

IT IS HELPFUL TO try to fit these developments into a yet larger context. By doing so, we can begin to take stock of this still young wilderness system-to draw some conclusions about its current stature and about its future.

*The* extent and distribution of wilderness lands is revealing on a number of counts. One *can get a gross* sense of the system from looking at the following table:

CONGRESSIONALLY DESIGNATED WILDERNESS  
(AS OF 1999)

<i>Area</i>	<i>Total Land</i>	<i>Wilderness Land</i>	<i>Percent Wilderness</i>
United States	2,271	104.5	4.6
Federal Public Lands	627	104.5	16.6
Alaska	365	58.0	15.9
Lower 48 States	1,906	46.5	2.4
Federal Public Lands (Lower 48 States)	373	46.5	12.5

*\*In millions of acres*