

Channel Islands

Channel Islands National Park
California

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



*WELCOME
to the*

*Channel Islands
National Park*

*Draft
General Management Plan
Wilderness Study
Environmental Impact Statement*

OPEN HOUSE



What is a General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement?

General management plans identify the overall direction for the future management of the National Park Service (NPS) units. Such plans take a long-range, conceptual view, answering the question

“What kind of place do we want this to be?”

General management plans provide a framework for making decisions about how best to protect resources, what levels and types of uses are appropriate, what facilities should be developed, and how people should experience the park.

All concepts, strategies, and actions in a general management plan must be consistent with the reasons for the area’s establishment –its purpose, significance, and federal legislation.

To comply with provisions of the Wilderness Act and National Park Service management policies, the Park Service is also preparing a wilderness study. The wilderness study will be combined with the general management plan to identify areas in the park that would be appropriate for wilderness designation.

The NPS is preparing an environmental impact statement for the combined general management plan/ wilderness study, which will identify significant issues and concerns, present a reasonable range of management alternatives, and analyze the environmental consequences of each of the alternatives.



Anacapa Island



San Miguel Island



Brown Pelican



Coreopsis on Anacapa Island



Park Purpose

In the park's enabling legislation (16 USC § 410ff) Channel Islands National Park was set aside to protect the nationally significant natural, scenic, wildlife, marine, ecological, historical, archeological, cultural, and scientific values of the Channel Islands in the State of California. The resources associated with these values include, but are not limited to, the following:

1. the brown pelican nesting area;
2. the undisturbed tide pools providing species diversity unique to the eastern Pacific coast;
3. the pinnipeds (marine mammals such as seals and sea lions) which breed and pup almost exclusively on the Channel Islands, including the only breeding colony for northern fur seals south of Alaska;
4. the eolian (wind dominated) landforms and caliche;
5. the presumed burial place of Juan Rodriquez Cabrillo; and
6. the archeological evidence of long-term use by Native Americans.

Additionally, Congress mandated (16 USC § 410ff-3a and b) that

- "the park shall be administered on a low-intensity, limited-entry basis."
- "in recognition of the special fragility and sensitivity of park resources, it is the intent of Congress that visitor use within The park be limited to assure negligible adverse impact on the park resources. The Secretary shall establish appropriate visitor carrying capacities for the park."



Elephant Seals on San Miguel Island



Frenchy Cove, Anacapa Island



Channel Islands

Park Significance



The significance of Channel Islands National Park stems from the islands' remote, isolated position at the confluence of two major ocean currents, in a region of persistent oceanic upwelling, and at the border of two tectonic plates. The significance of the park is as follows:

- The park harbors in a remarkably small area the biologic diversity of 1,000 miles of the west coast of North America
- The park preserves remnants of the globally endangered Mediterranean ecosystem, including some of the finest examples of California coastal and marine ecosystems, with many endemic terrestrial and marine plants and animals
- The park preserves a prolific paleontological record and over 13,000 years of continuous human historical and archeological resources that represent a variety of cultures
- The park provides the public with unparalleled opportunities for solitude, tranquility, wildlife viewing, appreciation of natural history, outdoor recreation and education – all within a few miles of the nation's second largest metropolitan area



Anacapa Island Visitor Center



What is the schedule of the General Management Plan / Wilderness Study / Environmental Impact Statement?

2001- 2002	PROJECT SCOPING
2002 - 2006	DEVELOPMENT OF PRELIMINARY ALTERNATIVES
2006 - 2008	PREPARATION OF DRAFT PLAN / INITIATE THE WILDERNESS STUDY PROCESS
2009 - 2010	COMPLETE INTERNAL REVIEW OF THE DRAFT PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY / EIS
2011	PUBLIC REVIEW OF DRAFT PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY /EIS
2012	REVISE DRAFT PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY / EIS
2013	DISTRIBUTION OF FINAL PLAN / WILDERNESS STUDY / EIS AND APPROVAL





What is Wilderness?



“A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his 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. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which

- (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable;
- (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation;
- (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and
- (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

--Section 2(c) of the Wilderness Act

Wilderness Study



The purpose of wilderness studies is to determine if and where NPS lands should be proposed for wilderness designation. They are formal, thorough analyses of the lands in a park that are determined to be suitable for wilderness designation. A wilderness study may propose that all or some of the suitable lands be proposed as wilderness. Wilderness studies identify a range of possible wilderness configurations (alternatives) and evaluate their effects.

Wilderness studies are supported by appropriate documentation of compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act and the National Historic Preservation Act. The Council on Environmental Quality requires environmental impact statements for wilderness studies that will result in recommendations for designations (i.e., proposals for legislation to designate the lands as wilderness).



The Wilderness Process



The National Park Service uses the following process to determine if NPS areas should be proposed for inclusion within the national wilderness preservation system.

Assessment of Wilderness Eligibility

All lands administered by the National Park Service, including new units or additions to existing units since 1964, are evaluated for their eligibility for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. The eligibility assessment serves to identify areas that meet the minimum criteria for inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. In the case of the Channel Islands National Park, a waiver was granted to combine the eligibility assessment with the wilderness study.

Wilderness Studies

Lands and waters found to possess the characteristics and values of wilderness, as defined in the Wilderness Act and determined eligible pursuant to the wilderness eligibility assessment, are formally studied to determine which lands should be recommended to Congress for wilderness designation.

Proposed Wilderness and Recommended Wilderness

If the decision is made to propose wilderness, and the NPS Director concurs, a wilderness proposal is sent to the assistant secretary for fish and wildlife and parks and the secretary of the interior, who in turn may revise or approve the proposal. The secretary may then forward a wilderness recommendation to the president. The president may approve or revise the recommendation and then transmit the recommendation to Congress for consideration.

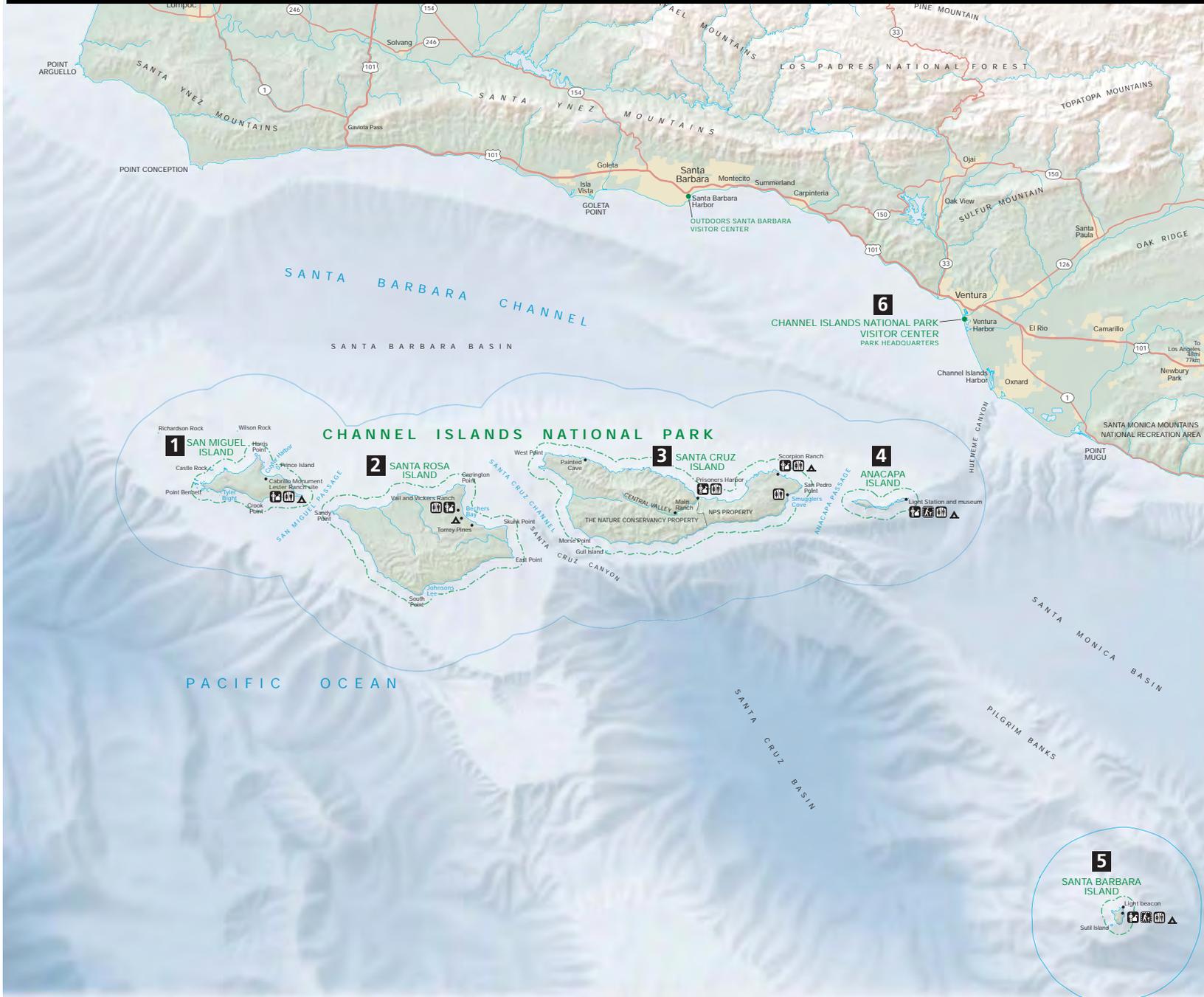
Designated Wilderness

After the President's wilderness recommendation is formally sent to and considered by Congress, Congress may subsequently enact the legislation needed to include the area within the national wilderness preservation system as "designated" and/or "potential" wilderness.

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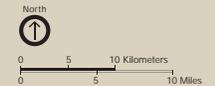


Authorized park boundary
The Channel Islands National Park boundary extends 1.8km (1 nautical mile) from the shore of each island.

Authorized marine sanctuary boundary
The Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary boundary extends 10.8km (6 nautical miles) from the shore of each island. For information on Marine Protected Areas see California Fish and Game website at www.dfg.ca.gov.

- Ranger station
- Restrooms
- Self-guiding trail
- Campground

Data Sources
Depth tints and terrestrial relief derives from Digital Elevation Models (DEM) produced by NOAA and the USGS. Bathymetric relief shading was manually produced.



Channel Islands National Park General Management Plan Wilderness Study / EIS

United States Department of the Interior • National Park Service



Channel Islands National Park

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



1. Why designate wilderness in the Channel Islands?

The wild and primitive nature of the Channel Islands has always been valued. Wilderness designation would provide a permanent layer of protection to the park and its resources. It would ensure the American people would have the opportunity in perpetuity to enjoy the Channel Island's existing primitive, scenic, and inspirational qualities. Opportunities for solitude and primitive experiences would continue.

2. What is a wilderness study?

A wilderness study examines lands in a national park unit and determines which of those lands possess the characteristics and values of wilderness, as defined in the Wilderness Act. In other words, a wilderness study focuses on if and where wilderness should be designated in a national park unit. The formal study will result in a wilderness proposal to the director of the National Park Service (NPS).

3. Why is the National Park Service doing this study now?

Both the Wilderness Act and NPS management policies mandate that all lands administered by the National Park Service be evaluated for possible inclusion in the national wilderness preservation system. In addition, the legislation establishing Channel Islands National Park mandates that the NPS evaluate the park and make recommendations regarding wilderness designation.



4. How can the Channel Islands be considered for wilderness designation since they have had a history of human activity?

It is true that the Channel Islands are not pristine. Native Americans, European settlers, ranchers, fishermen, fur traders, hunters, and the military have altered the landscape of the islands. However, Congress recognized that lands can still be considered for wilderness designation even if they are not "pristine." The key questions that need to be answered are

"Will the area recover significantly to a natural state (not necessarily to its original state)?" and "Can the area be reasonably protected in the future as wilderness?" In the case of the Channel Islands, the National Park Service believes that the answer to both of these questions is yes.



Channel Islands National Park

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)



5. Will the wilderness study cover the waters surrounding the islands?

The Channel Island National Park boundary extends one nautical mile around each island. However, the ownership, authority, and jurisdiction of park waters is complex, with overlapping jurisdictions with the Channel Islands National Marine Sanctuary and the State of California. The State of California owns the living marine resources, water column, and sea floor within the park boundary. Thus, these waters are not considered suitable to be considered for wilderness designation.

6. What happens after the wilderness study is completed?

The findings of the study will be a proposal that is sent from the NPS Pacific West regional director to the director of the National Park Service. If approved, the proposal will then be forwarded to the assistant secretary for fish, wildlife and parks and the secretary of the interior, who in turn will determine whether or not to send the proposal to the president. If the president concurs with the proposal, a wilderness recommendation would be sent to Congress.

7. Who decides whether or not wilderness is designated on the Channel Islands?

There are several decision makers who play a key role in determining whether or not wilderness is designated. The NPS Pacific West regional director, the director of the National Park Service, the secretary of the interior, and the president can all stop the wilderness designation process by not approving a wilderness proposal. However, ultimately Congress has the sole power to designate wilderness. Congress also can designate wilderness at any time, regardless of the wilderness study process, and designate areas that differ from the findings of the study.

8. How would wilderness affect my experience at the Channel Islands?

The environmental impact statement that accompanies the wilderness study will analyze this question. But we do not expect you would experience changes in your visit. You would still be able to access and experience the park as you do today. There would be no mechanized travel within the wilderness.





Channel Islands National Park

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

9. How would wilderness affect the administration and management of the park?

Wilderness designation would constrain access and development by the National Park Service administration. In general, this would limit the use of mechanized equipment and vehicles unless the agency determines these are the minimum tool necessary to achieve critical objectives.

10. How is wilderness different from other federal public lands?

Designated wilderness is the highest level of conservation protection for federal lands. Only Congress may designate wilderness or change the status of wilderness areas. Wilderness areas are designated within existing federal public land. Congress has directed federal land management agencies, including the National Park Service, to manage wilderness areas so as to preserve and, where possible, to restore their wilderness character.

The Wilderness Act prohibits permanent roads and commercial enterprises, except commercial services that may provide for recreational or other purposes of the Wilderness Act. Wilderness areas generally do not allow motorized equipment, motor vehicles, mechanical transport, temporary roads, permanent structures or installations (with exceptions in Alaska). Wilderness areas are to be primarily affected by the forces of nature, though the Wilderness Act does acknowledge the need to provide for human health and safety, protect private property, control insect infestations, and fight fires within the area. Wilderness areas are managed under the direction of the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation, and agency policy.

11. Is designated wilderness necessary in a national park?

The Wilderness Act protects designated wilderness areas by law "for the permanent good of the whole people." With the Wilderness Act, Congress secures "for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness. "The undeveloped areas of national parks (often called "backcountry") are protected by regulations and policies. However, backcountry could be developed, such as road building, and off-road mechanized vehicular use.

12. What is the significance of wilderness?

Through the Wilderness Act, Congress recognized the intrinsic value of wild lands. Some of the tangible and intangible values mentioned in the Wilderness Act include "solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation," as well as "ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value." Wilderness areas provide habitat for wildlife and plants, including endangered and threatened species.

Wilderness protects open space, watersheds, natural soundscapes, diverse ecosystems, and biodiversity. Wilderness visitors often cite the inspirational and spiritual values of wilderness, including opportunities to reflect on the community of life and the human place on Earth. Wilderness provides a sense of wildness, which can be valuable to people whether or not those individuals actually visit wilderness. Just knowing that wilderness exists can produce a sense of curiosity, inspiration, renewal and hope.



Preliminary Actions Considered for the General Management Plan

<p>1</p>	<p>SAN MIGUEL ISLAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible multi-day guided trips for small groups would be provided • New equipment storage building at Lester Ranch would be developed • Fixed wing access to island via a concessioner (if technology permits in the future)
<p>2</p>	<p>SANTA ROSA ISLAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ranch complex at Becher's Bay would be preserved to interpret the ranching history • Ranch buildings would be adapted for visitor use, lodging accommodations (if feasible), and a research / education center • If feasible a transport system would be developed to provide access to day use areas • Concession run kayak, snorkel operations (if feasible) • Two bunkhouse would be located near present employee housing at Becher's Bay • A ranger station and maintenance storage area would be accommodated in the ranch complex • Possible horse concession operations
<p>3</p>	<p>SANTA CRUZ ISLAND</p> <p>Prisoners Harbor</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historic warehouse would be adaptively reused as a visitor contact / orientation center • Housing (bunkhouse, three single-family residence) and small maintenance facility would be developed <p>Scorpion Ranch</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The historic ranch would be maintained • Temporary housing would be removed and replaced with permanent structures at the current location <p>Smugglers Cove</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Historic masonry building would be adaptively reused/rehabilitated to serve as seasonal housing <p>Del Norte</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seasonal housing unit would be retained or the unit to be managed through historic lease, contract, or cooperative agreement
<p>4</p>	<p>ANACAPA ISLAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One or two new park housing unit using historic building plans would be developed • New small equipment storage building compatible with the historic district would be developed
<p>5</p>	<p>SANTA BARBARA ISLAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wildlife blinds would be installed to increase visitor opportunities for pelican viewing
<p>6</p>	<p>CHANNEL ISLANDS NATIONAL PARK VISITOR CENTER</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Park headquarters area and visitor center would be redeveloped to expand visitor opportunities and expand administrative capabilities