



A Lenten Journey

*Who are we,
and what are
we called to be?*

**Monday
March 2, 2009**

REMEMBRANCE

In key stories of our faith, the wilderness is the place where people encounter God and are challenged, strengthened and nourished to live as God's witnesses in the world. In the wilderness God called Moses to lead his people out of slavery and into freedom. In the wilderness the Hebrew people ate manna and learned to trust that God would provide enough for all. And on the banks of a wild river, Jacob wrestled with God and received God's blessing.

Wilderness areas are still places for spiritual renewal and challenge, where we are reminded of our place in God's world as beloved children among all of God's beloved creatures. Even the legal definition of wilderness in the federal Wilderness Act of 1964 seems to recognize its ineffable, spiritual importance: "a wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain."

Wilderness areas are also of great ecological importance. They are invaluable for preserving nature's life cycles, and offering protection of watersheds, habitat for wildlife and sanctuaries of biodiversity.

Officially designated wilderness areas enjoy the highest form of protection of all federal public lands. There are now 680 designated wilderness areas comprising more than 105 million acres in the United States—but that includes just 2.5 percent of federal public lands outside of Alaska.

Be Aware

- There may be efforts to protect public lands with wilderness designation in your state or region: the [Campaign for America's Wilderness](#) provides educational tours and resources on the political process of passing wilderness legislation.
- Stay aware of legislation that may impact wilderness in your state. The Wilderness Society was instrumental in creating the Wilderness Act in the 1960s and continues advocacy in Washington D.C. and in several states. To learn about specific bills being considered in Congress, visit their [Web site](#).

Something to think about: Find out if there's a [federally protected wilderness area](#) near you and consider a visit!

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