



# Uphold the Integrity of the Wilderness Act

May 22, 2017

## Voice Your Opposition to H.R. 1349

**Mountain bikes in designated Wilderness?** For over 50 years it's been prohibited by the landmark Wilderness Act. But a new group, the Sustainable Trails Coalition (STC), intends to change that. The STC's president proclaimed that legalizing mountain bikes in Wilderness is inevitable.<sup>1</sup> **We need your help to ensure that this won't happen. Please contact your member of Congress today.**

Importantly, the International Mountain Bicycling Association does not support the STC's goals or tactics.<sup>2</sup> That makes the cries of the STC sound like an isolated, spoiled child among the mountain biking community. The STC currently is "shopping" among Congress for support for H.R. 1349. They claim that bikes were always intended to be included in the Wilderness vision.

***Backcountry horsemen and outfitters, we need your help! Please educate your member of Congress on why mountain bikes in Wilderness is a bad idea.***

The infant STC organization, formed in 2015, thinks they can dictate the terms of how people access and enjoy Wilderness. Yet Section 4(c) of the 1964 Wilderness Act states: "...there shall be...no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment"...and "**no other form of mechanical transport...**" Clearly, bikes are mechanical transport.

The STC claims that the Wilderness Act has become the victim of outdated thinking and bureaucratic "lethargy and inertia." That's far from the truth. It just doesn't fit with the STC's wishful thinking. The vision behind this celebrated act of Congress is just as relevant today—if not more so—than it was over 50 years ago.

**Why oppose mountain bikes in Wilderness?** Bikes in Wilderness would forever alter a key aspect of what Congress intended to be the wilderness experience—the relatively slow, contemplative mode of travel that can be provided on foot, on horseback or via canoe. Other reasons bike use would be problematic:

- The rapid speeds at which mountain bikes are capable of traveling, combined with their often silent approach, would create significant safety hazards for horsemen on steep, narrow or winding trails.
- Worse still would be safety hazards for persons leading a pack string, where a bike startling the least-trained horse or mule among the pack string could bolt and/or endanger the entire party.
- Solitude or a primitive and unconfined recreational experience would be lost if horsemen were forced to constantly scan the trail ahead and over their shoulder for rapidly approaching bikes.

***Please join BCHA in voicing opposition to H.R. 1349, which would authorize bikes in Wilderness. Call your member of Congress today. The Capitol Switchboard can connect you to your legislator in Washington, DC. Call: (202) 224-3121. Call today!***

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.hcn.org/articles/its-inevitable-there-will-be-bikes-in-wilderness> (March 29, 2016)

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.imba.com/resources/land-protection/frequently-asked-questions-wilderness-and-imba#q5>



National Wilderness  
Stewardship Alliance



## PROTECT AMERICA'S WILDERNESS

### OPPOSE HR 1349 - WHEELS OVER WILDERNESS

The following organizations oppose H.R. 1349, and any other efforts to amend the Wilderness Act to allow biking in wilderness.

#### RECREATION ORGANIZATIONS

American Hiking Society  
Sustainability, Inc.  
**Western States Safe Trails Alliance**

#### OUTFITTERS AND GUIDES

Montana Outfitters and Guides Association  
Bob Marshall Wilderness Outfitters (MT)  
Kennedy Meadows Pack Station (CA)  
Rich's Montana Guest Ranch (MT)  
Smoke Elser (MT)  
Swan Mountain Outfitters (MT)

#### EQUESTRIAN ORGANIZATIONS

**Action Coalition for Equestrians**  
**American Endurance Ride Conference**  
Back Country Horsemen of America  
Back Country Horsemen of Arizona  
Back Country Horsemen of Utah  
Hoosier Back Country Horsemen  
**Loomis Basin Horsemen's Association**  
Moab Canyons Endurance Ride  
Pathfinder Back Country Horsemen  
Selway-Pintler Wilderness BCH  
Wyoming Back Country Horsemen

#### HUNTING AND FISHING ORGANIZATIONS

Backcountry Hunters & Anglers  
Arkansas Wildlife Federation  
Association of Northwest Steelheaders  
Colorado Wildlife Federation  
Florida Wildlife Federation  
Georgia Wildlife Federation  
Idaho Wildlife Federation  
Louisiana Wildlife Federation

Idaho Wildlife Federation  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
New Hampshire Wildlife Federation  
New Mexico Wildlife Federation  
South Carolina Wildlife Federation  
South Dakota Wildlife Federation  
Wyoming Wildlife Federation

#### CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS

Arizona Wilderness Coalition  
California Wilderness Coalition  
Connecticut Forest & Park Association  
Conservation Council for Hawaii  
Conservation Federation Missouri  
Conservation Northwest  
Friends of Nevada Wilderness  
Montana Wilderness Association  
National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance  
Natural Resources Council of Maine  
New Hampshire Audubon  
New Mexico Wilderness Alliance  
Northeast Wilderness Trust  
**North Fork American River Alliance**  
**Sierra Foothills Audubon Society**  
Southern Utah Wilderness Alliance  
Texas Conservation Alliance  
Virginia Conservation Network  
The Wilderness Society  
Wyoming Wilderness Association  
(plus 100+ other conservation organizations)

#### TRAILS ORGANIZATIONS

Pacific Crest Trail Association  
**Washington Trails Association**

115TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1349

To amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes.

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 2, 2017

Mr. McCLINTOCK (for himself, Mr. HUNTER, Mr. WESTERMAN, and Mr. PEARCE) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Natural Resources

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## A BILL

To amend the Wilderness Act to ensure that the use of bicycles, wheelchairs, strollers, and game carts is not prohibited in Wilderness Areas, and for other purposes.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*  
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. USE OF CERTAIN WHEELED DEVICES NOT PRO-**  
4 **HIBITED IN WILDERNESS AREAS.**

5 Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C.  
6 1133(c)) is amended by adding at the end the following:  
7 “Nothing in this section shall prohibit the use of motor-  
8 ized wheelchairs, non-motorized wheelchairs, non-motor-

## HR 1349 Urgent Congressional targets (May 15, 2017)

BCHA member contact with yellow highlighted members is yet to be confirmed

Green highlight indicates contacts by in-state BCHA members made since April 27th

### House Nat Resources R's

Doug Lamborn, CO-  
Rob Wittman, VA-  
Glenn 'GT' Thompson, PA  
Paul Gosar, AZ-  
Scott Tipton, CO-  
Doug LaMalfa, CA-  
Jeff Denham, CA-  
Paul Cook, CA-  
Bruce Westerman, AR-  
Garret Graves, LA- no BCHA rep in LA  
Jody Hice, GA-  
Darin LaHood, IL  
Daniel Webster, FL-  
David Rouzer, NC-  
Jack Bergman, MI-  
Liz Cheney, WY-  
Mike Johnson, LA- no BCHA rep in LA

### Critical Senate Targets

Joe Manchin, WV  
Claire McCaskill, MO-  
Heidi Heitkamp, ND-  
Joe Donnelly, IN-  
Mike Crapo, ID-  
Jim Risch, ID-  
Cory Gardner, CO-  
Steve Daines, MT-

### Others contacted by BCHA

Mike Simpson, ID (R)  
Greg Walden, OR (R)  
Kurt Schrader, OR (D)  
Gary Palmer, AL (R)  
Mike Rogers, AL (R)  
Jack Bergman, MI (R)

### House Natural Resource Committee D's

Raúl Grijalva  
Grace Napolitano  
Jim Costa  
Niki Tsongas  
Jared Huffman  
Alan Lowenthal  
Don Beyer  
Norma Torres  
Ruben Gallego  
Colleen Hanabusa  
Nanette Barragán  
Darren Soto  
Jimmy Panetta  
A. Donald McEachin  
Anthony Brown



National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance



## OPPOSE HR 1349 - WHEELS OVER WILDERNESS

H.R. 1349, the “Wheels Over Wilderness” bill, introduced by Congressman Tom McClintock (R-CA), carves a gaping loophole in the 1964 Wilderness Act, which has stood for a half-century as one of America’s bedrock conservation laws. The bill would open America’s 110 million acres of wilderness areas to mountain bikes, an unprecedented assault on wilderness areas across the country.

### The Wilderness Act Prohibits Mountain Bike Use in Wilderness

The Wilderness Act prohibits the use of motorized vehicles, motorboats, and “other forms of mechanized transport” in wilderness areas.<sup>1</sup>

For five decades Congress has resisted efforts to undermine the Wilderness Act by opening wilderness areas to uses that are currently prohibited. These efforts have failed due to strong public support for wilderness. This latest effort deserves to fail as well.

IMBA will continue to respect both the Wilderness Act and the federal land agencies' regulations that bicycles are not allowed in existing Wilderness areas.

*--Statement of the International Mountain Bicycling Association regarding mountain bikes and wilderness. February 2016.*

### America’s Public Lands – Room For Everyone

America’s public lands are national treasures and every year hundreds of millions of people visit these lands to hike, camp, bike, fish, ride horseback, and paddle. Spanning over 600 million acres of forest, desert, mountains, rivers, prairie, and grassland, our public lands retain plenty of room for all types of recreation.



The Bob Marshall Wilderness is a haven for equestrians, hikers, and hunters.

Just one-sixth of our public lands are designated as wilderness areas. Excluding Alaska, just one-eighth of public lands are designated as wilderness. When considering all lands, less than three percent of the land in the lower 48 states is wilderness. With less than 3% of the land in the continental United States designated as wilderness, there are plenty of lands—including public lands—that remain open to mountain bicycles outside wilderness.

### Mountain Bikes Do Not Belong in Wilderness

Mountain bicycling is a wonderful form of outdoor recreation. But like some other recreational pursuits, it is not suitable for wilderness. The primitive and unconfined recreational experience provided by

<sup>1</sup> 16 U.S.C. 1133(c).

wilderness would be lost should hikers and horsemen be forced to constantly scan the trail ahead and over their shoulder for rapidly approaching bikes. As a form of mechanized transport, mountain bicycling is the type of mechanization the National Wilderness Preservation System was established to exclude in order to protect wilderness's rustic and primitive character. In short, wilderness is meant for forms of transport—foot, horseback, and canoe—that are compatible with an experience based on solitude, tranquility, and compatibility with the wilderness environment.

Places like the Montana's Bob Marshall Wilderness, the John Muir and Ansel Adams wilderness areas of California's Sierra Nevada Mountains, and the Shenandoah Wilderness along the Appalachian Trail have long been enjoyed by hikers and equestrians. These experiences would be indelibly altered by mechanization along the same trails that have been non-mechanized for hundreds of years.

H.R. 1349 also attempts to use wheelchair access as a reason for amending the Wilderness Act. Section 507 of the Americans with Disabilities Act already makes clear that wheelchairs are permitted in wilderness.

### **There Are Better Approaches to Enhancing Mountain Biking Opportunities**

Across the country, wilderness advocates and mountain bike organizations have worked together to develop legislative proposals that preserve access to important mountain bike trails and protect adjacent areas as wilderness. Efforts like the Hermosa Creek Watershed Protection Act in Colorado and the Blackfoot Clearwater Stewardship Act in Montana have been widely celebrated and serve as models for building successful partnerships between stakeholders and land managers.

These efforts have secured the support of wilderness advocates and mountain bikers. This collaborative approach is the best way to address public land management issues.

H.R. 1349 is yet another attack on our public lands that undermines one of our nation's bedrock conservation laws, jeopardizes America's wilderness and won't advance mountain biking. The legislation is opposed by conservation organizations, sportsmen, equestrians, outfitters, and others who support retaining that small percent of our nation's rustic outdoor heritage that remains as wilderness.

*For more information please contact:*

*Michael Carroll, The Wilderness Society, [Michael\\_carroll@twc.org](mailto:Michael_carroll@twc.org), 970-946-9043*

*Randy Rasmussen, Back Country Horsemen of America, [WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org](mailto:WildernessAdvisor@bcha.org), 541-602-0713*

### **CASE STUDY: HERMOSA CREEK**

For years, broad coalitions that include wilderness advocates and mountain bikers have worked to find common ground to accommodate a wide variety of activities on public lands.

For instance, in southwest Colorado, a series of meetings involving a lot of give and take among diverse community stakeholders resulted in the designation of both a wilderness area and a special management area. The agreement set aside roughly 70,000 acres for mountain biking, dirt biking, snowmobiling and other purposes and about 37,000 acres of designated wilderness.

Similar efforts have produced agreements in California, New Mexico, Montana the southern Appalachians and other parts of the U.S.