

RESTORE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENT OF THE WILDERNESS ACT

Background:

Section 7 of the Wilderness Act required regular reporting to Congress on the status of the Wilderness System:

At the opening of each session of Congress, the Secretaries of Agriculture and Interior shall jointly report to the President for transmission to the Congress on the status of the wilderness system, including a list and descriptions of the areas in the system, regulations in effect, and other pertinent information, together with any recommendations they may care to make.
Wilderness Act, section 7.

In the mid-1990s, Public Law 104-66, the *Federal Reports Elimination and Sunset Act of 1995*, terminated the Wilderness Act's requirement that the Administration transmit to Congress an annual report on the status of the Wilderness System. Eliminating this requirement was interpreted by the agencies as further evidence that Congress was little interested in the wilderness programs of the federal agencies. Moreover, without any reporting requirements, the executive agencies have essentially escaped the oversight that is fundamental to our legislative system.

Congress should restore the reporting requirements of Section 7 of the Wilderness Act (Public Law 88-577). It should require that the annual report provide meaningful information on the health and well-being of the Wilderness System, including whether the wilderness character of each area is improving, stable, or declining, and the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff that are assigned to wilderness stewardship in each area.

Resolution:

The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs urges Congress to restore the reporting requirements of Section 7 of the Wilderness Act (P.L. 88-577), and to require that the annual reports include information on whether the wilderness character of each area is improving, stable, or degrading, and on the number of full-time staff equivalents (FTE) assigned to each area.