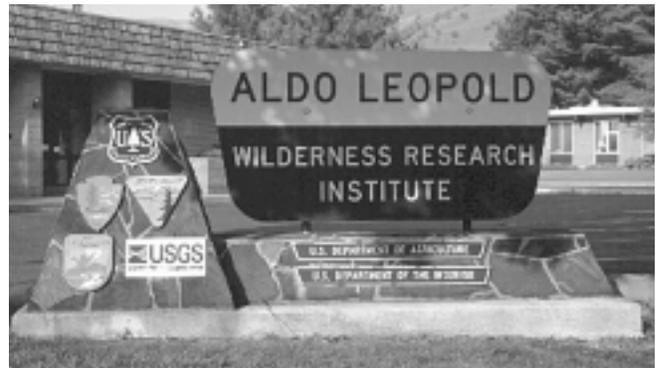


Mapping the United States National Wilderness Preservation System

BY DAVE SPILDIE

A new map of the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) will be published in 2004 to commemorate the 40th anniversary of the 1964 U.S. Wilderness Act. This map will be an excellent source of wilderness information for the public as well as wilderness management agencies. This article briefly explains the history of U.S. wilderness maps and the collaborative partnerships instrumental in developing and publishing them.

The U.S. Geological Survey (USGS) published the first standardized map of the NWPS in 1987. This map showed NWPS areas in the coterminous United States on the front, with Alaska and Hawaii on the back. The back of the map also included general information on each congressionally designated wilderness area. The color of the wilderness showed which of the four federal agencies administered the wilderness. In 1989, The Wilderness Society published a NWPS map commemorating the 25th anniversary of The Wilderness Act. This map showed wildernesses by agency, with Alaska and Hawaii inset below the coterminous United States. The reverse side listed acreage, year of proclamation, and administrative information for each wilderness. To commemorate the 35th anniversary of The Wilderness Act, The Wilderness Society, Trails Illustrated of National Geographic maps, and the USDA Forest Service—the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute (ALWRI) and the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center (ACNWTC)—collaborated to update the Wilderness Society map. This new map retained the appearance and size of the previous map but included general information on wilderness within the map border.



September 2004 marks the 40th Anniversary of The Wilderness Act, and various summits and celebrations are planned to herald this landmark for wilderness. The NWPS map is again being revised and will be available to the public for this occasion. A collaborative agreement has been reached with the USGS National Atlas of the United States program to publish this map of wilderness areas. For the first time, the new wilderness map will show Alaska and Hawaii at the same projection as the coterminous United States on the front side of the publication. This is an important change since 54 percent of the NWPS is in Alaska. Insets will describe the history and development of the wilderness system, and the back of the map will include a table showing acreage, year of proclamation, and administrative unit for each wilderness. A collage of images, text, and graphs will provide additional information. The large format (42 inches by 46 inches) will allow the map to be published at 1 : 5,000,000 scale, giving

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would be valuable, and instructor manuals for existing textbooks (e.g., Hendee and Dawson 2002) with reading supplements from the *IJW* would be useful. Case studies of planning and management successes were suggested for subjects such as wilderness planning for increasing visitor demand, conflicts between visitor use types and special interest groups, fire ecology and management, and stewardship of wilderness conditions and resources.

Given the growing number of college outdoor clubs, plus hundreds of wilderness experience programs such as Outward Bound and others aimed at outdoor experiential education, and the well-documented link between wilderness visitation, higher education, and environmental group membership, *we expect that wilderness course enrollments will remain strong and provide important educational support*

for many people headed for lifelong involvement and interest in wilderness issues. The findings of this survey, and its comparison with the survey by Hendee and Roggenbuck (1984) almost 20 years earlier, suggest fewer wilderness-related courses and students now, but wilderness-related courses continue to be taught in one-third of U.S. college and university forestry or natural resource programs, and incorporation of wilderness topics into other courses may be accompanying the downsizing of natural resource curriculum in response to decreased enrollment and budgets. 

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a clearer picture of the spatial extent and boundaries of each wilderness.

Along with development of the hard-copy map, a collaborative agreement has allowed posting the boundaries of each wilderness digitally on the USGS National Atlas website. The boundaries are available for download as a separate layer through the Map Layers Data Warehouse in two digital formats with supporting metadata (<http://www.nationalatlas.gov/wildrnm.html>). This layer provides wilderness boundary data for Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis and display.

The efforts of numerous partners have made publication of this new map possible. The USGS National Atlas is responsible for the cartography and printing, and a committee of wilderness experts from the National Park

Service, The Wilderness Society, and the Campaign for America's Wilderness are crafting the text. A graphic artist from the USGS Geology Division is designing the wilderness collage. Staff from ALWRI and ACNWTC are compiling photos and images of wilderness areas. The director of ACNWTC is responsible for securing funding, and the GIS coordinator from ALWRI has developed the wilderness boundaries and is the project supervisor. Integration of these disciplines ensures a compelling vision for the 40th Anniversary of the 1964 Wilderness Act.

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Wilderness, although global in scale, tends to focus on tropical biomes, reflecting Conservation International's and Agrupación Sierra Madre's interest in tropical biodiversity. However, one of the joys of reading through this book is the opportunity to discover "new" wilderness areas around the world—for example, I was unfamiliar with the Pantanal region, the world's largest contiguous wetland (at 220,000 km² or 84,942 sq miles) along the border of Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia.

Although this is an extremely impressive book, I had a few minor concerns. The aforementioned imbalance in terms of textual information on many of the nontropical wilderness areas was slightly off-putting. The focus on species-level as opposed to ecological process-based indicators was also

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