

# SIERRA NATIONAL FOREST Wilderness Areas

## FOREST WILDERNESS AREAS

Sierra National Forest now contains approximately 528,000 acres of Congressionally designated Wilderness. Almost 227,000 acres were added to the Sierra's existing system as a result of the California Wilderness Act of 1984.

The Sierra's five Wilderness areas are the Ansel Adams, Dinkey Lakes, John Muir, Kaiser and Monarch. The following "thumbnail sketches" are intended to give you a feel for the character of each area - the terrain, vegetation and outstanding features you will encounter during your visit. More complete descriptions plus information on access, trails and permit requirements are contained in individual brochures for each Wilderness.

## ANSEL ADAMS WILDERNESS

The California Wilderness Act nearly doubled the acreage of the former Minarets Wilderness and changed the name to Ansel Adams. The Wilderness is located in both the Sierra and Inyo National Forests and covers approximately 228,500 acres (138,660 acres are in Sierra National Forest). Ansel Adams is characterized by spectacular alpine scenery with barren granite peaks, steep-walled gorges and rock outcroppings. Elevations range from 3,500 feet to 13,157 feet and there are several small glaciers on the north and northeast facing slopes of the highest peaks. There are also a number of fairly large lakes on the eastern slope of the precipitous Ritter Range. The Ansel Adams Wilderness contains the headwaters of the North and Middle Forks of the San Joaquin River.

## DINKEY LAKES WILDERNESS

The Dinkey Lakes Wilderness was created by the California Wilderness Act of 1984. It lies on the

west slope of the Sierra Nevada southeast of Huntington Lake and northwest of Courtright Reservoir. It is located just west of the new portion of the John Muir Wilderness and is separated from the John Muir by the Dusy/Ershim Off-Hiway Vehicle Route. Most of the Dinkey Lakes Wilderness is above 8,000 feet and Three Sisters Peak is the highest point at 10,619 feet. Vegetation is primarily lodgepole pine and there are many meadows and granite outcroppings. Sixteen lakes are clustered in the west central region of the Wilderness.

## JOHN MUIR WILDERNESS

The John Muir Wilderness covers 584,000 acres in the Sierra and Inyo National Forests. It was increased by 81,000 acres in the California Wilderness Act. The John Muir extends along the crest of the Sierra Nevada from Mammoth Lakes southeastward for a distance of about 30 miles then forks around the boundary of Kings Canyon National Park to the Crown Valley and Mt. Whitney regions. This is a land of snow-capped mountains with hundreds of lakes and streams and beautiful meadows. Elevations range from 4,000 feet to 14,496 at Mount Whitney and many peaks are above 13,000 feet. Lower elevations slopes are covered with stands of Jeffrey Pine, incense cedar, white and red fir and lodgepole pine. The higher elevations are barren granite with many glacially carved lakes.

## KAISER WILDERNESS

The 22,000 Kaiser Wilderness is located immediately north of Huntington Lake, approximately 70 miles northeast of Fresno. Kaiser Ridge bisects the Wilderness and provides a commanding view of the central Sierra Nevada. The



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southern half of the Wilderness is characterized by dense red fir and Jeffrey pine forests which extend up the gradual south slope of Kaiser Ridge. The top of the ridge is in the alpine zone. The descent from Kaiser Ridge into the northern part of the Wilderness is quite abrupt. This northern region is much more open than the south side and contains eighteen small lakes.

## **MONARCH WILDERNESS**

The Monarch Wilderness was created by the California Wilderness Act of 1984. It extends across 45,000 acres in the Sierra and Sequoia National Forests. The Sierra National Forest portion of the Wilderness (approximately 21,000 acres) is extremely rugged and difficult to traverse. Steepslopes extend up from the Middle and South Forks of the Kings River. Elevations range from 2,400 feet to over 10,000 feet. The lower elevations are predominantly chaparral-covered with with pine stands near the tops of the higher peaks. Rock outcroppings are found throughout the Wilderness.

## **REGULATIONS/PERMITS**

A Visitor Permit is required for all overnight stays in all Wilderness areas. A quota system is in effect from May 1<sup>st</sup> through November 1<sup>st</sup>. There is a \$5.00 non-refundable reservation fee for each person for all trails. Reservations can be made year round. Starting 2003, there will be a \$10.00 charge for any changes to a confirmed reservation. First come, first serve permits may be obtained in person the day of your trip or the day before you start your trip.

Only everyone's effort will preserve the beauty and solitude of the Wilderness experience. Please do your part and abide by the following:

- Maximum group size is 15 people.
- Camp at least 100 feet from stream banks, and lakeshores.
- Do not shortcut switchbacks.
- Keep soaps and detergents (including biodegradable ones) out of lakes and streams.
- Treat stream or lake water before using. Boil at least 5 minutes to remove harmful organisms.
- Bury all human waste and toilet paper 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 100 feet from water where runoff won't carry contamination into lakes or streams.
- Use gas stoves in the high country. Do not use wood from live or dead standing trees.

- Pack out all your trash.

For further information on regulations, permits, and conditions for the John Muir, Ansel Adams, Dinkey, and Kaiser Wilderness areas contact:

**High Sierra Ranger District**  
**Post Office Box 559**  
**Prather, CA 93651**  
**(559) 855-5360 TDD (559) 855-5367**

For information on permits, regulations and conditions in the Ansel Adams Wilderness area north of the San Joaquin River contact:

**Bass Lake Ranger District**  
**57003 Road 225**  
**North Fork, CA 93643**  
**(559)-877-2218**

### ***All Are Welcome***

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