater-East Desert-Spotted Range (268,698), Hole-in-the Rock West (91,533), Desert Range (23,100), Lucy Gray (9,717)	Southern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act	S. 567 H.R. 1597	NV	—	1,625,321	H.R. 1597 introduced on 3/3/2021 S. 567 hearings held on 3/31/2022
Rough Mountain Addition (1,000), Rich Hole Addition (4,600)	Virginia Wilderness Additions Act of 2021	S. 1000	VA	Provisions included as §2301 of H.R. 803.	5,600	H.R. 803 passed House 2/26/2021 S. 1000 introduced 3/25/2021

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres ^a	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Related Bills and Congressional Action	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Lost Creek (7,159), Rugged Ridge (5,956), Alcee Creek (1,787), Gates of the Elwha (5,669), Buckhorn Additions (21,965), Green Mountain (4,790), The Brothers Additions (8,625), Mount Skokomish Additions (8,933), Wonder Mountain Additions (26,517), Moonlight Dome (9,117), South Quinault Ridge (10,887), Colonel Bob Additions (353), Sam's River (13,418), Canoe Creek (1,378).	Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	S. 455 H.R. 999	WA	Provisions included as §302 of H.R. 803, §5551 of H.R. 4350, and Division I, §601 of H.R. 7900.	124,767	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 455 introduced 02/25/2021
Wild Rogue Addition (59,512)	Wild Rogue Conservation and Recreation Enhancement Act	H.R. 7509	OR	—	59,512	H.R. 7509 introduced 4/14/22
Encampment River Canyon, Prospect Mountain, Upper Sweetwater Canyon, Lower Sweetwater Canyon, Bobcat Draw	Wyoming Public Lands Initiative Act of 2021	S. 1750	WY	Acreage not specified in bill text.	Unknown	S. 1750 introduced 5/20/21

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: Bills may contain multiple designations. CRS identified acreage from the latest version of the legislation – as introduced, reported, passed, or enacted. Acreage listed in legislation may differ from final designated acreage (for example, if acreage in legislation is described as “approximate” or differs from the acreage calculated from official maps). Therefore, acreage should be considered approximate. To the extent possible, legislative provisions (i.e., wilderness designations or additions of a given area) are listed once, in the entry corresponding with the bill in which they were first introduced. If the provision was included in subsequent bills, either newly introduced, through the amendment process, or by other means, this is described in the “Notes” column. Bills that only included wilderness designations that had previously been introduced in other legislative vehicles are not generally listed in a separate entry, although the National Defense Authorization Acts of FY2022 and FY2023 are included to reflect congressional interest.

- a. Some wilderness bills contain hundreds of named areas. In this case, CRS has listed the region of the named areas (generally, the subtitle or section name specified in the bill) and the number of named areas in the region. Acres are as introduced and may differ from the latest action.

Management in Accordance with the Wilderness Act

Most bills direct that the designated areas are to be managed in accordance with the Wilderness Act, meaning human impacts, such as commercial activities, motorized and mechanical access, and infrastructure developments, are generally prohibited. The Wilderness Act does allow some activities that affect the natural condition of the area, such as access for emergencies and for minimum management requirements; activities to control fires, insects, and diseases; livestock grazing; and some water infrastructure facilities.¹¹ Subject to valid existing rights, wilderness areas are withdrawn from the public land laws and the mining and mineral leasing laws. The Wilderness Act specifies that “reasonable access” to nonfederal lands within a designated wilderness area must be accommodated.¹² State jurisdiction over and responsibilities for fish and wildlife and water rights are unaffected.

Individual bills designating wilderness areas may terminate or accommodate existing nonconforming uses or conditions. They also may address uses not considered in the Wilderness Act. In addition, Congress often considers legislation related to management of the system as a whole. For example, recent past Congresses have considered issues related to hunting, fishing, and shooting in wilderness, and border security operations in wilderness areas on the U.S.-Mexico border. The 117th Congress has considered legislation to address the use of mechanical transport in wilderness.

Mechanical Transport

The Wilderness Act generally prohibits mechanical transport.¹³ Most of the FLMA’s wilderness policies define *mechanical transport* to consist of human-powered vehicles with moving parts (except wheelchairs), such as strollers and mountain bikes.¹⁴ This prohibition has received attention from wilderness stakeholders and some Members of recent Congresses. Some stakeholders, such as mountain biking interest groups, assert that human-powered mechanical transport should be allowed in wilderness areas.¹⁵ These groups sometimes assert that mechanical transport is consistent with the spirit of the Wilderness Act or was not contemplated by Congress when the act was passed (e.g., mountain biking had not yet developed as a sport); they also contend that wilderness designations have contributed to a loss of recreation opportunities for those using mechanical transport. Other stakeholders assert that mechanical transport should remain prohibited. They contend that allowing mechanical transport would result in negative impacts to wilderness and interpret the act to prohibit mechanical transport both in letter and in spirit.¹⁶

¹¹ See 16 U.S.C. §1133(c) and 16 U.S.C. §1133(d).

¹² See 16 U.S.C. §1134(c).

¹³ 16 U.S.C. §1133.

¹⁴ BLM, FS, and FWS’s policies define *mechanical transport* to include vehicles and contrivances with moving parts, such as bicycles, strollers, sailboats, carts, and wheelbarrows, and exclude vehicles without moving parts, such as skis, snowshoes, and canoes. Wheelchairs were exempted from wilderness prohibitions through the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (P.L. 101-336). For BLM policy, see 43 C.F.R. §6301.5. For FS policy, see Forest Service Manual 2320, “Wilderness Management”. For FWS policy, see Fish and Wildlife Service Policy Manual 610 FW 1. CRS was unable to locate a definition of mechanical transport in NPS policies.

¹⁵ For example, see Sustainable Trails Coalition, *FAQ/Resources*.

¹⁶ For example, see Christopher Solomon, “Op-Ed: 5 Lies Being Used to Get Mountain Bikes in Wilderness,” *Outside*, March 31, 2017.

Some have sought to address this issue for individual wilderness areas, such as by adjusting boundaries to exclude mountain biking trails or advocating for alternate land designations. For example, in the 117th Congress, S. 1222 and H.R. 2551 would adjust multiple wilderness boundaries to allow biking on sections of the 100-plus-mile Bonneville Shoreline Trail.¹⁷ Others have sought to address the issue for all wildernesses. For example, legislation in previous Congresses would have explicitly allowed certain forms of mechanical transport in wildernesses (e.g., H.R. 1349 in the 115th Congress). In the 117th Congress, sponsors reintroduced the Human-Powered Travel in Wilderness Areas Act (S. 1686) for the fourth consecutive Congress. The bill would require local officials of the FLMAs to determine permissible forms of mechanized transport on established routes in wildernesses within two years of enactment. If local officials did not do so, all forms of mechanical transport would become permissible.

Wilderness Study Areas and Reviews for Wilderness Potential

Congress directed FS and BLM to initially evaluate the wilderness potential of their lands at different times, and these wilderness reviews have been controversial. Congress directed FS to review the wilderness potential of the National Forest System (NFS) in the 1964 Wilderness Act, and it directed BLM to do so for public lands in the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA).¹⁸ BLM and FS have different requirements on how to manage the wilderness potential of lands related to those studies. Some believe these *wilderness study areas* (WSAs, for BLM) and *inventoried roadless areas* (IRAs, for FS) restrict development opportunities, despite lacking congressional designation as wilderness. Others believe these designations protect important lands and resources.

Forest Service Wilderness Considerations and Inventoried Roadless Areas

The Wilderness Act directed FS to evaluate the wilderness potential of NFS lands by September 3, 1974.¹⁹ In the 1970s and 1980s, FS conducted two reviews, known as the Roadless Area Review and Evaluation (RARE) I and II; legal action blocked the results and limited FS management of associated lands. Congress intervened to legislatively address the reviewed areas, such as by designating them as wilderness or returning them to multiple-use management. In 2001, FS issued the Roadless Area Conservation Rule (*2001 Rule*) and designated the first IRAs, which were based on the reviews.²⁰ The rule's intended purpose was to protect the nation's collective roadless area resources from the negative impacts of roads and timber harvesting, control costs associated with roads on FS lands, and reduce the costs of litigation. However, the issuance of the 2001 Rule prompted more than a decade of conflict, including revocation and replacement with an alternate rule in 2005, litigation challenging both rules, and issuance of multiple state-specific roadless rules.²¹

Inventoried roadless areas are now defined, and their management specified, by four separate rulemakings. The 2001 Rule defines IRAs as areas identified in a referenced set of inventoried

¹⁷ Office of Congressman John Curtis, "Curtis Applauds Unanimous Passage of Bonneville Shoreline Trail Construction in Natural Resources Committee," press release, January 21, 2022.

¹⁸ P.L. 94-579; 43 U.S.C. §§1701 et seq. The Wilderness Act directed the Secretary of the Interior to review the wilderness potential of the lands managed by the NPS and FWS, but did not include BLM lands.

¹⁹ P.L. 88-577 §3(b); 16 U.S.C. §1132(b).

²⁰ FS, "Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation," 66 *Federal Register* 3244, January 12, 2001.

²¹ For additional detail on litigation regarding the roadless rules, see CRS Report R46504, *Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)*, by Anne A. Riddle and Adam Vann.

roadless area maps. This definition initially applied to all IRAs. However, FS subsequently issued individual roadless rules for Colorado, Idaho, and the Tongass National Forest (Tongass) in Alaska.²² IRAs for Colorado and Idaho also are designated through a set of maps that accompanied their individual roadless rules. The most recent roadless rulemaking, in 2020, exempted the Tongass from the 2001 Rule (which previously applied).

IRAs may have characteristics associated with generally undeveloped land (e.g., high-quality or undisturbed soil, water, or air; plant and animal diversity; sources of public drinking water; and others). The 2001 Rule addresses two issues: (1) roads and (2) timber harvesting in IRAs. Under the 2001 Rule, road construction, road reconstruction, and timber harvesting are prohibited in IRAs except under specified circumstances. These restrictions apply to NFS lands, except those in Colorado, Idaho, and the Tongass. The Colorado and Idaho rules address restrictions to road building and timber harvesting but may address other IRA uses or resources.

FS management of roadless areas has been contentious and is often the subject of congressional interest. Debates on IRA management often center on whether current FS roadless rules specify desirable levels of resource protection or resource development, with various sides supporting or opposing the rules' current provisions. Congress often considers policies such as codifying the roadless rules' provisions into law to provide more durable protections for roadless areas.²³ In recent Congresses, the exemption of the Tongass from the 2001 Rule also has been a focus of congressional attention. For example, Congress has sought to prohibit FS from using appropriated funds for forest development roads in the Tongass.²⁴

For more information on IRAs, see CRS Report R46504, *Forest Service Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs)*, by Anne A. Riddle and Adam Vann, and CRS Report R46505, *The Alaska Roadless Rule: Eliminating Inventoried Roadless Areas (IRAs) in the Tongass National Forest*, by Anne A. Riddle.

BLM Wilderness Study Areas and Wilderness Reviews

Section 603(a) of FLPMA required BLM to review and present its wilderness recommendations to the President within 15 years of October 21, 1976, and the President then had two years to submit wilderness recommendations to Congress.²⁵ Starting in 1977 through 1979, BLM identified suitable wilderness study areas (WSAs) from roadless areas identified in its initial resource inventory. BLM presented its recommendations within the specified time frame, and Presidents George H. W. Bush and William J. Clinton submitted wilderness recommendations to Congress. Although these areas have been reviewed and several statutes have been enacted to designate BLM wilderness areas based on them, many of the wilderness recommendations for BLM lands remain pending before Congress. Section 603(c) of FLPMA directs the agency to manage the studied lands “until Congress has determined otherwise ... in a manner so as not to

²² FS, “Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; Applicability to the National Forests in Idaho,” 73 *Federal Register* 1135, January 7, 2008, FS “Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; Applicability to the National Forests in Colorado,” 77 *Federal Register* 39576, July 3, 2012, and FS, “Special Areas; Roadless Area Conservation; National Forest System Lands in Alaska,” 85 *Federal Register* 68688, October 29, 2020.

²³ For example, see S. 877 (116th Congress), the Roadless Area Conservation Act, which would codify the 2001 Rule, Colorado Rule, and Idaho Rule—but not the Alaska Rule—into law. Similar versions of the bill were introduced in multiple prior Congresses.

²⁴ For example, in the 117th Congress, see H.R. 4372, §437.

²⁵ P.L. 94-579 §603; 43 U.S.C. §1782(a).

impair the suitability of such areas for preservation as wilderness.”²⁶ Thus, BLM must protect the WSAs until Congress enacts legislation that releases BLM from that responsibility, even if BLM did not recommend them for wilderness designation. This is sometimes referred to as a *nonimpairment obligation*.

WSAs are controversial, particularly management under the nonimpairment obligation. Some contend that it was never Congress’ intention to require long-term management of all WSAs under such strict protection, and that they should be released from the nonimpairment obligation to facilitate development.²⁷ Others prefer that WSAs continue to be protected, including by designation as other land designations.²⁸ Each Congress typically introduces legislation that *releases* WSAs, or specifies that BLM’s study obligation has been fulfilled and the land is to be returned to multiple-use management. See **Table 2** for a list of BLM WSA release provisions in the 117th Congress (See **Appendix** for 116th Congress legislation). Previous Congresses also have considered legislation to more broadly release WSAs.²⁹

Table 2. 117th Congress: Bills to Release BLM Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Name of WSA(s)	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Latest Action
Dominguez Canyon, McKenna Peak	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	H.R. 577 S. 173	CO	Provisions added as §734 of H.R. 803, §5634 of H.R. 4350, and Division I, §7134 of H.R. 7900.	H.R. 7900 passed House 7/14/2022 S. 173 Hearings held 6/16/2021. S. 173 failed to report favorably from Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee on 5/03/2022
Augusta Mountain, Desatoya	Lander County Land Management and Conservation Act	S. 1411	NV		S. 1411 introduced 04/28/2021
Hoodoo Mountain, Wales Creek	Montana Sportsmen Conservation Act	S. 4470	MT	S. 4470 also would release National Forest System lands designated as “wilderness study areas.”	S. 4470 introduced 6/23/2022

²⁶ FLPMA §603; 43 U.S.C. §1782(c).

²⁷ Jen Sieve-Hicks, “Bill would resolve management practices for lands stuck in limbo,” *Buffalo Bulletin*, July 7, 2021.

²⁸ George Wuerther, “Barrasso’s ‘Wilderness’ Bill Could Go Much Further,” *WyoFile*, June 14, 2022.

²⁹ For example, the Wilderness and Roadless Area Release Act of 2011 (H.R. 1581/S. 1087, 112th Congress) would have released certain BLM WSAs—those not designated as wilderness by Congress and those identified by the BLM as not suitable for wilderness designation—from the nonimpairment requirement of Section 603(c) of FLPMA. The bill also would have terminated the Clinton Administration and George W. Bush Administration Forest Service roadless area rules.

Name of WSA(s)	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Latest Action
Stillwater Range, Job Peak, Clan Alpine Mountains, Augusta Mountains (portions in Clark County), Desatoya Mountains (portions in Clark County), and any other WSA located in Clark County not designated as wilderness by Sec. 403(a). Burbank Canyons, China Mountain, Mt. Limbo, Selenite Mountains, and Tobin Range, and the portion of the Augusta Mountains WSA within Pershing County	Northern Nevada Economic Development, Conservation, and Military Modernization Act of 2021	H.R. 5243	NV		H.R. 5243 introduced 9/14/2021
Any wilderness study areas located in the proposed Sutton Mountain National Monument	Sutton Mountain and Painted Hills Area Wildfire Resiliency Preservation and Economic Enhancement Act	S. 3144	OR		S. 3144 introduced 11/03/2021
Encampment River Canyon, Prospect Mountain, Bennett Mountains, Sweetwater Canyon, Larkin Dome, Split Rock, Savage Peak, Miller Springs, DuBois Badlands, Copper Mountain, Whiskey Mountain, Fortification Creek, Gardner Mountain, North Fork, Bobcat Draw, Cedar Mountain, Honeycombs	Wyoming Public Lands Initiative Act of 2021	S. 1750	WY		S. 1750 introduced 5/20/21
Middle Fork Judith, Hoodoo Mountain, Wales Creek	Montana Sportsmen Conservation Act	S. 4470	MT		S. 4470 introduced 6/23/22

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: CRS identified acreage from the latest version of the legislation – as introduced, reported, passed, or enacted. WSA release legislation may specify that WSA acreage is to be released if not otherwise acted upon in that legislation; for example, all WSA acreage not designated as wilderness is to be released. Wilderness study area releases in multiple bills are listed next to the first introduced bill. Bills containing minor boundary adjustments to WSAs are not included.

Appendix. 116th Congress Wilderness Legislation

The 116th Congress added approximately 1.3 million acres to the wilderness system (see **Table A-1**). Many other bills to designate additional wilderness areas were introduced and considered. See **Table A-2** for 116th Congress legislation regarding release of Bureau of Land Management (BLM) wilderness study areas (WSAs).

Table A-1. 116th Congress: Bills to Designate Wilderness Areas

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
199 named areas in the Great Basin (44), Grand Staircase-Escalante (49), Moab-La Sal Canyons (17), Henry Mountains (11), Glen Canyon (9), San Juan-Anasazi (15), Canyonlands Basin (14), San Rafael Swell (20), and Book Cliffs/Uinta Basin (20) regions	America's Red Rock Wilderness Act	H.R. 5775 S. 3056	UT		8,550,500	H.R. 5775 introduced 02/06/2020 S. 3056 introduced 12/16/2019
Aden Lava Flow (27,673), Broad Canyon (13,902), Cinder Cone (16,935), East Potrillo Mountains (12,155), Mount Riley (8,382), Organ Mountains (19,916), Potrillo Mountains (105,085), Robledo Mountains (16,776) Sierra de las Uvas (11,114), Whitethorn (9,616) Cerro Del Yuta (13,420), Rio San Antonio (8,120) Virgin Peak (18,296), Black Ridge (18,192), Bitter Ridge North (15,114), Bitter Ridge South (12,646), Billy Goat Peak (30,460), Million Hills (24,818), Lime Canyon Additions (10,069)	Antiquities Act	H.R. 1050 S. 367	NM, NV	Virgin Peak, Black Ridge, Bitter Ridge North, Bitter Ridge South, Billy Goat Peak, Million Hills, and Lime Canyon Additions were not enacted by P.L. 116-9.	Introduced: 392,689 Enacted: 263,094	P.L. 116-9 §§1201, 1202
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Wilderness (1,559,538)	Arctic Refuge Protection Act of 2019	S. 2461	AK		1,559,538	S. 2461 introduced 9/11/2019
Bob Marshall Additions (47,206), Mission Mountains Additions (4,462), Scapegoat Additions (27,392)	Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act	S. 1765	MT		79,060	S. 1765 introduced 6/10/2019

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
H.R. 7626: Mount Olympus addition (326) S. 4215: Mount Olympus addition (334)	Bonneville Shoreline Trail Enhancement Act	H.R. 7626 S. 4215	UT		H.R. 7626: 326 S. 4215: 334	H.R. 7626 referred 8/7/20 S. 4215 hearings held 11/18/20
Avawatz Mountains (89,500), Great Falls Basin (7,810), Soda Mountains (80,090), Milpitas Wash (17,250), Buzzards Peak (11,840), Golden Valley (1,250), Kingston Range (52,410), Palo Verde Mountains (9,350), Indian Pass Mountains (10,860), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions North Eureka Valley (11,496), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions Ibex (23,650), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions Panamint Valley (4,807), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions Warm Springs (10,485), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions Axe Head (8,638), Death Valley National Park Wilderness Additions Bowling Alley (28,923), San Geronio Additions (7,141)	California Desert Protection and Recreation Act of 2019	H.R. 376 S. 67	CA		375,500	P.L. 116-9, §1411

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Caliente Mountain (35,116), Soda Lake (13,332), Temblor Range (12,585), Chumash Additions (23,670), Dick Smith Additions (54,053), Garcia Additions (7,289), Machesna Mountain Additions (S.1111: 8,671, H.R. 2199: 8,774), Matilija Additions (30,184), San Rafael Additions (23,969), Santa Lucia Additions (2,921), Sespe Additions (14,313), Diablo Caliente (17,870)	Central Coast Heritage Protection Act	H.R. 2199 S. 1111	CA	House provisions included as §301 of H.R. 2546 and subsequently included as §20303 of H.R. 6395. Senate provisions included as §203 of S. 3288.	S. 1111: 243,973. H.R. 2199: 244,076	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Provision dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020). S.3288 introduced 2/12/2020.
Joaquin Rocks (21,000)	Clear Creek National Recreation Area and Conservation Act	H.R. 403	CA		21,000	H.R. 403 introduced 2/05/19
Ptarmigan Peak Additions (6,896), Holy Cross Addition (3,866), Hoosier Ridge (5,235), Tenmile (7,624), Eagles Nest Addition (9,670), Lizard Head Addition (3,141), Mount Sneffels Additions (19,700), McKenna Peak (8,884)	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	H.R. 823 S. 241	CO	Provisions included at §21102 and §21202 of H.R. 6395.	65,016	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Provision dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020). S. 241 hearings held 11/18/2020.

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Redcloud Peak (38,217), Handies Peak (26,734), McIntyre Hills (16,481), Grand Hogback (10,282), Demaree Canyon (25,624), Little Bookcliffs (28,279), Bull Gulch (14,886), Castle Peak (12,016) Assignment Ridge (19,240), Badger Creek (23,116), Beaver Creek (35,251), Grape Creek (32,884), North Bangs Canyon (13,351), South Bangs Canyon (5,144), The Palisade (26,624), Unaweepe (19,776), Sewemup Mesa (37,637), Roubideau (17,587), Norwood Canyon (12,102), Cross Canyon (24,475), McKenna Peak (21,220), Weber-Menefee Mountain (14,270), Dolores River Canyon (33,351), Browns Canyon (17,922), San Luis Hills (10,527), Table Mountain (23,559), North Ponderosa Gorge (10,844), South Ponderosa Gorge (12,393), Diamond Breaks (33,168), Papoose Canyon (4,782)	Colorado Wilderness Act (Protecting America's Wilderness Act)	H.R. 2546	CA, CO, WA	The Colorado Wilderness Act was renamed the Protecting America's Wilderness Act and amended to include the provisions of the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (H.R. 2250, S. 1110), the Central Coast Heritage Protection Act (H.R. 2199, S. 1111), the San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act (H.R. 2215, S. 1109), and the Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act (H.R. 2642, S. 1382). See corresponding table entries. The provisions of the Protecting America's Wilderness Act were subsequently incorporated as Division O of H.R. 6395.	Introduced: 621,742 Latest action: 1,290,015	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Division O dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020).
Sheep Range (433,785), Las Vegas Range (146,826), Gass Peak (32,954), Papoose Range (43,573), South Spotted Range (51,243), Pintwater/East Desert/Spotted Range (463,585), Desert Range (53,986), Hole-in-the-Rock (84,854)	Desert National Wildlife Refuge and Nevada Test and Training Range Withdrawal and Management Act	H.R. 5606 S. 3145	NV		1,256,820	H.R. 5606 introduced 1/19/2020 S. 3145 introduced 12/19/2019

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Devil's Staircase (30,621)	Devil's Staircase Wilderness Act of 2019	H.R. 999 S. 86	OR		30,621	P.L. 116-9, §1205
Burbank Canyons (12,392)	Oregon Wildlands Act Douglas County Economic Development and Conservation Act	S. 2890	NV		12,392	S. 2890 hearings held 09/16/2020
Bisti/De-Na-Zin expansion (2,250), Big Wild Horse Mesa (18,192), Cold Wash (11,001), Desolation Canyon (142,996), Devil's Canyon (8,675), Eagle Canyon (13,832), Horse Valley (12,201), Labyrinth Canyon (54,643), Little Ocean Draw (20,660), Little Wild Horse Canyon (5,479), Lower Last Chance (19,338), Mexican Mountain (76,413), Middle Wild Horse Mesa (16,343), Muddy Creek (98,023), Nelson Mountain (7,433), Red's Canyon (17,325), San Rafael Reef (60,442), Sid's Mountain (49,130), Turtle Canyon (29,029)	John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act	S. 47	NM UT	S. 47 designated 1,309,241 acres in total. 663,405 of these acres are for 21 areas that were not previously included in other bills introduced in the 116 th Congress, which are listed in this entry. For information on the areas that were previously introduced in other bills in the 116 th Congress, see table entries on the California Desert Protection and Recreation Act (H.R. 376, S. 67) and the Devil's Staircase Wilderness Act/Oregon Wildlands Act (H.R. 999, S. 86).	Acres unique to S. 47: 663,405 Total enacted: 1,309,241	P.L. 116-9, §1121; §1231

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Fifteenmile Creek (58,599), Oregon Canyon Mountains (57,891), Twelvemile Creek (37,779), Upper West Little Owyhee (93,159), Lookout Butte (66,194), Owyhee River Canyon (223,586), Twin Butte (18,135), Cairn 'C' (8,946), Oregon Butte (32,010), Deer Flat (12,266), Sacramento Hill (9,568), Coyote Wells (7,147), Big Grassey (45,192), Little Groundhog Reservoir (5,272), Lower Owyhee Canyon (79,947), Jordan Crater (31,141), Owhyee Breaks (29,471), Dry Creek (33,209), Dry Creek Buttes (53,782), Upper Leslie Gulch (2,911), Slocum Creek (7,528), Honeycombs (40,099), Wild Horse Basin (18,381), Quartz Mountain (32,781), The Tongue (6,800), Brunt Mountain (8,109), Cottonwood Creek (77,828), Castle Rock (6,151), West Fork Bendire (10,159), Beaver Dam Creek (19,080)	Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act	S. 2828	OR		1,133,121	S. 2828 hearings held 09/16/2020
Mt. Moriah, High Schells, Arc Dome (acres unknown)	Nevada Lands Bill Technical Corrections Act of 2019	H.R. 253	NV		Unknown	H.R. 253 introduced 1/04/2019

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Many named areas (S. 827: 450, H.R. 1321: 451) in the Greater Glacier/Northern Continental Divide Ecosystem (19), Greater Yellowstone Ecosystem (59), Salmon/Selway Ecosystem (S. 827: 91, H.R. 1321: 88) Greater Cabinet/Yaak/Selkirk Ecosystem (47), Greater Hells Canyon Ecosystem (5), Islands in the Sky (111) and Wilderness in Biological Connecting Corridors (S. 827: 118, H.R. 1321: 122)	Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA)	H.R. 1321 S. 827	ID, MT, OR, WA, WY		S. 827 Total: 23,395,000 H.R. 1321 Total: 23,516,000	H.R. 1321 introduced 2/22/19 S. 827 introduced 3/14/19
Black Butte River (11,117), Chancelulla Additions (6,212), Chinquapin (26,890), Elkhorn Ridge Addition (H.R. 2250: 37, S. 1110: not included), English Ridge (6,204), Headwaters Forest (4,360), Mad River Buttes (6,002), Mount Lassic Addition (1,292), North Fork Eel Addition (17,182), Pattison (28,595), Sanhedrin Addition (112), Siskiyou Addition (27,747), South Fork Eel River Addition (H.R. 2250: 603, S. 1110: 313), South Fork Trinity River (26,446), Trinity Alps Addition (62,695), Underwood (15,127), Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Additions (10,729), Yuki Addition (10,866)	Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act	H.R. 2250 S. 1110	CA	House provisions included as §20231 of H.R. 2546 and subsequently included as §20231 of H.R. 6395. Senate provisions included as §131 of S.3288. In addition to the areas specified in this entry, H.R. 2250 and S. 1110 both included provisions to modify the boundary of Elkhorn Ridge, with no acreage given.	H.R. 2250 Total: 262,216 S. 1110 Total: 261,809	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Provision dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020). S.3288 introduced 2/12/2020.
Wild Rogue Additions (59,512)	Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act	S. 1262	OR		59,512	S. 1262 hearings held 5/14/2019

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Cain Mountain (12,339), Bluewing (24,900), Selenite Peak (22,822), Mount Limbo (11,855), North Sahwave (13,875), Grandfathers (35,339), Fencemaker (14,942)	Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act	H.R. 252 S. 2804	NV	Provisions subsequently included in H.R. 6228 and H.R. 6889.	136,072	H.R. 252 hearings held 7/10/2019 ^c S. 2804 introduced 11/06/2019
Burbank Canyons (12,392)	Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2020	H.R. 6228	NV	This bill also included the areas in the Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 252/S. 2804). See corresponding table entry.	148,464	H.R. 6228 introduced 07/13/2020
Clan Alpine Mountains (128,371), Desatoya Mountains (32,537), Cain Mountain Addition (7,664)	Northern Nevada Economic Development, Conservation and Military Modernization Act of 2020	H.R. 6889	NV	This bill also included the areas in the Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 252/S. 2804) and Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2020 (H.R. 6228). See corresponding table entries.	317,036	H.R. 6889 introduced 07/13/2020
Condor Peak (H.R. 2215: 8,207, S. 1109: 8,417), San Gabriel Additions (H.R. 2215: 2,032, S. 1109: 2,027), Sheep Mountain Additions (H.R. 2215: 13,726, S. 1109: 13,851), Yerba Buena (H.R. 2215: 6,694, S. 1109: 6,774)	San Gabriel Mountains Foothills and Rivers Protection Act	H.R. 2215 S. 1109	CA	House provisions included as §401 of H.R. 2546 and subsequently included as §20423 of H.R. 6395. Senate provisions included as §323 of S. 3288.	H.R. 2215: 30,650 S. 1109: 31,069	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Provision dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020). S. 3288 introduced 2/12/2020.

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Sangre de Cristo Wilderness (40,038)	Sangre de Cristo Wilderness Additions Act	S. 3320	CO		40,038	S. 3320 introduced 2/13/2020
Shawnee (289,000)	Shawnee Wilderness Designation Act	H.R. 5474 S. 3075	IL		289,000	H.R. 5474 introduced 12/18/2019 S. 3075 introduced 12/17/2019
Sutton Mountain (29,675), Pat's Cabin (15,951), Painted Hills (6,900), Dead Dog (4,939)	Sutton Mountain and Painted Hills Area Preservation and Economic Enhancement Act	S. 1597	OR		57,465	S. 1597 introduced 5/22/2019
Rough Mountain Addition (approximately 1,000) Rich Hole Addition (4,600)	Virginia Wilderness Additions Act of 2019 An original bill to release a federal reversionary interest in Chester County, Tennessee, to manage certain Federal land in Bath County, Virginia, and for other purposes.	S. 247 S. 3076	VA		Approximately 5,600	S. 247 Introduced 1/28/2019 S. 3076 passed/agreed to in Senate without amendment by Unanimous Consent 1/6/2020

Wilderness Name(s) and Acres	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Total Area (Acres)	Latest Action
Cerro de la Olla (13,103)	To amend the John D. Dingell, Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act to establish the Cerro de la Olla Wilderness in the Río Grande del Norte National Monument, New Mexico.	H.R. 8564 S. 3241	NM		13,103	H.R. 8564 introduced 10/09/2020 S. 3241 hearings held 09/16/2020
Arctic National Wildlife Refuge Coastal Plain (1,559,5389)	Udall-Eisenhower Arctic Wilderness Act Arctic Refuge Protection Act of 2019	H.R. 5999 S. 2461	AK		15,595,389	H.R. 5999 introduced 03/05/2020 S. 2461 introduced 09/11/2019
Lost Creek (7,159), Rugged Ridge (5,956), Alcee Creek (1,787), Gates of the Elwha (5,669), Buckhorn Additions (21,965), Green Mountain (4,790), The Brothers Additions (8,625), Mount Skokomish Additions (8,933), Wonder Mountain Additions (26,517), Moonlight Dome (9,117), South Quinault Ridge (10,887), Colonel Bob Additions (353), Sam's River (13,418), Canoe Creek (1,378)	Wild Olympics Wilderness and Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	H.R. 2642 S. 1382	WA	Provisions incorporated as §601 of H.R. 2546 and subsequently included as §20602 of H.R. 6395.	126,554	H.R. 6395 passed House and received in Senate, 08/05/2020. Provision dropped in conference (H. Rept. 116-617, conference rept. agreed to 12/11/2020).

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: Bills may contain multiple designations. CRS identified acreage from the latest version of the legislation—as introduced, reported, passed, or enacted. Acreage listed in legislation may differ from final designated acreage (for example, if acreage in legislation is described as “approximate” or differs from the acreage calculated from

official maps). To the extent possible, legislative provisions (i.e., wilderness designations or additions of a given area) are listed once, in the entry corresponding with the bill in which they were first introduced. If the provision was included in subsequent bills, either newly introduced, through the amendment process, or by other means, this is described in the “Notes” column. Bills that only included wilderness designations that had previously been introduced in other legislative vehicles are not listed in a separate entry. Legislative provisions that passed into law appear in boldface in the “Latest Action” column, along with the P.L. number of the legislation in which they passed.

Table A-2. 116th Congress: Bills to Release Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs)

Name(s) of WSA	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Latest Action
Doña Ana County, San Antonio, Cold Butte	Antiquities Act	H.R. 1050 S. 367	NM NV		P.L. 116-9 §1201, §1202 (Doña Ana County and San Antonio only)
Cady Mountains, Soda Mountains, Kingston Range, Avawatz' Mountain, Death Valley, Great Falls Basin	California Desert Protection and Recreation Act of 2019	S. 67 H.R. 376	CA		P.L. 116-9, §1411
San Benito Mountain	Clear Creek National Recreation Area and Conservation Act	H.R. 403	CA		H.R. 403 introduced 2/05/19
Dominguez Canyon, McKenna Peak, Rocky Mountain National Park	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	H.R. 823 S. 241	CO		H.R. 823 passed House and received in Senate, 10/31/2019 S. 241 introduced 1/28/19
Deschutes Canyon-Steelhead Falls	Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act	S. 81 H.R. 524	OR		P.L. 116-9, §1108
Burbank Canyons	Douglas County Economic Development and Conservation Act	S. 2890	NV		S. 2890 hearings held 9/16/2020.

Name(s) of WSA	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Latest Action
Ah-shi-sle-pah, Cady Mountains, Soda Mountains, Kingston Range, Avawatz, Death Valley 17, Great Falls Basin, unspecified WSAs in Utah	John D. Dingell Jr. Conservation, Management, and Recreation Act	S. 47	NM, CA, UT	S. 47 released multiple WSAs. The WSAs listed in this entry are areas that were not previously included in other bills introduced in the 116 th Congress. For information on the areas that were previously introduced in other bills in the 116 th Congress, see table entries on the Antiquities Act (H.R. 1050, S. 367), the California Desert Protection and Recreation Act (S. 67, H.R. 376), and the Crooked River Ranch Fire Protection Act (S. 81, H.R. 524).	P.L. 116-9, §1121; §1411; §1234
Name unknown; any WSA shown on referenced map not designated as wilderness	Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act	S. 2828	OR		S. 2828 hearings held 09/16/2020.
China Mountain, Mt. Limbo, Selenite Mountains, Tobin Range, and the portion of the Augusta Mountains WSA within Pershing County	Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act	H.R. 252 S. 2804	NV		H.R. 252 hearings held 7/10/2019 S. 2804 hearings held 11/18/2020
The portion of the Augusta Mountains WSA within Pershing County	Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act of 2020	H.R. 6228	NV	H.R. 6228 includes provisions of the Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 252 / S. 2804) and Douglas County Economic Development and Conservation Act (S. 2890). See corresponding table entries.	H.R. 6228 introduced on 3/12/2020

Name(s) of WSA	Bill Title	Bill No.	State	Notes	Latest Action
Stillwater Range, Job Peak, Clan Alpine Mountains, Augusta Mountains (portions in Clark County), Desatoya Mountains (portions in Clark County), and any portion of the WSAs not designated under Sec. 303(a) of H.R. 6889 and depicted as released on map referenced in the bill.	Northern Nevada Economic Development, Conservation and Military Modernization Act of 2020	H.R. 6889	NV	H.R. 6889 includes provisions of the Pershing County Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 252 /S. 2804), Douglas County Economic Development and Conservation Act (S. 2890), and Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act (H.R. 6228). See corresponding table entries.	H.R. 6889 introduced on 5/15/2020
Yolla Bolly, Timbered Crater, Lava, Pit River Canyon, Tule Mountain, South Warner Contiguous, Bitterbrush, Buffalo Hills, Twin Peaks, Five Springs, Dry Valley Rim, Skedaddle, Tunnison Mountain	Restoring Access to Public Lands Act	H.R. 572	CA		H.R. 572

Source: Congressional Research Service (CRS).

Notes: CRS identified acreage from the latest version of the legislation – as introduced, reported, passed, or enacted. WSA release legislation may specify that WSA acreage is to be released if not otherwise acted upon in that legislation; for example, all WSA acreage not designated as wilderness is to be released. Wilderness study area releases in multiple bills are listed next to the first introduced bill. Bills containing minor boundary adjustments to WSAs are not included. Legislative provisions that passed appear in boldface in the “Latest Action” column, along with the P.L. number of the legislation in which they passed.

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