

WILDERNESS LEGISLATION IN 118TH CONGRESS

Compiled by Wilderness Watch

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**Bolded Titles or bolded Comments indicate bad bills or provisions.
“Clean” means bill is free of any special provisions or management exceptions.**

Bill No./Sponsor	Title (not exact)	Latest Action	Comments
HR 668 McCollum (D-MN)	Boundary Waters Wilderness Protection and Pollution Prevention Act	Referred to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands by the Committee on Natural Resources, 21 Feb 2023	Withdraws federal lands and minerals in 234,328-acre Rainy River watershed from mineral exploration and development, to protect Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness and Voyageurs National Park from mining pollution.
HR 724 Huffman (D-CA)	Arctic Refuge Protection Act	Referred to the Subcommittee on Federal Lands by the Committee on Natural Resources, 21 Feb. 2023	Would repeal the provision from the 2017 Tax Bill requiring oil and gas leasing in the 1.56 million-acre coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, and would designate that coastal plain as Wilderness. Clean bill (free of special weakening provisions).
HR 1303 Leger Fernandez (D-NM)	Cerro de la Olla Wilderness	Referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands by the Committee on Natural Resources 22 Mar. 2023.	Would establish the 12,898-acre Cerro de la Olla Wilderness in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico. Allows wildlife water development structures (guzzlers) in Wilderness. <i>S. 593 is companion.</i>
HR 1380 Curtis (R-UT)	Protect America’s Rock Climbing (PARC) Act	Passed Committee on Natural Resources, 21 Jun. 2023.	Would legalize fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness, in contrast to the prohibition against installations in the 1964 Wilderness Act.
HR 2545 Carbajal (D-CA)	Central Coast Heritage Protection Act	Referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands by the Committee on Natural Resources, 8 May 2023	Designates 250,000 acres on the Los Padres National Forest in CA as Wilderness. Expands 9 Wildernesses on Los Padres NF, and designates 4 new Wildernesses on Carrizo Plain Natl Monument. Buffer zones, military overflights, horses, hydrologic/ meteorological/climatological collection devices, 2 existing water diversion/transport facilities & roads, electrical distribution line in San Rafael Wilderness addition. Incorporates bad wildlife practices from House Report 101-405.

HR 2765 Kilmer (D-WA)	Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	Referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands by Committee on Natural Resources	Would designate 14 new Wildernesses totaling 126,500 acres of Wilderness in Olympic National Forest, one Potential Wilderness of 5,346 acres, and 464 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Contains the usual buffer zone language , but otherwise clean bill. <i>S. 1254 is companion.</i>
HR 2989 McCarthy (R-CA)	Save Our Sequoias Act	Referred to 1) The Committee on Agriculture; and the 2) Committee on Natural Resources. The Committee on Natural Resources passed bill 17 May 2023. The Committee on Agriculture referred to Subcommittee on Forestry, 1 Jun. 2023.	Among other things, the bill directly amends the 1964 Wilderness Act to allow any activities related to reforestation (logging, planting, “vegetation competition control”) in designated Wildernesses in CA “to reestablish giant sequoias following a wildfire.”
HR 3031 Stansbury (D-NM)	America’s Red Rock Wilderness Act, 86 cosponsors	Referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands by the Committee on Natural Resources, 22 May 2023.	Would designate 8.4 million acres of Wilderness in UT. <i>S.1310 is companion.</i>
HR 3173 Amodei (R-NV)	Northern Nevada Economic Development and Conservation Act	Referred to Committee on Natural Resources and Committee on Agriculture, 10 May 2023. Ag referred to Subcommittee on Forestry, 1 Jun. 2023. Committee on Natural Resources referred to Subcommittee on Public Lands on 4 Mar 2024. Hearing held March 7, 2024.	Among other provisions, the bill would designate 12,392-acre Burbank Canyons Wilderness in Douglas Co., and 7 Wildernesses totaling 136,072 acres in Pershing Co., NV. Bill full of weakening special provisions. Releases WSAs.
HR 3195 Stauber (R-MN)	Mining in Watershed of BWCAW	Passed Committee on Natural Resources 17 May 2023. Committee on NR reported an amended version, H. Rep. 118-377. Placed on Union Calendar No. 308.	Would rescind Public Land Order 7917 in order to allow copper-nickel sulfide mining in the watershed of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness in MN.
H. Con. Res. 34 Stauber (R-MN)	Expressing disapproval of withdrawing Superior National Forest lands from mineral and geothermal development	Referred to NR Committee, then the Subcommittee on Energy and Mineral Resources. Subcommittee hearing on 11 May 2023, and discharged back to the NR Committee. NR Committee ordered to be reported by Yeas and Nays: 17-15 on 17 May 2023.	Seeks to have Congress disapprove the withdrawal of 225,504 acres of Superior NF land in NE Minnesota from mineral and geothermal laws, withdrawn to protect the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness from mining pollution. If Congress adopts a concurrent resolution on this disapproval, it will terminate the withdrawal, per the Federal Land Policy and Management Act.
HR 3437 Neguse (D-CO)	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	Referred to NR Committee 17 May 2023; NR Committee referred to	Incorporates 4 previous bills (Continental Divide, San Juan Mtns Wilderness, Thompson Divide, and Curecanti NRA

		Subcommittee on Federal Lands 22 May 2023.	Acts) and would designate a total of 80,443 acres of new Wilderness. 24,359 acres in 4 additions on White River NF, plus 8,036-acre Williams Fork Potential Wilderness on White River NF. Allows motorized equip/transport in potential Wilderness for range improvement , and has language to determine whether 2 vacant grazing allotments will be filled. Designates 3 Wilderness additions totaling 47,200 acres on GMUG NF, plus new 8,884-acre McKenna Peak Wilderness on BLM land, with buffer zone language . Releases remainder of Dominguez Canyon and McKenna Peak WSAs. Also removes 15.5 acres of potential wilderness in Rocky Mtn Natl Park for the Trail River Ranch within the Park. S. 1634 is companion.
HR 3681 Chu (D-CA)	San Gabriel Mountains Protection Act	Referred to NR Committee 25 May 2023; NR Committee referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands 9 Jun 2023.	Designates 4 Wildernesses on Angeles National Forest totaling 30,659 acres. Full of bad special provisions: buffer zones, military overflights, fire, horses, hydrologic/ meteorological/climatological collection devices, competitive running races. Also incorporates bad wildlife practices from bad House Report 101-405.
HR 3700 Huffman (D-CA)	Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act	Referred to NR Committee 25 May 2023; NR Committee referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands	Would designate 17 Wildernesses or wilderness additions totaling 251,023 acres on lands administered by FS and BLM in NW CA. Also designated 7 Potential Wildernesses totaling 49,692 acres. Full of bad special provisions: buffer zones, military overflights, fire, horses, hydrologic/ meteorological/climatological collection devices, and competitive equestrian event. Also incorporates bad wildlife practices from bad House Report 101-405. SEC. 302(m) CONTAINS NEW SPECIAL PROVISION LEGALIZING PERMANENT FIXED CLIMBING ANCHORS IN WILDERNESS.
HR 3971 Hill (R-AR)	Flatside-Bethune Wilderness Act	Referred to NR Committee 9 Jun 2023	Would add 2,215 acres to the Flatside Wilderness on the Ouachita National Forest and re-name the Wilderness as the Flatside-Bethune Wilderness.
HR 4297 Neguse (D-CO)	Bolts Ditch Headgate	Referred to NR Committee; NR Committee referred to Subcommittee on Federal lands 30 Jan 2024.	Would authorize additional entities to complete maintenance on Bolts Ditch and Headgate in Holy Cross Wilderness. S. 2156 is companion.

		Subcommittee held hearing on this bill 31 Jan 2024. Subcommittee discharged bill back to NR Committee 6 Feb 2024. NR Committee passed bill out of committee and ordered to be reported by unanimous consent 6 Feb 2024.	
HR 4332 Hageman (R-WY)	WY Public Lands Initiative Act	Referred to NR Committee 23 Jun 2023	Would remove protection for (or “release”) BLM-administered Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in WY, and designate 5 Wildernesses totaling 20,381 acres. S. 1348 is companion.
HR 4377 Grijalva (D-AZ)	Barry M. Goldwater Range amendments	Referred to NR and Armed Services Committees 27 Jun 2023; NR Committee referred to Subcommittee on Federal Lands 11 Jul 2023; Subcommittee on FL held hearing 13 Jul 2023; Subcommittee returned to NR Committee 26 Jul 2023; NR Committee Consideration and mark-up 26 Jul 2023; NR Committee reported favorably Yeas and Nays 32-0	Would transfer a patented mineral claim from Secretary of Air Force to Secretary of Interior to become part of Cabeza Prieta Wilderness.
HR 4872 Johnson (R-LA)	Securing Our Borders and Wilderness Act	Referred to NR and Homeland Security Committees 25 Jul 2023. Committee on Homeland Security referred to its Subcommittee on Border Security and Enforcement 25 Jul 2023.	Directly amends Wilderness Act to allow structures, installations, and roads; motor vehicles, motorboats, and motorized equipment; aircraft; tactical infrastructure and technology; and roads and physical barriers within any Wilderness for purposes of international land border security.
HR 5364 Edwards (R-NC)	TREES (Trees Remember Each Effacing Step) Act	Referred to Ag Committee 8 Sept 2023. Ag Committee Referred to Subcommittee on Forestry 21 Sept 2023.	Requires US Forest Service to install fences and barriers around old-growth trees in Joyce Kilmer-Slickrock Wilderness that are within 10 feet of Joyce Kilmer Memorial Trail.
HR 5919 Curtis (R-UT)	Connect the Parks Act	Referred to NR Committee on 25 Oct 2023. However, this bill in its entirety was subsumed in the EXPLORE Act (HR 6492), and the EXPLORE Act was ordered to be reported favorably out of Committee on Natural Resources by unanimous consent 1/17/24	Requirements to increase broadband internet service and cellular phone service (and associated tower construction) could have many negative impacts on National Park Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, and backcountry. S. 2018 is companion.

HR 5943 Leger Fernandez (D-NM)	Pecos Watershed Protection Act	Referred to NR Committee 25 Oct 2023.	Establishes the 11,599-acre Thompson Peak Wilderness on Forest Service-administered land. Has weakening special provisions on buffer zones. <i>S. 3033 is companion.</i>
HR 5962 Neguse (D-CO)	Re-name Mount Evans Wilderness as Mount Blue Sky Wilderness	Referred to NR Committee 25 Oct 2023.	Would re-name the Mount Evans Wilderness in CO as the Mount Blue Sky Wilderness following the official name change of the mountain itself. <i>S. 3044 is companion.</i>
HR 6216 Horsford (D-NV)	Nevada military and public lands bill	Referred to NR and Armed Services Committees 3 Nov 2023.	Among other things, would designate 736,188 acres as the Southern Paiute Wilderness in NV. Has weakening special provisions on water rights, data collection stations, military overflights, guzzlers, and motor vehicles and aircraft for nonconforming wildlife-management activities. <i>S. 3134 is companion.</i>
HR 6285 Stauber (R-MN)	Alaska's Right to Produce Act	Passed NR Committee on 6 Dec 2023 with Yeas and Nays: 24-17.	Would re-issue cancelled oil and gas leases on coastal plain of Arctic NWF, prohibit the Administration from cancelling or pausing oil leases there, withdraw the Sept 2023 SEIS, and nullify some Biden Administration actions.
HR 6314 Smith (D-WA)	Voluntary Grazing Permit Retirement Act (VGPRRA)	Referred to Committee on Natural Resources	Would allow for the voluntary retirement of grazing permits on federal land, including Wilderness.
HR 6492 Westerman (R-AR) 45 Co-sponsors	Expanding Public Lands Outdoor Recreation Experiences Act (EXPLORE Act)	Ordered to be reported favorably out of Committee on Natural Resources Committee by unanimous consent 17 Jan 2024. Committee on Ag referred to Subcommittee on Forestry and Subcommittee on Commodity Markets, Digital Assets, and Rural Development 24 Jan 2024	Includes anti-wilderness sections, including the PARC Act on fixed climbing anchors and Connect the Parks Act (all of 5919). <i>Similar to S. 873.</i>
HR 6718 McCarthy (R-CA)	City of Ridgecrest Land Exchange	Referred to NR Committee 12 Dec 2023.	Would legislate a land exchange of 500 acres of federal BLM land in/near the City of Ridgecrest for 640 acres of privately-owned land within the Owen Peak Wilderness.
S. 282 Markey (D-MA)	Arctic Refuge Coastal Plain Wilderness	Referred to Committee on Environment and Public Works 7 Feb 2023.	Would designate the coastal plain of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska as Wilderness. Clean bill.

S. 440 Wyden (D-OR)	Oregon Recreation Enhancement Act	Referred to ENR Committee 15 Feb 2023. ENR Committee ordered to report bill favorably without amendment 17 May 2023. ENR Committee, reported by Senator Manchin without amendment and with written S. Rep. 118-51. Placed on Senate Leg Calendar under general orders on 11 July 2023 (Calendar No. 123).	Would expand the Wild Rogue Wilderness by 59,512 acres. Would establish the 98,150-acre Rogue Canyon Recreation Area and 29,884-acre Molalla Recreation Area on BLM-administered land. Clean bill.
S. 593 Heinrich (D-NM)	Cerro de la Olla Wilderness	Passed ENR Committee on 11 July 2023. Sen. Rpt. 118-54. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under General orders 11 Jul 2023 (Calendar No. 126).	Would establish the 12,898-acre Cerro de la Olla Wilderness in the Rio Grande del Norte National Monument in New Mexico. Allows wildlife water development structures (guzzlers) in Wilderness. <i>HR 1303 is companion.</i>
S. 745 Kaine (D-VA)	Virginia Wilderness Additions Act of 2023	Referred to Ag Committee 9 Mar 2023.	Would designate 1,000-acre addition to Rough Mtn Wilderness and 4,600-acre addition as Potential Wilderness to Rich Hole Wilderness on George Washington NF in VA. Clean bill.
S. 873 Manchin (D-WV)	America's Outdoor Recreation Act	Passed ENR Committee 17 May 2023 with amendments. S. Rpt. 118-79 on 26 Jul 2023.	Sec. 122 has revised language essentially mandating fixed climbing anchors in Wilderness.
S. 1254 Murray (D-WA)	Wild Olympics Wilderness & Wild and Scenic Rivers Act	Passed ENR Committee 14 Dec. 2023 with amendment.	Would designate 14 new Wildernesses totaling 126,500 acres of Wilderness in Olympic National Forest, one Potential Wilderness of 5,346 acres, and 464 miles of Wild and Scenic Rivers. Contains the usual buffer zone language, but otherwise clean bill. <i>HR 2765 is companion.</i>
S. 1310 Durbin (D-IL)	America's Red Rock Wilderness Act	Referred to ENR Committee on 26 April 2023.	Would designate 8.4 million acres of Wilderness in UT. <i>HR 3031 is companion.</i>
S. 1348 Barasso (R-WY)	Wyoming Public Lands Initiative Act of 2023	Passed ENR Committee 14 Dec. 2023 with an amendment in the nature of a substitute.	Would remove protection for (or "release") BLM-administered Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs) in WY, and designate 5 Wildernesses totaling 20,381 acres. <i>HR 4332 is companion.</i>
S. 1531 Whitehouse (D-RI)	Northern Rockies Ecosystem Protection Act (NREPA)	Referred to ENR Committee 10 May 2023.	Designates 20.6 million acres of Wilderness in ID, MT, OR, WA, and WY. Designates 1,810 miles of wild and scenic

			rivers, 1.022 million acres of wildland recovery areas, and 3.5 million acres of biological connecting corridors.
S. 1634 Bennett (D-CO) 2 Co-sponsors	Colorado Outdoor Recreation and Economy (CORE) Act	Passed ENR Committee with amendments 14 Dec. 2023.	Incorporates 4 previous bills (Continental Divide, San Juan Mtns Wilderness, Thompson Divide, and Curecanti NRA Acts) and would designate a total of 80,443 acres of new Wilderness. 24,359 acres in 4 additions on White River NF, plus 8,036-acre Williams Fork Potential Wilderness on White River NF. Allows motorized equip/transport in potential Wilderness for range improvement , and has language to determine whether 2 vacant grazing allotments will be filled. Designates 3 Wilderness additions totaling 47,200 acres on GMUG NF, plus new 8,884-acre McKenna Peak Wilderness on BLM land, with buffer zone language. Releases remainder of Dominguez Canyon and McKenna Peak WSAs. Also removes 15.5 acres of potential wilderness in Rocky Mtn Natl Park for the Trail River Ranch within the Park. HR 3437 is companion.
S. 1776 Padilla (D-CA)	Protecting Unique and Beautiful Landscapes by Investing in California (PUBLIC) Lands Act	Passed ENR Committee with amendment in the nature of a substitute 14 Dec 2023.	Includes 3 House bills: Northwest CA Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests (HR 3700), Central Coast Heritage Act (HR 2545), and San Gabriel Mountains, Foothills, and Rivers Protection (HR 3681). Wildernesses are designated. Lots of bad special provisions included.
S. 1890 Wyden (D-OR)	Malheur Community Empowerment for the Owyhee Act	Passed ENR Committee 14 Dec. 2023.	Among many other things, would designate 27 Wildernesses totaling 1,097,731 acres in Malheur County. Has bad wildlife provisions including aircraft and motor vehicle use, and incorporates bad language from House Report 101-405. Releases WSAs.
S. 2018 Barasso (R-WY)	Connect Our Parks Act	Passed ENR Committee 9 Jan 2024 with amendment in the nature of a substitute and with S. Report No. 118-154. Placed on Senate Legislative Calendar under general orders 9 Jan 2024 (Calendar No. 306).	Requirements to increase broadband internet service and cellular phone service (and associated tower construction) could have many negative impacts on National Park Wilderness, Recommended Wilderness, and backcountry. HR 5919 is companion.
S. 2149 Tester (D-MT)	Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act	Ordered to be passed by ENR Committee 21 Sept. 2023. ENR	Would add 2 additions to Bob Marshall Wilderness totaling 47,206 acres, 1 addition to Mission Mtns W of 4,462 acres,

		Committee reported bill favorably without amendment with S. Report No. 118-155 on 9 Jan 2024.	and 1 addition to Scapegoat W of 27,392 acres. Requires access to private inholdings (apparently no exchange option); allows installation or maintenance of hydrological, meteorological, or climatological instrumentation in any wilderness addition; specifically allows commercial outfitter/guide activity (“may be authorized”); and has special provisions on buffers.
S. 2156 Bennett (D-CO)	Bolts Ditch Headgate	Referred to ENR Committee 22 Jun 2023.	Would authorize additional entities to complete maintenance on Bolts Ditch and Headgate in Holy Cross Wilderness. <i>HR 4297 is companion.</i>
S. 2216 Daines (R-MT)	Montana Sportsmen Conservation Act (Removing Protection for Wilderness Study Areas in MT)	ENR Committee ordered favorable passage 21 Sept. 2023. ENR Committee reported favorably, by Sen. Manchin, with an amendment 9 Jan 2024. Sen. Report No. 118-156.	Removes Wilderness Study Area (WSA) protection for the 81,000-acre Middle Fork Judith WSA, the 11,380-acre Hoodoo Mountain WSA, and the 11,580-acre Wales Creek WSA in MT.
S. 2630 Kaine (D-VA)	Shenandoah Mountain Act	Referred to Ag Committee 27 Jul 2023.	Among other things, would designate 4 new Wildernesses and 1 wilderness addition totaling 33,857 acres on George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. Has weakening provisions on buffer zones.
S. 2990 Braun (R-IN)	Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area and Wilderness Establishment Act of 2023	Referred to Ag Committee	Establishes the Benjamin Harrison National Recreation Area of 29,382 acres on the Hoosier NF surrounding the Wilderness, and adds 15,300 acres to the 12,472-acre Charles C. Deam Wilderness. Creates “non-wilderness” corridors that bisects proposed Wilderness and on which allows mountain bikes and continued motorized use. Exceptions for installations and access to those installations without listing installations.
S. 3033 Heinrich (D-NM)	Pecos Watershed Protection Act	Referred to ENR Committee 4 Oct 2023. Hearing before ENR Committee’s Subcommittee on Public Lands, Forests and Mining 25 Oct 2023. ENR Committee ordered to be reported with amendment favorably 14 Dec. 2023.	Establishes the 11,599-acre Thompson Peak Wilderness on Forest Service-administered land. Has weakening special provisions on buffer zones. <i>HR 5943 is companion.</i>

<p>S. 3044 Hickenlooper (D-CO)</p>	<p>Re-name Mount Evans Wilderness as Mount Blue Sky Wilderness</p>	<p>ENR Committee ordered to report bill without amendment favorably 14 Dec. 2023.</p>	<p>Would re-name the Mount Evans Wilderness in CO as the Mount Blue Sky Wilderness following the official name change of the mountain itself. <i>HR 5962 is companion.</i></p>
<p>S. 3134 Cortez Masto (D-NV)</p>	<p>Promoting National Security and Preserving Access to Public Land in Southern Nevada Act</p>	<p>Referred to ENR Committee 25 Oct 2023.</p>	<p>Among other things, would designate the 736,188-acre Southern Paiute Wilderness on the Desert National Wildlife Refuge in Clark and Lincoln Counties, NV. Among other things, would designate 736,188 acres as the Southern Paiute Wilderness in NV. Has weakening special provisions on water rights, data collection stations, military overflights, guzzlers, and motor vehicles and aircraft for nonconforming wildlife-management activities. <i>H.R. 6216 is companion bill.</i></p>
<p>S. 3593 Rosen (D-NV)</p>	<p>Truckee Meadows Public Lands Management Act</p>	<p>Introduced and referred to the Committee on Energy and Natural Resources 16 Jan 2024.</p>	<p>Designates five wildernesses in northwestern Nevada, and removes eleven other Wilderness Study Areas and areas managed for potential wilderness from protection. Has weakened special provisions on water rights; military overflights; data collection stations; water guzzlers and water development projects for wildlife; and state-wildlife-management activities, including motorized vehicles and aircraft for those activities.</p>