

## **The Designation of Areas for Wilderness Preservation and the Concept of Multiple Use**

### Introduction

The concept of “multiple use” is often misperceived to be in conflict with wilderness designation. For example, in a news article discussing areas under consideration for wilderness designation, the journalist described “legislation that would remove three of the ‘wilderness study areas’ in Montana from a federal list, and return management to multi-use status.”<sup>1</sup>

Of the four federal agencies that manage wilderness, two are “multiple use” agencies. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) within the Department of Interior, and the Forest Service (FS) within the Department of Agriculture, manage federal lands under statutes that require multiple use management.<sup>2</sup> However, arguably, the Fish and Wildlife Service and the National Park Service also manage lands for multiple uses, as will be described later, though they have no statutory requirement calling for or defining multiple use.

This paper examines the concept of multiple use, how wilderness preservation relates to multiple use, and the human benefits, in terms of multiple uses, resulting from wilderness preservation. The paper begins with an examination of how opponents and proponents of wilderness preservation thought about wilderness in terms of multiple use. Next, the paper examines how Congress, through statutes, defined multiple use in a manner which includes wilderness. That is followed by a brief consideration of the two agencies (the National Park Service and the Fish and Wildlife Service) which were not given a multiple use mandate in their organizational Acts. The paper continues with a comparison of land uses in the US and the balance of those uses. The paper concludes with an examination of the multiple uses that occur in wilderness.

### Multiple Use in the Discussions and Debates Surrounding the Proposal for Wilderness Preservation

In the late 1950's and early 1960's, industrial interests argued against most wilderness preservation under the auspice that the nation is best served by “multiple use;” they did not consider wilderness within the spectrum of multiple use. According to industry, preserving wilderness was only acceptable on tracts of land where serious interference with industrial economic pursuits (for example, mining and timber production) would not occur.<sup>3</sup> Economic theories of the time, placed only intangible values to natural areas compared to industrial activity with fully described tangible values.<sup>4</sup> This allowed natural values to be easily sacrificed for industrial economic uses. “Multiple-use,” it was argued, “meets the interests of all people of the Nation and permits development of all resources.”<sup>5</sup> On the other hand, “Locking up the future development and use of these vital resources on the lands within the proposed

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<sup>1</sup> Bragg, Dennis, Are 3 Montana Wilderness Study Areas Ready for Changes? July 24, 2023

<sup>2</sup> Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 & Public Law 94-579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

<sup>3</sup> Wilderness and Recreation--a Report on Resources, Values, and Problems. Report to the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission by the Wildland Research Center, University of California, 1962.

<sup>4</sup> Holmes, Thomas, A Perpetual Flow of Benefits: Wilderness Economic Values in an Evolving, Multicultural Society, USDA General Technical Report WO-101, October, 2022

<sup>5</sup> Wild. and Rec., Op.cit.

wilderness system would have serious economic implications.”<sup>6</sup> Some of the more pointed arguments stated that “no wilderness withdrawal is in the best public interest.”<sup>7</sup> The rationale was that wilderness designations “serve only a small segment of the public,”<sup>8</sup> and “would limit the use of the areas... to one purpose.”<sup>9</sup> This view would allow for wilderness preservation only if an area was not suitable for any other uses.<sup>10</sup>

Arguments were also made that wilderness preservation was unnecessary because “There are plenty of areas in the West which will always remain primitive and undeveloped without the necessity of the restrictions proposed in [wilderness] legislation.”<sup>11</sup> However, that sentiment was coupled with the principle that if an economic use of land was discovered at a later date, that use would take precedence.<sup>12</sup> The Wildland Research Center noted that “much of the value of wilderness areas depends on their security,” and that this idea of multiple use “conceptualizes ‘wilderness’ as residual wasteland to which little dollars-and-cents value can be attached.”<sup>13</sup>

The industrial view of multiple use did not recognize non-industrial activities as bonified uses. Howard Zahniser, the principal author of the Wilderness Act, likened this approach to a “bread-alone existence.”<sup>14</sup> “We can,” he argued, “have our forest products and wilderness too.” He continued “just as man cannot live by bread alone... we cannot afford to use the forests for their products only.”<sup>15</sup> Without also protecting wilderness, the nation would have a system of selective use, not multiple use.

Zahniser’s concept of multiple use was holistic. “The principle of multiple use of resources is a remarkably apt one for application in a program for wildland preservation.”<sup>16</sup> Those promoting multiple use as an alternative to wilderness preservation have, he argued “idealized their own single purposes with a ‘multiple use’ label.”<sup>17</sup> He did not wish to eliminate other uses, expressing that areas that have wilderness character should be preserved, “if at all possible in meeting other needs,” recognizing that “to preserve some areas free from timber cutting will require adequate timber production on other areas.”<sup>18</sup> Furthermore, “if the public need,” he reasoned, “cannot be satisfied elsewhere or otherwise, the wilderness involved may be sacrificed if the conflicting need warrants and if the area involved is not the last remaining wilderness area of its kind.”<sup>19</sup> In another writing, Zahniser said “we are not meaning to challenge any economic program... our wish rather is to design a wilderness preservation program which can be a part of an overall program that includes also our economic uses of our natural resources.”<sup>20</sup> Wilderness needed a permanent place as a resource recognized among other resources;

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<sup>6</sup> Ibid

<sup>7</sup> Ibid

<sup>8</sup> Ibid

<sup>9</sup> Ibid

<sup>10</sup> Ibid

<sup>11</sup> Ibid

<sup>12</sup> Ibid

<sup>13</sup> Ibid

<sup>14</sup> Zahniser, *Wildlands: A Part of Man’s Environment*, Yearbook for Agriculture, 1963.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Harvey, Mark, 2014, *The Wilderness Writings of Howard Zahniser*

<sup>17</sup> Ibid

<sup>18</sup> Ibid

<sup>19</sup> Zahniser, *A Statement on Wilderness Preservation in Reply to a Questionnaire*, March 1, 1949.

<sup>20</sup> Zahniser, *the Wilderness Bill and Foresters*, March 14, 1957

both those that provide social benefits as well as industrial benefits. “Although wilderness is our oldest resource, it is the last to be recognized,”<sup>21</sup> said Zahniser.

Industry’s influence on federal agency resource decisions were significant in the 1950’s and 1960’s.<sup>22</sup> Though agencies did identify areas for wilderness protections under a multiple use framework, prevailing agency customs assumed that there was no to very low economic value to wilderness because benefits to wilderness preservation were intangible and difficult to monetize.<sup>23</sup> Consequently, wilderness preservation was unlikely to match industry influence and so rarely had strong consideration in multiple use decisions. Because of this dynamic, proponents of wilderness preservation sought to move multiple use decisions from agencies, which industry was better positioned to influence, into Congressional planning which could better account for non-use economic values. Zahniser said, “no areas will persist as wilderness except as they are deliberately so preserved.”<sup>24</sup>

Shortly after passage of the Wilderness Act, economic methods came into practice in which natural amenity values could be measured in terms comparable with material goods.<sup>25</sup> In 1967, economist John Krutilla presented a new framework for treating “non-use” or “amenity” resources as economic values commensurate with material goods and services.<sup>26</sup>

#### Multiple Use in Statute

Congress institutionalized and defined “multiple use” four years prior to the Wilderness Act. The Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act (MUSYA) of 1960 established five components for which the National Forests were to be administered: outdoor recreation, range, timber, watershed, and wildlife and fish purposes. However, the Act also underscored that “multiple use” is not limited to a list of five uses, but includes “various renewable surface resources.” In addition, the Act specifically stated: “The establishment and maintenance of areas of wilderness are consistent with the purposes and provisions of this Act.”<sup>27</sup>

The Wilderness Act of 1964 does not use the term “multiple use,” but does describe concepts germane to multiple use. First, the Act describes a “resource of wilderness.”<sup>28</sup> This means that when managing for the “various renewable surface resources” under the concept of multiple use, wilderness is among them. Second, the Act mandates a variety of uses within wilderness. It mandates the preservation of wilderness character which is a composite of multiple resource uses.<sup>29</sup> It identifies, as the Act’s purpose, the securing of the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.<sup>30</sup> Though these benefits are only partially defined in the Act, they include a wide range of uses which benefit people. The Act identifies six

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<sup>21</sup> Zahniser the Wilderness Bill and Foresters, March 14, 1957

<sup>22</sup> Wild. and Rec., Op.cit.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid

<sup>24</sup> Zahniser, the Wilderness Bill and Foresters, March 14, 1957

<sup>25</sup> Holmes, Op.cit.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid

<sup>26</sup> Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

<sup>27</sup> Section 2, Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960

<sup>28</sup> Section 2(a), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>29</sup> Section 4(b) and 2(c), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>30</sup> Section 2(a), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

uses to which wilderness is devoted.<sup>31</sup> Lastly, the Act contains special provisions that allow for additional resource uses in wilderness alongside the Act's mandate to preserve wilderness character.<sup>32</sup> In other words, within the resource of wilderness, and provided for within the Wilderness Act, are multiple uses of Wilderness areas.

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLPMA) of 1976 provides a definition of multiple use that is very similar to the MUYSYA. However, it lists nine components and then states that multiple use is not limited to those components. Though wilderness is not specifically identified, it is clear that FLPMA considers wilderness to be one of the multiple uses. In Section 603, Congress instructs the BLM to identify areas "having wilderness characteristics" which were "identified during the inventory required by section 201(a)." Section 201(a) requires inventory of public lands for "their resource and other values." In other words, FLPMA assumes that an inventory of resources, or multiple uses, will identify areas that possess the "resource of wilderness" described in the Wilderness Act.

Two important concepts common to both the MUYSYA and the FLPMA are that multiple use means making "judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources," and using some land "for less than all of the resources." In other words, multiple use is applied through scale and zoning. Because some resource uses conflict, it is impossible to produce all resources from every acre of land. Consequently, the BLM and the FS consider resource availability, and determine which lands to prioritize for a given resource or combination of resources. Both the MUYSYA and FLPMA direct that decisions identifying priority use of federal land is not based solely on the use that provides the greatest monetary output.<sup>33</sup> Congress sometimes directly identifies a priority resource through legislation, as it has done in legislation that adds units to the National Wilderness Preservation System.

As with all statutes, managing for the uses described in the statute comes with constraints or exceptions. The MUYSYA and FLPMA both constrain multiple use allocations to judiciously meet the needs of the American People in a harmonious and coordinated manner.<sup>34</sup> Likewise, uses described within the Wilderness Act must be managed in a harmonious manner that preserves wilderness character as a whole.<sup>35</sup> Exceptions to land uses are also identified. For example, valid existing rights are excepted from the requirements of all three statutes.

#### Uses of the FWS and NPS

Though fewer in number and under different statutory purposes than the BLM and the FS, a variety of land uses can and do occur within the units of the FWS and NPS. The statute guiding the Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) allows for uses that are compatible with, and do not interfere with conserving fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats. This generally means recreational uses that are wildlife-dependent; the statute specifically calls out fishing, hunting, wildlife observation, and environmental education or interpretation as uses that are generally compatible and allowed.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> Section 4(b), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>32</sup> Section 4(d), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>33</sup> Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 & Public Law 94-579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

<sup>34</sup> Ibid

<sup>35</sup> Section 4(b), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>36</sup> Public Law 105-57, National Wildlife Refuge System Improvement Act of 1997

The statute guiding the National Park Service (NPS) describes that the purpose of parks is to conserve their scenery, natural and historic objects, wildlife, and to provide for their enjoyment in a manner that leaves them unimpaired for future generations.<sup>37</sup> The statute allows for the disposal and sale of timber to control insect or disease or to conserve scenery, and for the destruction of animals and plants detrimental to use of a unit. It also grants the privilege to graze livestock, and to issue leases and permits to accommodate visitors<sup>38</sup>

With both the FWS and NPS, valid existing rights held prior to park or refuge establishment continue. This can include mineral uses and rights of way for utilities. Roads, concessions, and other recreational developments consistent with the overall purpose of a park or refuge may also exist. Even though NPS and FWS lands are not given a multiple use mandate, there are multiple uses occurring on those lands nonetheless.

### Multiple Use in Practice

All resources cannot be produced from every acre of land. Sometimes this axiom is because not all resources exist on every acre of land. In other situations, the axiom results from a conflict that exists between resource uses. For example, an open pit copper mine cannot also accommodate off-highway vehicle recreation, just as a Wilderness area cannot accommodate road construction. Within this reality, multiple use has been systematically applied by Congress and the federal land management agencies across the entirety of the federal public lands, aptly employing the “judicious use of the land for some or all of these resources” and using some land “for less than all of the resources.”<sup>39</sup>

Mining operations occur on an estimated 1.3 million acres on federal lands.<sup>40</sup> Economic quantities of oil and gas are produced on approximately 12.4 million acres of federal lands.<sup>41</sup> Timberlands constitute 102 million acres of federal land.<sup>42</sup> Motorized vehicle recreation with no restrictions (i.e. where cross country use is allowed) occur on an estimated 130 million acres (not including Alaska where 72 million acres of land are open with no restrictions pending classification), and lands where motor vehicle recreation is allowed but restricted to roads and trails occurs on an estimated 183 million acres of federal land.<sup>43</sup> Finally, wilderness preservation is designated on approximately 112 million acres of federal land.<sup>44</sup> Other land uses also exist on the federal estate, and some of the mentioned uses may overlap where compatible. However, the described land uses tend to be the dominate land uses of areas and provide a reasonable comparison for the nation’s balance of multiple use on the federal estate.

### Managing Multiple Use in Wilderness

Wilderness is not just a land use (or allocation) along a spectrum of multiple uses. Within Wilderness, multiple uses occur. The multiple uses within units of the National Wilderness Preservation System are

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<sup>37</sup> Public Law 64–235, An Act to establish a National Park Service, and for other purposes of 1916

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 & Public Law 94–579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

<sup>40</sup> Mining on Federal Lands, GAO-20-461R, June 25, 2020.

<sup>41</sup> BLM statistics, 2022, <https://www.blm.gov/programs/energy-and-minerals/oil-and-gas/about>

<sup>42</sup> Timber Harvesting on Federal Lands, Congressional Research Service, July 28, 2021, R45688

<sup>43</sup> Motorized Recreation on Bureau of Land Management and Forest Service Lands, Congressional Research Service, R42920, January 16, 2013

<sup>44</sup> <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/fast-facts/default.php>

described in the Wilderness Act within four categories: “wilderness character,” “public purposes,” “benefits,” and “special provisions.”

### *Wilderness Character*

The Wilderness Act provides a mandate that “each agency administering any area designated as wilderness shall be responsible for preserving the wilderness character of the area.”<sup>45</sup> Wilderness character, is the combination of five qualities described in the Definition of Wilderness in Section 2(c) of the Act. These qualities are “untrammeled,” “natural,” “undeveloped,” “outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation,” and “other features of value.”<sup>46</sup> These qualities are unique uses of land that sometimes conflict when managed for. Just as the multiple uses identified in the MUSYA and FLPMA are managed judiciously for the combination of uses that best meet present and future needs, the decisions for managing the interrelated qualities of wilderness are made in the combination that best preserves wilderness character as a whole.<sup>47</sup>

### *Benefits of wilderness*

The policy of the Wilderness Act is “to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness.”<sup>48</sup> As described earlier, some thought wilderness was not “in the best public interest,”<sup>49</sup> in other words, wilderness does not yield sufficient benefits. If that was an accurate assessment, visitors would be few. However, visitation to wilderness continues to grow, indicating that the benefits provided to people by wilderness are real and important. For example, between 2005 and 2014 visits to National Forest wilderness areas increased by 27.4 percent; a higher increase in visitation than for non-wilderness recreation on the National Forests.<sup>50</sup> The Act clearly champions the “use and enjoyment”<sup>51</sup> of wilderness, but the benefits of wilderness go well beyond visitation. Benefits can also be indirect, or “nonuse,” such as the benefits received from the knowledge that wilderness dependent wildlife persist.<sup>52</sup> They can also be based on ecosystem services, such as the clean water that originates from wilderness.<sup>53</sup>

In 1958, Congress authorized the Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission (ORRRC) to, among other things, “inventory and evaluate the outdoor recreation resources and opportunities of the Nation.”<sup>54</sup> The Act authorizing the ORRRC recognized that outdoor recreation provides “spiritual, cultural, and physical benefits.”<sup>55</sup> Completed in 1962, the ORRRC concluded “there are two kinds of

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<sup>45</sup> Section 4(b), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>46</sup> Keeping it Wild 2, General Technical Report RMRS-GTR-240, October, 2015

<sup>47</sup> Cite Hourse report. Also cite Californians agains toxins

<sup>48</sup> Section 2(a), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>49</sup> Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

<sup>50</sup> Bowker, JM, et al, A Perpetual Flow of Benefits: Wilderness Economic Values in an Evolving, Multicultural Society, USDA General Technical Report WO-101, October, 2022

<sup>51</sup> Section 2(a), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>52</sup> Cordell, HK, Bergstrom, JC, and Bowker JM, The Multiple Values of Wilderness, Venture Publishing, Inc, 2005

<sup>53</sup> Ibid

<sup>54</sup> PL 85-470, An Act for the establishment of a National Outdoor Recreation Resources Review Commission of 1958

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

benefit deriving from wilderness areas: those which accrue in a recreation experience to particular individuals and those which accrue indirectly to society.”<sup>56</sup>

The Wilderness Act identifies many benefits, both tangible and intangible. Tangible benefits in the Act include: primitive and unconfined recreation; conservation of untrammeled and natural landscapes; the opportunity for solitude; protection of historical/cultural features; providing undeveloped areas; protection of scenic areas; educational opportunities; and, protection of geological features and areas of interest in scientific pursuits. A significant intangible benefit identified in the Wilderness Act is the bequest value; the Act requires administration of Wilderness areas which leaves them “unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.”<sup>57</sup> Howard Zahniser, the principal author of the Wilderness Act, explained “the wilderness that has come to us out of the eternity of the past, we have the boldness to project into the eternity of the future.”<sup>58</sup> Arguably, intangible benefits of wilderness are numerous, but few are stated in the Wilderness Act.

Literature before the Wilderness Act and testimony from the hearings on the Act are rich with accountings of the intangible benefits of wilderness. Examples include: spiritual, adventure, awe, inspiration, peace, renewal, humility, and challenge. Howard Zahniser described the benefits of wilderness to people and society as “impressing a visitor with a sense of remoteness,” and “impressing visitors with their relationship to other forms of life.”<sup>59</sup>

Shortly after the passage of the Wilderness Act in 1964, methods to estimate the economic value of Wilderness were developed allowing for cost/benefit comparisons.<sup>60</sup> In 1967, economist Krutilla, pioneered methods to estimate the economic value of intangible benefits<sup>61</sup> to create a more tangible and measurable understanding of those benefits. Krutilla studied existence, option, and bequest values which, in relationship to wilderness, have particular importance.<sup>62</sup> Existence values are associated with widespread biological and geomorphological variety. Within existence values, demand for wilderness protection may be present, even though there is no intention to use the protected area. Option value is the retention of the ability to use an area in the future, where, if the value were lost in the present, the use would be impossible to re-create. Bequest value is the value of preserving an area for future generations. Many have since concluded that “the Wilderness Act provided the American public with a natural endowment of extraordinary value” because of, in part, existence, option, and bequest values.<sup>63</sup>

The study of tangible wilderness benefits is ongoing and has expanded into many other benefits. For example, recent studies beginning to describe the economic benefits that wilderness generates in nearby gateway communities. Wilderness visits generate economic activity for local outfitting, lodging, restaurants, and bars.<sup>64</sup> Wilderness gateway communities also have become desirable locations for employers to relocate; having wilderness nearby provides an amenity which attracts employees.

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<sup>56</sup> Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

<sup>57</sup> Section 2(c), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>58</sup> Harvey, Mark, 2014, The Wilderness Writings of Howard Zahniser

<sup>59</sup> Ibid

<sup>60</sup> Holmes, Op.cit.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid

<sup>62</sup> Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

<sup>63</sup> Holmes, Op.cit.

<sup>64</sup> Hjerpe, Evan, A Perpetual Flow of Benefits: Wilderness Economic Values in an Evolving, Multicultural Society, USDA General Technical Report WO-101, October, 2022

Consequently, residential population increases and businesses to support the new residences also increase.<sup>65</sup> Studies have shown that rural western counties containing wilderness consistently generate greater in-migration (8.2%) than counties that do not contain wilderness (0.0 percent). However, more study is needed to understand the full roll of wilderness in these statistics.<sup>66</sup>

The direct and tangible demand for Wilderness visitation tends to decrease when incomes rise. When incomes are lower, visiting Wilderness provides a more affordable substitute to more expensive forms of recreation.<sup>67</sup> Still, it is important to recognize that the value of wilderness is more deeply held than the direct economic activity generated. Both the tangible and intangible benefits are of great importance to many people.

Though the Act extols the “benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness,”<sup>68</sup> benefits are not precisely laid out by the Wilderness Act. Furthermore, the intangible benefits provided by Wilderness are often personal and difficult to describe or quantify. Nonetheless they are real benefits; it is often an intangible benefit that will be expressed by people when asked why wilderness is important to them. These benefits are uses of wilderness. Wilderness preservation is often in the best public interest for lands because it meets “the [present and future]<sup>69</sup> needs of the American people.”<sup>70</sup> Though many of the beneficial uses of wilderness are intangible, they can be more deeply held in the human psyche than the uses accounted for on a ledger. Wallace Stegner, a preeminent spokesperson for wilderness,<sup>71</sup> said in 1960, “the reminder and the reassurance that [wilderness] is still there is good for our spiritual health even if we never once in ten years set foot in it.”<sup>72</sup>

#### *Public Purposes*

Section 4(b) of the Wilderness Act identifies recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical uses to which wilderness is devoted under the label of “public purposes.” These are the most clearly identified multiple uses provided by the Wilderness Act.

Just as the MUSYA and FLPMA provide multiple use with constraints, the Wilderness Act provides a constraint to the public purposes in the sentence immediately preceding the public purposes. Section 4(b) states that each agency “shall so administer such area for such other purposes for which it may have been established as also to preserve its wilderness character.” The public purposes are among the “other purposes” which are only administered in a manner consistent with the preservation of wilderness character.

Consider two of the public purposes: recreation and conservation. First, recreation is administered within the context of primitive recreation, a quality of wilderness character. Motorized recreational opportunities, for example, are not primitive and are not provided for in wilderness. Second,

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid

<sup>66</sup> Ibid

<sup>67</sup> Bowker, JM, et al, A Perpetual Flow of Benefits: Wilderness Economic Values in an Evolving, Multicultural Society, USDA General Technical Report WO-101, October, 2022

<sup>68</sup> Section 2(a), Public Law 88-577, Wilderness Act of 1964

<sup>69</sup> Public Law 94-579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

<sup>70</sup> Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 & Public Law 94-579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

<sup>71</sup> Wilderness Connect, <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/people/wallace-stegner.php>

<sup>72</sup> Stegner, Wallace, 1960, Wilderness Letter, from Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

conservation is managed within the context of wilderness being untrammelled and natural, two qualities of wilderness character. Conservation, in terms of wildlife in wilderness, is achieved within the context of populations that are free from human control or influences. Recreation and conservation, as well as other public purposes, are multiple uses of wilderness administered in the context of the preservation of wilderness character. These so called “public purposes,” applied within their constraint of preserving wilderness character, are, in essence, the operative multiple uses of Wilderness.

### *Special Provisions*

The Wilderness Act, and some subsequent laws adding additional wilderness units to the NWPS, contain special provisions for resource uses such as grazing, water development, and fire control. Grazing is mandated to continue, and Congress has further provided “Grazing Guidelines” that articulate what activities utilizing prohibited uses may occur in association with grazing. New mining uses were allowed to be established up until 1984 and existing mining uses may continue in wilderness, managed under stipulations that prevent unnecessary degradation to wilderness character. The control of fire may occur as deemed desirable. The Congress has included additional guidance that “anything necessary for the protection of the public health or safety” in regard to fire management is permissible.<sup>73</sup> Congress further stated that prescribed burning is a potential pre-suppression activity “particularly in cases where a history of past fire suppression policies have allowed 'unnatural' accumulations of dead or live fuel...to build up to hazardous levels.”<sup>74</sup> These special provisions act as additional multiple uses within wilderness alongside the Act’s mandate to preserve wilderness character.

### *Conclusion*

The preservation of wilderness is one use of federal lands within a spectrum of multiples uses ranging from resource extraction to preservation. Furthermore, within areas designated as Wilderness, multiple uses occur. It’s multi-faceted uses include preserving wilderness character, securing the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness, devotion of wilderness areas to public purposes, and implementing special provisions.

In addition to the Wilderness Act of 1964, two multiple use laws, the Multiple Use and Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976, clearly support the preservation of wilderness within the concept of multiple use. Key concepts are that multiple use makes judicious use of the land for some of the resources, and that some land will be used for less than all of the resources.<sup>75</sup> Both the MUSYA and FLPMA conclude that decisions to identify priority land uses cannot be based solely on the use that provides the greatest economic output.

The science of economics has also advanced in ways meaningful to understanding “non-use” or “amenity” resources in comparison with the tangible economic values produced with industrial goods

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<sup>73</sup> House Report 95-540

<sup>74</sup> House Report 98-40

<sup>75</sup> Public Law 86-517, Multiple Use Sustained-Yield Act of 1960 & Public Law 94–579, Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976

and services.<sup>76</sup> Wilderness has been shown to provide multiple economic values in both direct and indirect ways, providing Americans an endowment of extraordinary value.<sup>77</sup>

The various uses of wilderness are likely, at times, to conflict, just as multiple uses identified under the MUSYA and FLPMA may conflict. Under the MUSYA and FLPMA, Congress instructed the resolution of those conflicts through a judicious, harmonious and coordinated consideration of all land values. Under the Wilderness Act, conflicts are similarly resolved under the guiding principle of preserving wilderness character as a whole.<sup>78</sup>

Howard Zahinser urged the Nation to avoid taking the approach of a “bread-alone existence;”<sup>79</sup> that is, a narrow viewpoint of the land that only values material products. Within the United States, wilderness makes up roughly 5% of the land base.<sup>80</sup> A balanced society will assure wilderness preservation is among the many beneficial uses of America’s public lands.

July 27, 2025. James Sippel as lead for the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid

<sup>76</sup> Wild. and Rec, Op.cit.

<sup>77</sup> Holmes, Op.cit.

<sup>78</sup> House Report 101-405 Appendix B

<sup>79</sup> Zahniser, *Wildlands: A Part of Man’s Environment*, Yearbook for Agriculture, 1963.

<sup>80</sup> Wilderness Connect <https://wilderness.net/learn-about-wilderness/fast-facts/default.php>