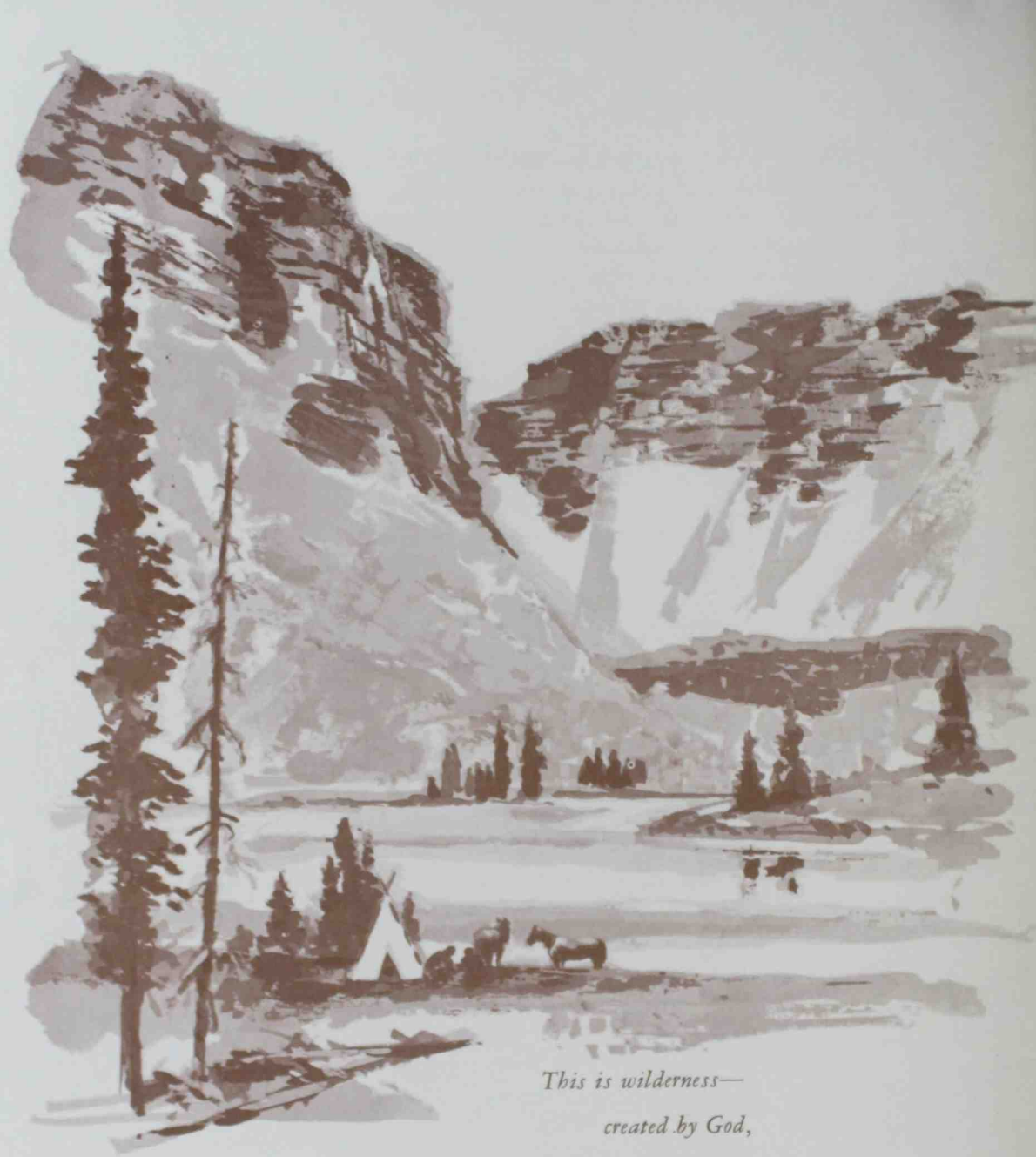


WILDERNESS

The National Forests . . .

**AMERICA'S
PLAYGROUNDS**

U.S. Dept. of Agriculture • Forest Service • PA-459



This is wilderness—

created by God,

molded by nature;

the province of wild creatures,

the far retreat of man.

... beyond civilization

All of the sixth day they had ridden the wild summits of the Continental Divide, and horses and men were tiring when they rode into the basin. Three small lakes gleamed in the afternoon sun, and around them crowded dark green timber. Rocky peaks hemmed the basin except at its upper end where a great wall of granite rose sheer. David thought it was the most beautiful valley he had ever seen.

When they had pitched camp, David broke out fishing gear and climbed to the granite wall and the lake at its base. For a moment he stood quietly, enjoying the remoteness of the rocky shore. Then deftly he cast in quest of a trout, fishing waters no other man might fish for months.

"Why wilderness?" a friend in Philadelphia had asked. "Why go where there's nothing?" David hadn't known how to answer. He had known only that he wanted something more than food and drink and the pleasures of vacations he usually took. But he could answer his Philadelphia friend now; he had been beyond civilization.

For the first time he had slept cradled by the earth in a world totally new to him. He had lived close to the land, experiencing its isolation and, standing on lofty peaks or lying warm in his sleeping bag, listening to its remarkable stillness. In ancient rocks he had glimpsed its past; in green shoots reaching above decaying vegetation he had seen the wilderness renewing itself, and in these things he had sensed its link with things eternal. He had found the wilderness not the empty land of his friend's imagination, but a land of beauty and life.

The last soft daylight hung over the mountain rim when David started back to camp. He walked slowly, and turned often to look at the lake. On the last high rise he turned again, and now the red-gold of the setting sun reflected from clouds overhead. The basin filled with the golden glow, and David knew that one day he must come again to this unnamed lake at the base of a granite wall in America's wilderness.





A Wilderness Heritage

Wilderness is an integral part of the American heritage. This Nation was born in wilderness, and from it came the land and materials needed to build a country. The freedom of wild lands, their great open spaces, and their grandeur are interwoven in America's history, art, and literature, and have strongly influenced the shaping of the national character.

The wilderness that witnessed the birth of this Nation and nourished its growth no longer spreads from ocean to ocean. Neither has it all been tamed. Many of these untamed lands, majestic samples of primeval America, are parts of the National Forests of the United States. Here, as wild and just as free as ever, over 14 million acres of wilderness in 84 areas are held in trust by the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Forest Service for the use, enjoyment, and spiritual enrichment of the American people.

Nearly 40 years ago the Forest Service pioneered in preserving America's wilderness heritage. Wilderness is irreplaceable and must not all be lost. Inherent in its primeval character are recreational, scientific, educational, and historical values of great benefit to the Nation and its people.

The Forest Service bears with pride its stewardship of these unique lands and has long been dedicated to keeping them intact for this and future generations of Americans.

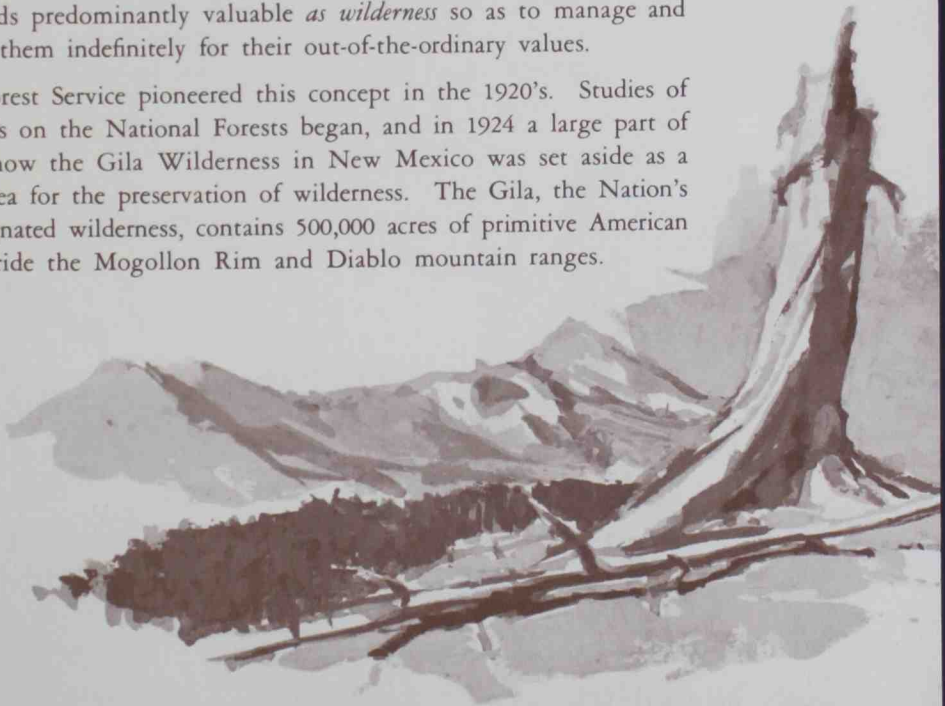
Pioneering a concept

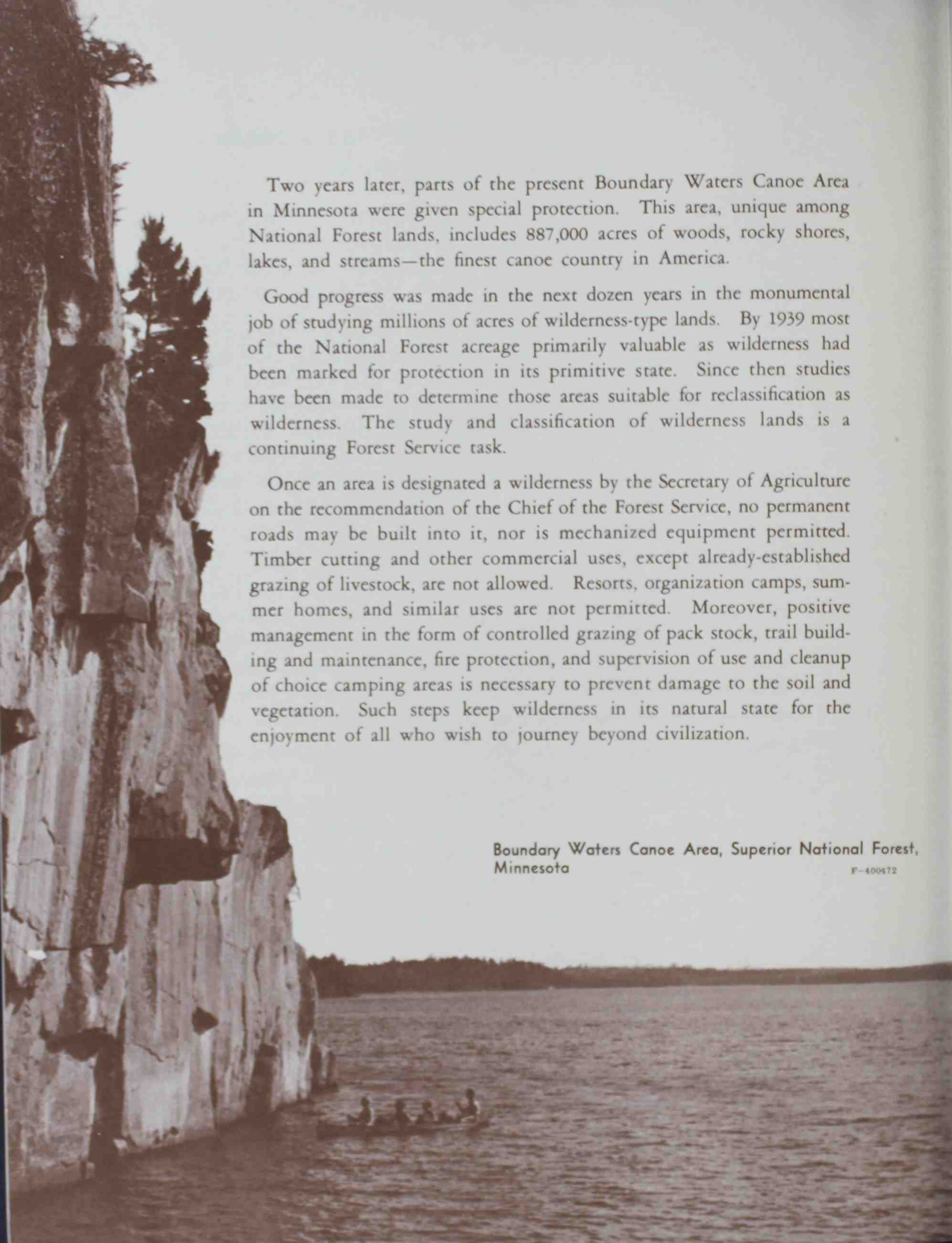
The value of going into the wilderness to refresh the spirit and body has been understood by men since Biblical times, and before. More recently, men have realized that in the habitable areas of the world wilderness lands might not always be available as a far retreat for mankind.

One of the first Americans to sense in his country's growth a threat to its wilderness, and to speak out for the preservation of wild lands, was Henry Thoreau. Even then, just over 100 years ago, the need was not immediate. Much of the land was still wild. There seemed to be more space for growing than the country would ever need. But before many decades passed, our building Nation was reaching toward even the remotest of its lands. For a few conservationists who looked to the future, this was a warning that without protection none of our lands would remain forever wild.

Many of these far-sighted individuals were in the Forest Service. Led by Aldo Leopold, who later was to become one of the Nation's most distinguished naturalists, their thinking influenced early recognition of wilderness values and benefits to the Nation. So began the Forest Service concept of wilderness land management: that of designating as wilderness those lands predominantly valuable *as wilderness* so as to manage and maintain them indefinitely for their out-of-the-ordinary values.

The Forest Service pioneered this concept in the 1920's. Studies of wild lands on the National Forests began, and in 1924 a large part of what is now the Gila Wilderness in New Mexico was set aside as a special area for the preservation of wilderness. The Gila, the Nation's first designated wilderness, contains 500,000 acres of primitive American lands astride the Mogollon Rim and Diablo mountain ranges.



A sepia-toned photograph of a rocky shoreline. On the left, a tall, craggy rock face rises from the water. A few dark evergreen trees are growing on the top of the rock. In the lower right, a small canoe with several people is on the water. The background shows a distant shoreline with more trees under a pale sky.

Two years later, parts of the present Boundary Waters Canoe Area in Minnesota were given special protection. This area, unique among National Forest lands, includes 887,000 acres of woods, rocky shores, lakes, and streams—the finest canoe country in America.

Good progress was made in the next dozen years in the monumental job of studying millions of acres of wilderness-type lands. By 1939 most of the National Forest acreage primarily valuable as wilderness had been marked for protection in its primitive state. Since then studies have been made to determine those areas suitable for reclassification as wilderness. The study and classification of wilderness lands is a continuing Forest Service task.

Once an area is designated a wilderness by the Secretary of Agriculture on the recommendation of the Chief of the Forest Service, no permanent roads may be built into it, nor is mechanized equipment permitted. Timber cutting and other commercial uses, except already-established grazing of livestock, are not allowed. Resorts, organization camps, summer homes, and similar uses are not permitted. Moreover, positive management in the form of controlled grazing of pack stock, trail building and maintenance, fire protection, and supervision of use and cleanup of choice camping areas is necessary to prevent damage to the soil and vegetation. Such steps keep wilderness in its natural state for the enjoyment of all who wish to journey beyond civilization.

Boundary Waters Canoe Area, Superior National Forest,
Minnesota

F-400472

There are now 84 separate areas of land, about 8 percent of the more than 186 million acres of the National Forest System, which are designated as wilderness. They are located on parts of 73 National Forests in 14 States and their combined area, over 14 million acres, exceeds the total land area of New Hampshire, Connecticut, and Massachusetts. Their management is included in the overall program of multiple-use management for the National Forest System, which comprises 154 National Forests and 19 National Grasslands in 41 States and Puerto Rico.

National Forest wilderness lands embrace desert country and brushland, virgin timber stands, great valleys and alpine meadows, and some of the Nation's loftiest mountains. They contain countless streams and lakes. They abound in fish, small animals and birds, and big-game animals such as deer, elk, moose, mountain goats, and bighorn sheep. Some are the province of the grizzly bear, which must have the wilderness habitat to survive.

These ancient lands range in size from a few thousand acres to more than a million. Some are split by deep canyons, or are otherwise distinguished by geological formations in which can be read the history of the land. In others are the homes of living glaciers.

But however they have been worn and molded by the elements, however their features have been torn and twisted and sometimes piled one upon the other by ancient cataclysms, they all share in common a primeval character, the identifying mark of wilderness.





Into the Wilderness

The appreciation of wilderness values is an invention of civilization. Man generally does not recognize such values until he has become separated from them; that is, when he has become civilized and a member of a dynamic and complex society.

Primitive man, living deep in the forest and fearing its mysteries, had little regard for an environment in which his life was constantly endangered. The American pioneer viewed the wilderness first as a land to be conquered and put to domestic use, for he was confined more by it than by the villages, roads, and farms he was building.

He was aware of the solitude and beauty of wild forests and the freedom of untamed lands, but his awareness was blunted; the forests were too much in abundance and too much a part of his life.

It is only recently in this century that Americans, closely confined by a highly complex civilization, have begun developing a deeper appreciation of wilderness.

Many people—those working in historical, scientific, and educational fields—are interested in these lands in relation to their work. But by far the most popular appeal of wilderness to Americans is the opportunity it provides for rugged, primitive outdoor recreation.

Those who go into the American wilderness for recreation—whether spiritual or physical—are as diverse in character as are the wild lands they visit. They come from every section of the United States, men and women of many ages and backgrounds. They come for various reasons; wilder-

ness means many different things to people. And they come prepared. They have made careful plans and detailed arrangements, both essential for a successful and enjoyable trip, for in the wilderness their way is the arduous, virile travel of the pioneers. On foot, on horseback, or by canoe—there is no other way to travel—they seek out the unusual outdoor experiences only these primitive lands can give.

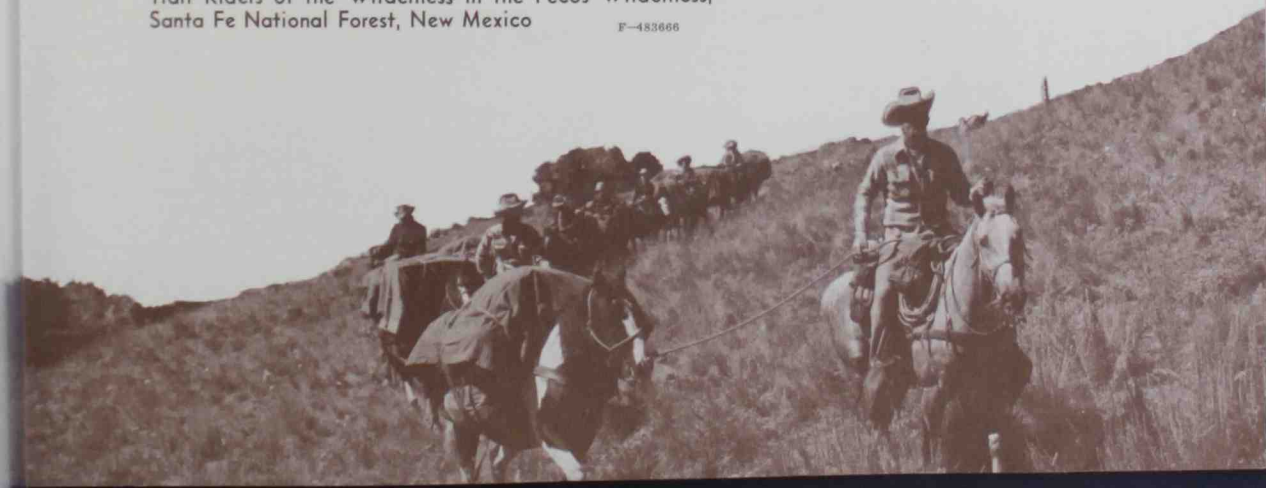
They may go into the wilderness to hunt big game or to fish in waters seldom visited by other fishermen. Perhaps their hobby is photography and they wish to document America's primitive landscapes or to capture on film the wild animals and birds. Others may only seek the solitude of great space and distance. Some may desire to conquer a towering mountain peak thrust skyward millions of years ago and then, standing high on the peak, say to themselves that *no* man has stood here before.

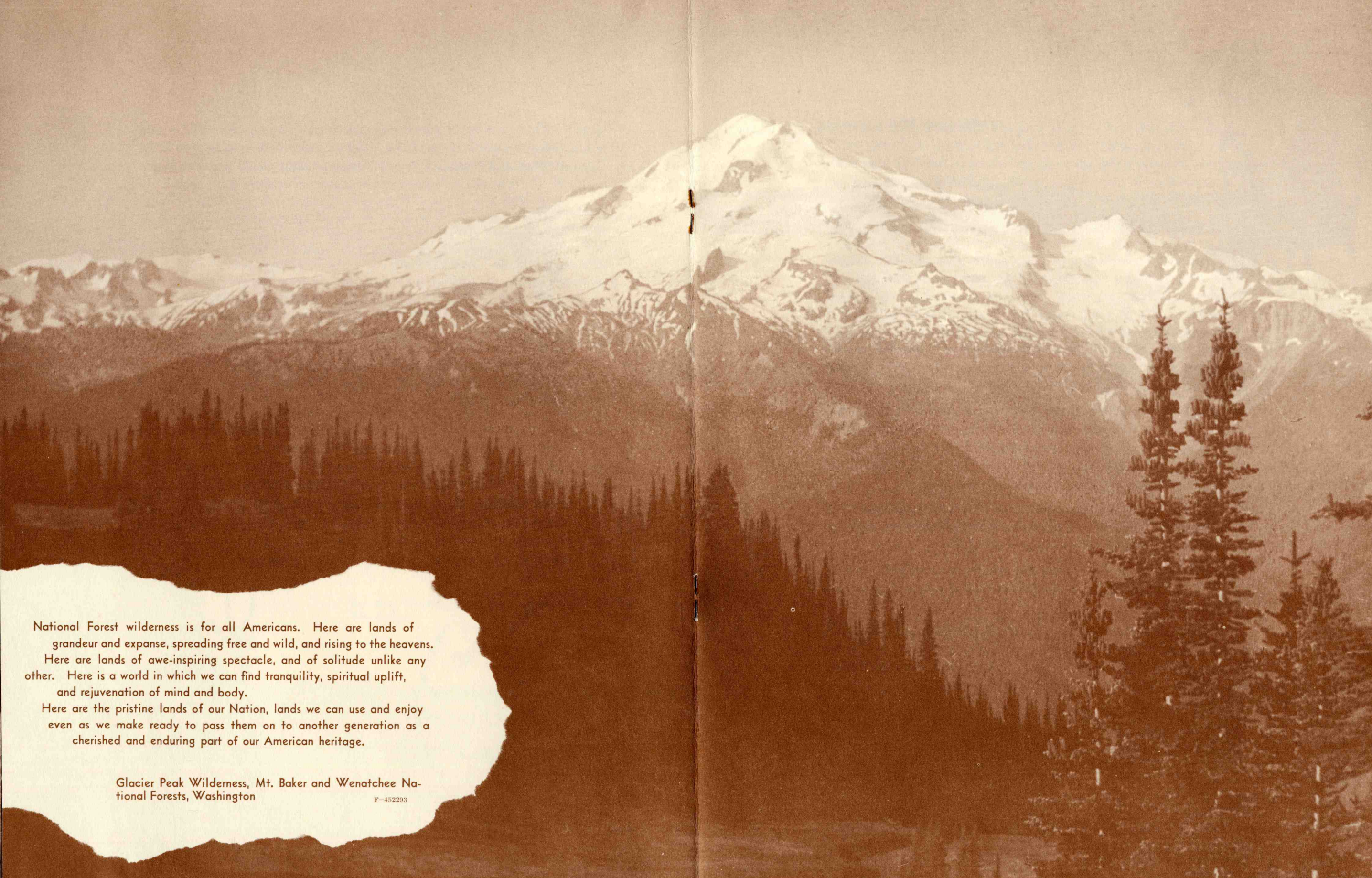
But for most people, it is thrill enough and satisfying enough just to travel in primitive lands, camping where night falls and enjoying the soul-healing freedom of living in a world apart from the pressures of their daily lives.

Whatever his interest, the first-time wilderness visitor will find his days in the wild lands adding up to an experience of special significance to him, though perhaps unexplainable to another person. The wilderness environment will be unlike any he has ever known, and his emotional and spiritual reactions to it will be completely, uniquely his.

Trail Riders of the Wilderness in the Pecos Wilderness,
Santa Fe National Forest, New Mexico

F-483666





National Forest wilderness is for all Americans. Here are lands of grandeur and expanse, spreading free and wild, and rising to the heavens. Here are lands of awe-inspiring spectacle, and of solitude unlike any other. Here is a world in which we can find tranquility, spiritual uplift, and rejuvenation of mind and body. Here are the pristine lands of our Nation, lands we can use and enjoy even as we make ready to pass them on to another generation as a cherished and enduring part of our American heritage.

Glacier Peak Wilderness, Mt. Baker and Wenatchee National Forests, Washington

F-452293

Wilderness under Forest Service management

The National Forests are America's playgrounds—but they also are lands of many other uses. They yield water, timber, forage, wildlife, and forest recreation opportunities of all kinds, including those enjoyed in wilderness areas.

In the years ahead, however, the Nation's rapidly expanding population will need even greater resource yields from these public forests. This rising need is being met by the Development Program for the National Forests. Under this program, forest resources are being more intensively developed and managed for multiple use while the land, the basic resource, is being conserved.

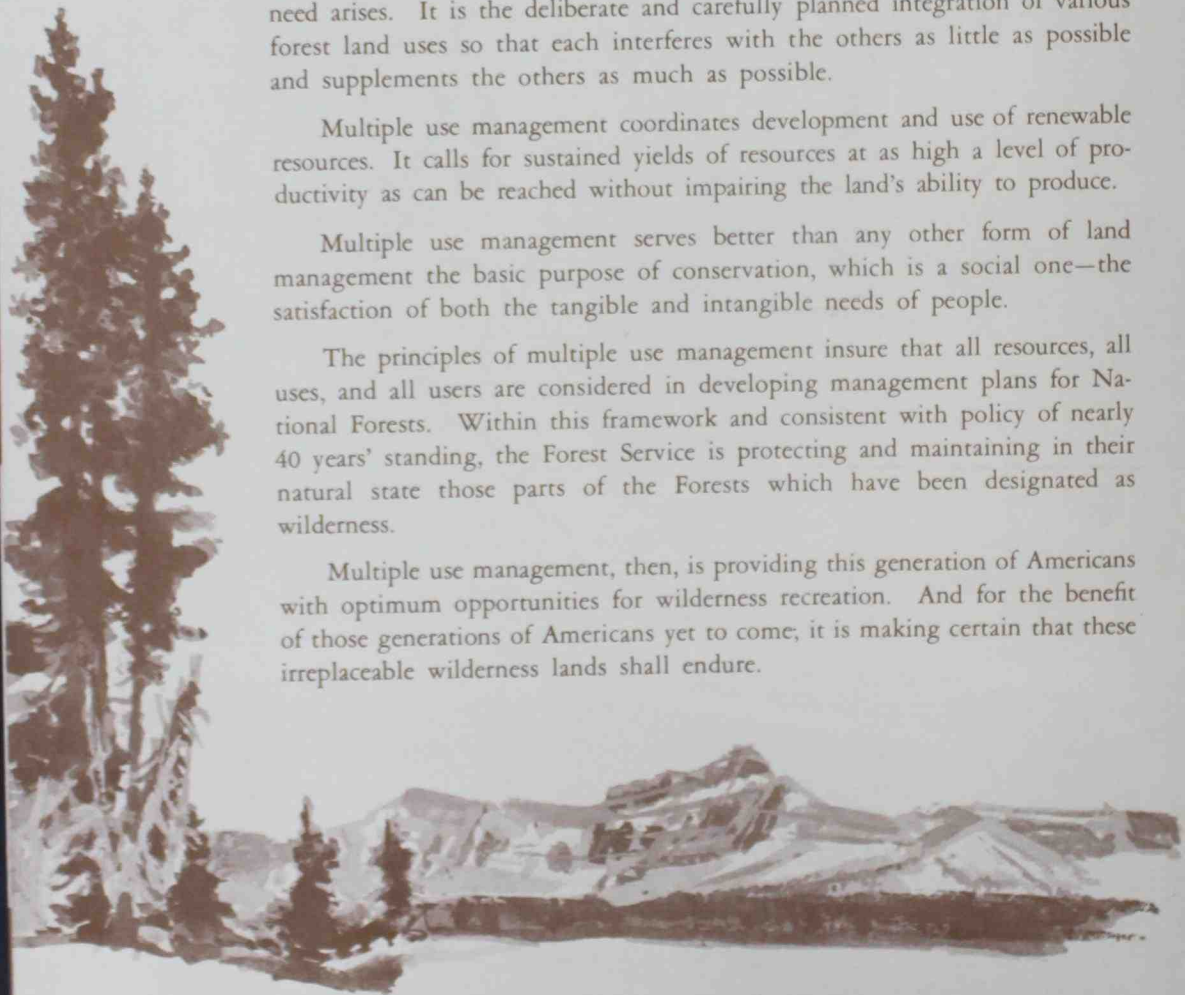
Management for multiple use takes positive action before, not after a need arises. It is the deliberate and carefully planned integration of various forest land uses so that each interferes with the others as little as possible and supplements the others as much as possible.

Multiple use management coordinates development and use of renewable resources. It calls for sustained yields of resources at as high a level of productivity as can be reached without impairing the land's ability to produce.

Multiple use management serves better than any other form of land management the basic purpose of conservation, which is a social one—the satisfaction of both the tangible and intangible needs of people.

The principles of multiple use management insure that all resources, all uses, and all users are considered in developing management plans for National Forests. Within this framework and consistent with policy of nearly 40 years' standing, the Forest Service is protecting and maintaining in their natural state those parts of the Forests which have been designated as wilderness.

Multiple use management, then, is providing this generation of Americans with optimum opportunities for wilderness recreation. And for the benefit of those generations of Americans yet to come, it is making certain that these irreplaceable wilderness lands shall endure.





Great Gulf Wild Area, White Mountain National Forest,
New Hampshire

F-476932

INFORMATION

For detailed information on visiting National Forest wilderness, see the map for the number of the Forest Service Region administering the area you are interested in and write to the appropriate Regional Forester, Forest Service:

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1. Federal Building
Missoula, Mont. | 6. Post Office Box 3623
Portland 8, Oreg. |
| 2. Federal Center
Building 85
Denver 25, Colo. | 7. 6816 Market St.
Upper Darby, Pa. |
| 3. 517 Gold Ave. SW.
Albuquerque, N. Mex. | 8. 50 Seventh St. NE.
Atlanta 23, Ga. |
| 4. Forest Service Bldg.
Ogden, Utah | 9. 710 N. 6th St.
Milwaukee 3, Wis. |
| 5. 630 Sansome St.
San Francisco 11, Calif. | 10. Fifth Street Office Bldg.
Post Office Box 1631
Juneau, Alaska |

For licenses to hunt or fish on the National Forests, apply to the Fish and Game Department of the State that includes the area you plan to visit.

This booklet is one of a series on the many uses and benefits of the water, timber, wildlife, forage, and recreation resources of the National Forest System. Others include *Backpacking in the National Forest Wilderness*, *Camping*, *Skiing*, and *Timber*.

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