

Wilderness in Washington: Update & Discussion

Coffee with Yvonne: July 20, 2021. 8:00am

Intros & Agenda

9:00 - 9:10am	Intro & Audience Poll
9:10 - 9:30am	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intro to Wilderness Policy• Evergreen's Work on Wilderness: Middle Fork / Wild Olympics / Colville NF FMPR• The Big Wilderness Debate: IMBA & STC• The "Washington Way": Wilderness Planning Principles• Wild Olympics and Colville NF Wilderness proposals: Status Update
9:30 - 10:00am	Audience Poll & Q&A

What is Wilderness?

“land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable...”

A Brief History of Wilderness Time

1956	Wilderness Society Executive Director Howard Zahniser drafts Wilderness Bill to address piecemeal approach to conservation. 8 years, 66 iterations
1964	President Lyndon B. Johnson signs the Wilderness Act .
1977	US Forest Service rules bikes are a form of "mechanical transport," and bans them from Wilderness lands.
1981	US Forest Service rules bikes can be permitted with conditional allowance
1983	US Forest Service reverses back to 1977 Rule
1989	H.R.3172 "To amend the Wilderness Act to allow the use of bicycles in wilderness areas." The Subcommittee on National Parks and Public Lands took no further action. H.R.3172
2012	The National Parks Service amends current regulations and authorizes park superintendents to open trails to bike use where/if appropriate. 36 CFR Part 4
2015	The Sustainable Trails Coalition forms to try and fix this situation.

Wilderness Today

- Today's wilderness system includes: 111 acres, more than 750 wilderness areas from coast to coast 111+

Wilderness Collaboration to Protect MTB access in Washington

Wild Sky Wilderness (2008)

Alpine Lakes Wilderness Additions (2014)

Wild Olympics legislation focused on the Olympic Peninsula (2020)

Colville National Forest Master Plan Revision: Recommended Wilderness (current)

WA Wilderness Principles

The common ground that local Wilderness and mountain bike advocates in Washington State have identified is summarized by the following shared goals.

1. Support permanent protection for high value wild lands and waters in Washington State (i.e., Wilderness and Wild and Scenic River designation)
2. Seek to avoid the loss of existing priority mountain bike trails and future trail opportunities as a result of new Wilderness designations.
3. Support some level of protective management for lands underlying or surrounding priority mountain bike trails excluded from Wilderness designation.



The Question of Mechanical vs. Human Powered...

"Mechanical transport, as herein used, shall include any contrivance which travels over ground, snow, or water, on wheels, tracks, skids, or by floatation and is propelled by a nonliving power source contained or carried on or within the device."

36 CFR § 293.6(a) (1973), formerly 36 CFR § 251.75 (1966)