

Resolution #22  
Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs

## **RESTORE THE REPORTING REQUIREMENTS OF THE WILDERNESS ACT**

Submitted by: Wilderness Watch

**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.”

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 federal agencies as evidence that Congress was little interested in their wilderness programs. Without any reporting requirements, the executive agencies have essentially escaped the oversight that is fundamental to our governmental system.

Congress should restore the reporting requirements of Section 7 of the Wilderness Act. Congress should further 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. The report should also include the number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff assigned to wilderness stewardship in each unit of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

**Resolution:** The Federation of Western Outdoor Clubs adopted a resolution in 2007 (Res. 1) urging 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. We reiterate our call for this change.

Contact: George Nickas, Wilderness Watch, PO Box 9175, Missoula, MT 59807.  
(406) 542-2048. [gnickas@wildernesswatch.org](mailto:gnickas@wildernesswatch.org)