



# Wilderness: 40th Anniversary

*You can find Wilderness at a wildlife refuge near home.*

Remnants of America’s Wilderness remain today in 44 states as frontiers for humans and wildlife, thanks to The Wilderness Act, which celebrated its 40th anniversary September 3, 2004.

The Wilderness Act of 1964 was signed by President Lyndon B. Johnson 40 years after the Forest Service established Gila Wilderness Area as the first such protected place. It guarantees that some lands will forever be kept in their wild and natural state.

The nation’s 105-million acres National Wilderness Preservation System – containing nearly 5 percent of America’s lands – is enjoyed by more than 12 million people annually, who visit the rare places where trumpeter swans float on crystal blue waters and the only echo comes from a waterfall.

### Wilderness bestows a multitude of benefits:

- *Americans drink clean water that flows from areas protected by Wilderness.*
- *We all breathe clean air that is replenished by the filtering action of plants found in Wilderness.*
- *Wildlife abounds in Wilderness because it protects the natural processes that give rise to rich biodiversity.*
- *Wilderness is part of America’s tradition, assuring the perpetuation of outdoor recreation in places that will forever remain relatively untouched and unaltered.*

Whether visitors hike, ride trails on horseback or float down rivers and brooks, Wilderness offers untrammelled, breath-taking beauty.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the Forest Service, and the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management each steward Wilderness lands.

The National Wildlife Refuge System has refuge Wilderness areas that are sites to behold.



*Chassahowitzka NWR, Florida*



*Okefenokee NWR, Georgia*



*Kofa NWR, Arizona*