

For comparison a township, six miles square and containing 36 square miles, contains 23,040 acres. Thus, an area of 70,000 acres is approximately 110 square miles. This, if laid out in an approximate square, would be an area 10 x 11 miles. If such an area were shaped as a rectangle with a length approximately twice its width, then the dimensions would be roughly 15 x 7.5 miles. An area of this size would require only a 3.5 mile penetration on a direct line to get from the boundaries to the central portions. With typical wilderness trails this distance might be increased by 50 percent or more. Even so, a distance of 5 or 7 miles would not seem difficult and much of the interior portions of wilderness would be reasonably accessible.

On the other hand, wilderness-type areas in Idaho average over 1,000,000 acres each. This is almost 1,600 square miles and if shaped as a square would be almost 40 miles on each side. Penetration from the edge to the central portions would require a minimum airline distance of about 20 miles and a distance by typical wilderness trails of perhaps 35 to 40 miles.

Access to small wilderness-type units found in many states is not extremely difficult. Penetration into larger areas such as some found in Idaho, Wyoming, Montana, Washington, and Utah does present great difficulties. Many people, familiar with small, jewel-like wilderness areas in their own states, are not fully cognizant of the size and difficulties of access to larger areas.

Contiguous areas.—Frequently wilderness-type areas are given different names but are not geographically separated. Two or more areas are joined along common boundaries and thus the contiguous area of wilderness is substantially larger than is indicated by the average size for individual areas. In addition, wilderness-type areas may be contiguous with National Park areas. Existing wilderness laws and regulations provide that roadless areas in national parks could be given wilderness status.

The effect of contiguous areas is very pronounced in Wyoming. Yellowstone Park is bounded on the east side by the North Absaroka and South Absaroka Wilderness and on the south side and parts of the east side by Teton Wilderness. The stratified primitive area adjoins the Teton and South Absaroka wilderness areas. Thus in Yellowstone Park and the immediate vicinity there are two large contiguous-wilderness-type areas, which will be referred to hereafter as the Northeast and Southeast Yellowstone contiguous areas (Table 2).

TABLE 2.—POTENTIAL OR PRESENT CONTIGUOUS WILDERNESS-TYPE AREAS IN WYOMING

		Area, acres
SE Yellowstone Contiguous:		
SE Yellowstone (approximately)-----		460, 000
Teton Wilderness-----		563, 000
South Absaroka Wilderness-----		506, 300
Stratified Wilderness-----		147, 000
Combined Contiguous-----		1, 676, 300
NE Yellowstone Contiguous:		
NE Yellowstone (approximately)-----		349, 000
North Absaroka Wilderness-----		359, 700
Combined Contiguous-----		708, 700
Wind River Mountain Contiguous:		
Bridger Wilderness-----		383, 000
Glacier Primitive-----		177, 000
Popo Agie Wild-----		70, 000
Wind River Roadless Area (Indian reservation)-----		183, 520
Combined Contiguous-----		813, 520
Cloud Peak Wild Area-----		94, 000

The Southeast Yellowstone contiguous area, including different wilderness areas indicated in Table 2 is roughly rectangular and about 45 miles wide and 60 miles long. It would be a minimum of 25 to 30 miles from the various boundary areas where visitors might approach with automobiles to the most remote interior points. Or, very likely 45 to 60 miles one way by typical wilderness trails. This does indeed create an extreme problem of inaccessibility.