

## Primary Interpretive Themes for NPS Wilderness

Interpretation provides opportunities for people to forge intellectual and emotional connections to the meanings inherent in wilderness resources. Interpretive themes communicate specific messages based upon the significance of the wilderness resource and experience to the American people. They are the stories through which the values of wilderness are conveyed to the public. These themes connect wilderness to larger ideas as well as universal meanings and values. They are the building blocks on which interpretive products and services for wilderness are based. The interpretive themes for National Park Service wilderness areas are:

<b>PRIMARY INTERPRETIVE THEMES FOR WILDERNESS EDUCATION</b>	
<b>Theme A</b>	The concept of officially designating wilderness originated in the United States with the conviction that some wild land resources are most valuable left in their natural state forever. ( <i>e.g. social, scientific, economic, educational, recreational, and historic value</i> ).
<b>Theme B</b>	As a foundation for healthy and diverse ecosystems, officially designated wilderness and other wild lands provide critical habitat for rare and endangered species and play a significant role in the overall health of natural systems worldwide. ( <i>e.g. watersheds, air quality</i> ).
<b>Theme C</b>	By law, wilderness is managed differently than other federal lands in order to retain its primeval character and preserve wilderness as a special place for humans to examine their relationship to the natural world.
<b>Theme D</b>	Wilderness offers opportunities for personal renewal, inspiration, artistic expression, pride of ownership of our shared heritage, and the prospect of hope for the future. Wilderness has inspired and continues to inspire a distinctive genre of literature and art, enriching millions of lives in the United States and around the world.
<b>Theme E</b>	Wilderness provides opportunities for physical and mental challenge, risk and reward, renewal, self-reliance, solitude, and serves as a haven from the pressures of modern society. ( <i>e.g. exploration, discovery, and recreation</i> )
<b>Theme F</b>	The survival of wilderness depends on individual and societal commitment to the idea of wilderness and on appropriate use, behavior, and values. ( <i>e.g. appreciation, values, skills</i> ).
<b>Theme G</b>	Wilderness provides a unique setting for teaching science, math, literature, art, music, civics, outdoor skills and other subjects, as well as opening a dialogue on ecosystem stewardship.

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<b>Theme H</b>	Wilderness contains primitive areas relatively undisturbed by human activities where scientific research may reveal information about natural processes and living systems that may have wide-ranging applications and may serve as global indicators of ecological change.
<b>Theme I</b>	Cultural and archeological sites found in wilderness can provide a more complete picture of human history and culture. <i>(This includes indigenous peoples, conquests, colonialism and resistance, freedom, independence, and ingenuity, a sense of connectedness, stewardship, and human survival.)</i>
<b>Theme J</b>	The Wilderness Act created a National Wilderness Preservation System that preserves some of the most unique ecological, geological, scientific, scenic, and historical values in the National Park System and other public lands, and that the public and Congress have determined to require special protection.
<b>Theme K</b>	Wilderness users must accept certain inherent risks associated with weather, terrain, water, wildlife, and other natural elements. Safety cannot be guaranteed in Wilderness, but can be enhanced with proper trip planning, appropriate skill, and responsible behavior.
<b>Theme L</b>	Large tracts of major ecosystems, protected within NPS Wilderness, are a rich legacy to pass on to future generations.

----End of Guidance----