



United States Department of Agriculture



Wilderness Stewardship Performance Guidebook

Version 2024.1 (05/17/2024)



Forest Service Wilderness Stewardship Performance Guidebook



The richest values of wilderness lie not in the days of Daniel Boone, nor even in the present, but rather in the future.

-Aldo Leopold

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Introduction

This Guidebook is intended to provide specific instructions, and associated resources, to support Wilderness Stewardship Performance (WSP), covering both the element selection process and annual reporting of accomplishment for each wilderness managed by the Forest Service. The annual data entry instructions for National Resource Manager (NRM) -Wilderness are addressed in a separate document.

WSP places heightened emphasis on the interdisciplinary responsibilities of wilderness stewardship and the potential linkages with other program areas. It seeks to foster improved integration and communication between program areas, to accurately reflect the collaboration required to steward our wilderness resource. This Guidebook goes beyond the traditional wilderness audience but strives to reach all those involved with the varied and important task of wilderness stewardship.

Feedback Requested

This Guidebook was developed and is maintained by representatives from the three national wilderness groups: the Washington Office/Regional Wilderness Program Managers, Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG) and Wilderness Information Management Steering Team (WIMST).

These groups are interested in making this Guidebook as helpful as possible and periodic updates are expected. The version control protocol associated with Guidebook updates is available after the element descriptions. If you have comments or suggestions for how to improve this document, please send them to eric.sandeno@usda.gov.

Table of Elements

Category	Element Title	Selection*
Natural Quality of Wilderness Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invasive Species • Air Quality Values • Natural Role of Fire • Water • Fish and Wildlife • Plants 	Select 1-3
Undeveloped Quality of Wilderness Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recreation Sites • Trails • Non-Compliant Infrastructure • Motorized Equipment / Mechanical Transport Use Authorizations 	Select 1-2
Untrammelled Quality of Wilderness Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agency Management Actions 	Must Select
Solitude Quality of Wilderness Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunities for Solitude • Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation 	Select 1-2
Other Features of Value Quality of Wilderness Character	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural Resources 	Select 0-1
Special Provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Livestock Grazing • Outfitters and Guides • Other Special Provisions (e.g., dams, airstrips, mines) 	Select 0-2
Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Workforce Capacity • Education • Wilderness Character Baseline 	Must Select

* Note: A total of 10 elements must be selected plus two additional reporting checkboxes (boundary maps and upward reporting).

Acronyms

10YWSC	10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge
AMP	Allotment Management Plan
BMP's	National Core Best Management Practices for water quality
DHS	Department of Homeland Security
EDRR	Early Detection and Rapid Response
FAQs	Frequently Asked Questions
FMRS	Fire Management Reference System
HUC	Hydrologic Unit Code
IMPROVE	Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments
INA	Information Needs Assessment
LRMP	Land and Resource Management Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MRA	Minimum Requirements Analysis
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NFS	Nation Forest System
NFST	National Forest System Trail
NRHP	National Register of Historic Places

NRM	National Resource Manager
NVUM	National Visitor Use Monitoring
PAS	Performance Accountability System
READ	Resource Advisor
REAF	Resource Advisor Fireline
TESP-IS	Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Database
TMOs	Trail Management Objective
THSP	Technical Specialist
TRACS	Trail Assessment and Condition Survey
USFWS	U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
WAG	Wilderness Advisory Group
WAQV	Wilderness Air Quality Value
WCATT	Watershed Classification and Assessment Tracking Tool
WCF	Watershed Condition Framework
WCM	Wilderness Character Monitoring
WIMST	Wilderness Information Management Steering Team
WSP	Wilderness Stewardship Performance

Document Version Control

The WSP Guidebook was first developed in 2015, and there have been revisions each year since. Annual updates will become minor as WSP is increasingly finely tuned.

Version dates are tracked at two levels: document-wide and element-specific. The date of the last edit made anywhere in the document is recorded on the cover page. The date of edit specific edits can be found on the respective element pages. The baseline version each year will include any changes that directly affect the scoring for the elements that fiscal year. Any subsequent changes during the year will be of less relative significance, such as to provide links to additional supporting resources or to add a Frequently Asked Question.

<i>Version Date</i>	<i>Changes Made</i>
02/7/2015	Baseline Version
3/22/2015	Incorporated revised element FAQs from WAG
10/29/2015	Updated FAQ's
1/2017	Updates FAQ's
7/1/2017	Significant edits including change to solitude scoring. Improved deliverable language
4/19/2018	Updated FAQ's. Slight change to WCM Baseline deliverable
4/19/2019	Updated links. Improved a few FAQ's. Clarified WSP element selection process for newly designated wilderness areas.
4/01/2020	Updated links. Updated FAQ's. Updated Air Quality Element FAQ's, and resources, no change to Air Quality Element scoring. Added Pinyon location for data stewards to place completed documents. Added annual WCM tasks for on time reporting requirements.
4/02/2021	Updated links. Changed terminology in 2-point check box from targeting actions toward "non-traditional audiences" to "underserved communities."
6/20/2021	Water Element, improved flow and achievability of element based on changes in terminology and manual direction. Updated FAQ's.
5/18/2022	Updated links
6/1/2023	Updated links. Plants Element, incorporated trees into the plants element, including adding FAQ. Education Element, added FAQ regarding new education plan template.
5/17/2024	Updated links. Trails Element, added new options for both the 4 point and 6 point level and provided some clarification for user created trails. Fire Element, removed fire planning checklist requirement and replaced it with need for wilderness direction to be included in the Wildland Fire Decision Support System and added new FAQ's for the element. Included new FAQ's for elements which have a tie to the "Tribal Action Plan".

The Wilderness Information Management Steering Team (WIMST) and subject matter experts have completed a series of webinars specific to individual elements. The webinars are posted to the WSP Tools and Templates SharePoint site within the appropriate element folder.

Staff are encouraged not to print this large document but instead rely on the digital version to ensure the latest, most up-to-date version is used.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Version 2020.1 (04/01/2020)

General FAQs

1. Why do we have this performance measure?

A performance measure serves as a measuring stick to provide yourself, your staff, your successors, and leadership with specifics of the work we are doing in wilderness and to also identify what is not getting done. A performance measure is a quantifiable indicator used to assess how well we are achieving our desired objectives. It is not just about measuring success, but also identifying deficiencies.

The performance measure “wildernesses managed to a minimum stewardship level”, commonly referred to as the “10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge”, was established in 2001 and remained largely unchanged throughout the challenge. The 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act and the culminating year of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (10YWSC) in 2014 provided an opportune time to reassess the current performance measure and determine if changes were needed looking ahead to the next 10 years and beyond.

Informed by input gathered in two surveys to the field, the national and regional wilderness programs determined that a new performance measure was needed to address several shortcomings: (1) units should have greater flexibility in the selection of elements of local concern; (2) the linkage between the performance measure and wilderness character needed to be strengthened; and (3) several existing elements needed to be modified significantly in response to lessons learned over the previous decade.

2. Are “wildernesses meeting baseline performance for preserving wilderness character” and “Wilderness Stewardship Performance” the same thing? If so, why have different names?

Yes, they both refer to the new performance measure. “Wildernesses meeting baseline performance for preserving wilderness character” is the official name of the measure as it is tracked in the agency performance management system – known as the Performance Accountability System (PAS). “Wilderness Stewardship Performance” is the short name for the performance measure that is more likely to be used in program conversations.

3. Do WSP scores and preservation of wilderness character go hand in hand?

No. While the ultimate goal is for all wilderness areas to have a score above 60, a score alone does not always indicate that we are making progress in preserving wilderness character nor does a low score always indicate lack of effort to complete the tasks for an element. Wilderness Stewardship Performance assigns a score based on certain tasks in each element. Those tasks help us determine conditions that require action in each wilderness. Wilderness Character Monitoring on the other hand does a better job of looking at those conditions to determine if we are or are not preserving wilderness character.

For example, your wilderness could have a score of 10 in the invasive species element, but that does not mean your wilderness is free of invasive species. In fact, even with a score of 10, acres of invasive species could be increasing each year. The purpose of the invasive species element is to develop a plan to find, identify, and assess actions to address invasive species. The intended final outcome is a wilderness that is free of invasive species, but that outcome is not reflected in scoring.

At the same time, impacts from recreation sites, such as large bare areas, sites too close to trails and water, hacked up trees, etc., could require countless hours of staff time to determine current conditions and take required corrective actions. But the wilderness score for this element may never get above a 6 if Land Management Plan Standards and Guidelines can't be achieved.

It is important you have a perspective on how the WSP elements apply to your wilderness, and how the work you are doing is addressing wilderness character, no matter the score.

4. How was WSP developed and who was involved?

WSP was developed over several years, under the leadership of the Washington Office and the active participation of the three national wilderness teams with representatives from each region (Wilderness Regional Program Managers, Wilderness Advisory Group and Wilderness Information Management Steering Team). This process was informed heavily by two broad surveys that were conducted with field staff, resulting in comments from several hundred respondents, including wilderness managers, staff from other program areas and line officers. Most recently, a survey was conducted by WAG after the initial “dry run” year (FY 2015), leading to a number of modifications and improvements.

5. How is WSP integrated with Land Management Plan direction and Land Management Plan monitoring?

With the implementation of WSP, individual elements integrate the need for Land Management Plan direction.

6. What is the relationship between Wilderness Stewardship Performance and Wilderness Character Monitoring?

The two are related but distinct. Generally speaking, WSP tracks the stewardship actions we take to preserve wilderness character, and Wilderness Character Monitoring (WCM) tracks the outcome of those actions. For example, the Invasive Species element in WSP tracks

whether or not priority management actions from an integrative species management plan have been implemented in a wilderness. By comparison, WCM develops a baseline and evaluates trends for invasive species populations in a wilderness. WSP and WCM are also connected through the Wilderness Character Baseline element that rewards points for completing the baseline and determining trends. However, wilderness stewardship is broader than just WCM, so there are elements in WSP that do not map precisely onto WCM.

It should also be noted that some of the data collected to make progress under WSP (e.g., invasive species, solitude monitoring, water quality, etc.) will be needed to provide the “best data available” on which WCM implementation depends.

7. What are the consequences for WCM if a certain element is not selected as one of our core elements under WSP?

There is an intentional difference in the level of detail covered by WCM and that covered by WSP. WCM attempts to address the status and trend of a wide number of indicators and measures that are applicable across all wildernesses, whereas WSP only focuses on the top ten stewardship issues for a particular wilderness. If an element is not selected for WSP, it does not mean that it is not important. An unselected element may still require stewardship efforts and may (or may not) be addressed in WCM.

Basic Mechanics / Framework FAQs

1. How does the framework work?

The lead forest for each wilderness is responsible for the selection and annual reporting on 10 “core” elements associated with wilderness stewardship. The WSP framework contains four mandatory elements (agency management actions, workforce capacity, education, and wilderness character baseline) and the lead forest must select six other elements from a list of 16. Each element is worth a maximum of ten points, for a total of 100 points. An additional four points may be scored by satisfying two “additional requirements” checkboxes (Wilderness Boundaries and Upward Reporting). A wilderness scoring 60 points or more will equate to “Wilderness meeting baseline performance for preserving wilderness character” (a.k.a., “Wilderness Managed to Standard”). The ten element/60-point standard for WSP is consistent with the approach used under the 10YWSC, and this framework is being used in WSP based in part on lessons learned from the 10YWSC.

2. If everyone is selecting a different suite of elements, how do we evaluate trends across all the wildernesses within the National Forest System?

The WSP framework strikes a balance between providing flexibility to ensure units are able to select the elements that most closely mirror local stewardship priorities while still enforcing consistent business rules in the selection of elements. Four elements are mandatory across all wildernesses and rules are in place to ensure each wilderness selects at least one element from each of the four primary qualities of wilderness character. This degree of consistency in WSP makes the evaluation of trends possible across all the wildernesses within the National Forest System.

3. Why are there two additional requirements checkboxes?

The two additional requirements checkboxes (Wilderness Boundaries and Upward Reporting) meet particular wilderness stewardship reporting needs that warrant their inclusion within WSP, despite not fitting neatly into the general element framework. The “Wilderness Boundaries” checkbox addresses statutory requirements to prepare wilderness boundary descriptions and final maps for transmittal to Congress. The “Upward Reporting” checkbox incentivizes on-time annual upward reporting for WSP, which is critical for wilderness program management. Forests do not lose points within the 100-point WSP framework if they do not satisfy either of these requirements. However, forests will gain additional points for meeting either requirement (2 points for each checkbox) that will be added to their overall WSP score. As a result, a wilderness needs to score 60 out of a possible 104 points to be determined to be “managed to standard.”

4. Do I have to complete all requirements for a certain point level before proceeding to the next scoring level?

There are two types of scoring: incremental and checkboxes. The incremental scoring (in 2-point levels) requires that you complete the requirements at each lower level before you can claim points at the next higher level. For example, if the 2-point level requires the development of a plan and the 4-point level calls for the implementation of actions in the field, you cannot get past the 2-point level until the plan is finalized. By contrast, accomplishment on the 2-point checkboxes can be claimed irrespective of other progress on that element.

Element Selection Process FAQs

1. How were the ten elements selected for each specific wilderness?

Ideally, element selections were made in an interdisciplinary fashion, with the forest staff officer with wilderness responsibilities on the lead national forest for a particular wilderness ultimately making the recommendations to their forest supervisor. These selections were submitted to the regional wilderness program manager for review to ensure a measure of consistency across the region. Involvement of line officers and other relevant personnel (including interdisciplinary involvement) throughout the selection process was strongly encouraged. Final element selections were made in 2016 and approved and signed off on by the forest supervisor on the lead national forest. In instances where a wilderness is shared by two or more national forests, the forests supervisors on the “non-lead” forests were consulted during the selection process.

2. Why do some wildernesses have more than ten elements?

Only ten elements are selected to calculate the WSP score for a wilderness. These are referred to as “core elements.” However, a forest has the option to select and annually report on additional WSP elements, known as “elective elements.” Progress on these elective elements can be reported and tracked in NRM-Wilderness but are not used to calculate the total WSP scores.

3. Are elective elements scored?

Yes, elective elements are scored and progress can be tracked annually. These scores are included in the canned reports and user views included in NRM. However, these scores do not contribute to the overall scores used to determine whether or not a wilderness is currently being managed to standard. The WSP framework and selection process require the local unit to identify the top ten elements that are most relevant to their stewardship priorities. They may optionally decide to track additional elements if it helps their evaluation of progress made by their stewardship program, but these extra elements are not reported upwards.

4. Can we change the elements we selected in FY 2016?

Ideally you should not be changing elements, because this would make it difficult to track overall trends. The change management process requires additional documentation and should not occur unless there is a unique situation, for example when a new issue emerges. Work with your regional wilderness program manager and provide a rationale for the change on the element selection template, signed by the forest supervisor on the lead national forest.

5. A number of the elements are written in such a way that I won't be able to score a high level (6-points or above) unless I have specific management issues. Doesn't that approach to scoring "punish" wildernesses that have avoided certain problems?

WSP attempts to evaluate the actions undertaken to address the current stewardship priorities that are reflective of current workload for each individual wilderness. If a particular issue or management concern simply doesn't exist, such as Opportunities for Solitude or Outfitters & Guides, those elements should not have been chosen during the element selection process. However, for some elements, if your monitoring reveals that there are no problems, you can still claim points at higher levels. Refer to specific scoring rules.

Implementation FAQs

1. The wilderness I manage is also managed by other forests and districts, so how do we approach WSP?

Each wilderness needs to be managed as a single entity, regardless of how many different ranger districts, national forests, and in some instances, regions are involved. Each wilderness managed by the Forest Service has a single national forest identified as lead for that wilderness. That forest has the lead for the element selection process and annual reporting, but it is incumbent upon that forest to involve and coordinate with all other units in the various aspects of wilderness stewardship, including the annual reporting on performance measure accomplishment.

2. How will we ensure consistent scoring methods and leveling across wildernesses?

The WSP Guidebook provides instructions for how to score each of the elements, and it includes supporting resources and Frequently Asked Questions. Those doing the reporting will be required to enter documentation to support the accomplishment levels claimed during the annual

reporting. Wilderness Regional Program Managers will also strive to ensure that forests in their respective regions are interpreting the element scoring similarly.

3. Where will all the data from this new performance measure go? Will the data go into a national or local database?

Annual accomplishment reporting is entered into NRM-Wilderness as part of the year-end reporting process. Data for current or previous years can be accessed by the forests, regional offices, or Washington Office through reports or user views. Beginning in FY 2016, the data will also be fed into the Performance Accountability System.

4. What training and additional materials will be made available to help field staff figure out how to implement the new performance measure?

The WSP Guidebook is the primary resource for understanding each of the component elements. This Guidebook provides, for each element, key terms and definitions, detailed scoring instructions, expected deliverables, explanatory notes, supporting resources and frequently asked questions. Regional training opportunities and other resources needed to support the element selection process may also be provided. The Washington Office provides annual training on the WSP Module in NRM-Wilderness, as well as webinars focused on specific elements. In addition, the WSP SharePoint site is a great resource for protocols, templates, communication materials, accomplishment reports, and funding opportunities. [WSP SharePoint site](#)

5. How soon after a wilderness is newly designated do we need to implement WSP?

WSP element selection and accomplishment reporting is not required until the end of the first entire fiscal year after designation. For example, a wilderness designated January 10, 2019 would not need to complete element section and accomplishment reporting until the end of Fiscal Year 2020. Elements may be changed after the first year of reporting, but will be locked after the second year of reporting. After the second year of reporting, the process will be the same as outlined in Element Selection Process FAQs, #4.

6. Many of the elements prescribe an active role for Forest Supervisors. In Region 10, can we substitute our District Rangers for the role played by Forest Supervisors in other Regions?

Yes. Due to the organizational differences in Region 10, the element selection process and scoring requirements in various elements that specify a role for Forest Supervisors can simply transfer those same roles and responsibilities to their District Rangers. All other Regions will still be required to involve their Forest Supervisors on the appropriate elements

7. The wilderness I manage is shared with another national forest. How do I report scores, if we've made progress on certain aspects of an element but the adjoining forest has not?

Unless partial accomplishment is specifically addressed in the element scoring, it should be assumed that progress on that element is required wilderness-wide, regardless of the number of national forests involved. Again, our intent is to manage wilderness as a single entity, not as discrete chunks based on administrative units.

Funding FAQs

1. Will funds be provided to assist with making progress on WSP?

More than \$11,000,000 was allocated between 2015 and 2020 for WSP implementation. In contrast to previous years, there was not a national application and selection process for identifying and funding WSP in FY22. Funding was once again made available in FY23, but not through an application process. Regional Wilderness Program Managers worked with the WO wilderness staff to identify projects in each region to fund, totaling \$1.5 million. Additional funds were also made available through the National Wilderness Stewardship Alliance partner funding program. There were no internal funding opportunities in FY24.

2. Is WSP tied to the budget allocation for my forest and wilderness?

No. The NFRW budget allocation model that is used to allocate funds from the Washington Office to the regions is still based solely on the number of wildernesses by complexity class by region. Individual regional offices and national forests have their own models for further allocating these funds for field programs and activities.

Targets and Accountability FAQs

1. Is there a performance target with WSP? If so, who and how will this target be determined?

No. Since FY 2018, no targets have been assigned tied to wilderness stewardship.

2. Is WSP linked to performance evaluations, including line officers' performance?

Currently, there is no de facto link between WSP and performance evaluations, including line officers' performance. It is up to the discretion of local units, supervisors, and employees to determine whether to establish any link between WSP and employee performance evaluations.

Element Descriptions

Element: Invasive Species

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: The priority invasive terrestrial and aquatic species in this wilderness, including vertebrates, invertebrates, plants, and pathogens, have been assessed and treatment actions taken to address the highest priority populations, with an emphasis on prevention and early detection/rapid response.

Outcome: This wilderness has been successfully treated against invasive species.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Early Detection and Rapid Response (EDRR): A prompt and coordinated response to reduce invasive species' environmental and economic impacts and spread, which might result in less resource damage than implementing a long-term control program.

Integrative Species Management Plan: A plan that identifies and prioritizes activities to prevent, control, contain, eradicate, survey, detect, identify, inventory, and monitor invasive species; including rehabilitation and restoration of affected sites and educational activities related to invasive species. This plan explicitly acknowledges the unique goals of wilderness stewardship and includes a tactical plan for the management of priority invasive species populations.

Invasive Species: A species is considered invasive if it meets two criteria:

1. It is nonnative to the ecosystem under consideration, and
2. Its introduction causes or is likely to cause unacceptable effects to human health or the environment.

Priority Invasive Species: An invasive organism that has been targeted for management action and research based upon risk assessments, project objectives, economic, environmental, and social considerations, or other rank setting decision support tools.

Threatened, Endangered and Sensitive Species Database (TESP-IS): The national corporate database in NRM for invasive species.

Treatment: Any activity or action taken to directly eradicate, control, prevent or otherwise manage the spread of an invasive species infestation.

Successfully Treated: The treatment goals specified in the invasive species management plan have been achieved.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	An informal survey has been conducted to determine the presence of all invasive species (plant, animal, insect, terrestrial, and aquatic). A coarse approximation of extent/abundance has been developed. If populations have been identified, immediate actions are taken (Early Detection and Rapid Response) to eradicate, control, or contain infestations within a relatively short time. Any treatment actions taken have been entered into TESP-IS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive species survey records current in TESP-IS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey completion date (MM/YYYY) Description of any treatment actions (brief) and completion date of TESP-IS data entry (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	A more detailed, quantitative inventory has been conducted to determine abundance and distribution of invasive species populations, consistent with the accepted protocols for the appropriate taxa. Populations have been mapped and data entered into TESP-IS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory records including spatial and tabular data current in TESP-IS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Inventory completion date (MM/YYYY) Data entry into TESP-IS completion date (MM/YYYY)
6 points³	An integrative invasive species management plan has been developed, consistent with national policy (FSM 2900), that identifies the priority invasive species to be managed in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An integrative invasive species management plan in place consistent with national policy (FSM 2900) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and signature date (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
8 points⁴	Management actions have been implemented (e.g., prevention, EDRR, control treatments, regulations, education, etc.), according to the priorities outlined in the integrative species management plan, in the areas or populations posing the highest risk to wilderness values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planned priority management actions implemented, and details of those activities recorded in TESP-IS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description management actions (brief) and date of implementation (MM/YYYY)
10 points⁵	The management actions identified in the integrative species management plan have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, and the treatment efficacy has been recorded in TESP-IS.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Invasive Species Treatment Efficacy data collected, recorded, and current in TESP-IS 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of effectiveness of actions (brief). Data entry into TESP-IS completion date (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

General: Measuring the extent/distribution and characteristics of an invasive species population will vary by taxa (plants, vertebrates, invertebrates, fungi, etc.). Consult specialists if needed. All invasive species survey, inventory, and treatment activity records should be entered into the Nation Forest System (NFS) corporate database application consistent with the national protocols, standards, business rules, and requirements for invasive species recordkeeping. All invasive species management activities in wilderness must be consistent with direction in Forest Service Manual 2900.

- 1 - The survey should include a visual examination of at least 80% of all high-risk areas and primary travel routes (such as trails, trailheads, river/stream crossings and access points, campsites, stock picket areas, unique sites or attractions, stream banks and lakeshores, rock/ice climbing areas, burned areas, caves, and other areas with high public use or disturbance) within the wilderness. Surveys should be seasonally-timed for best results, and may be conducted several times throughout the year depending on site conditions and other factors.
- 2 - At minimum, inventories should target high-risk sites, access areas, and primary travel routes to quantify the location, abundance, and extent of invasive species populations. Spatial and tabular data are required for each inventory record (i.e. mapped polygons of each infestation), consistent with national record keeping protocols and requirements.
- 3 - The invasive species management plan for this wilderness area should include activities for prevention, early detection and rapid response (EDRR), control, and restoration against invasive species populations in (at minimum) all high-risk areas, access areas, and travel routes, and should identify specific integrated management techniques, procedures, timing, and other information about actions necessary to prevent, detect, eradicate, control and contain targeted invasive species within the wilderness.
- 4 - Invasive Species Management Plan activities implemented during the year are credited toward this wilderness stewardship accomplishment. Full wilderness stewardship credit will be given when a substantial portion ($\geq 80\%$) of planned activities for a given year were implemented.
- 5 - Full credit will be given when all invasive species treatment activities conducted in a given year have been monitored for treatment efficacy and data have been recorded in TESP-IS.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Invasive Species Program](#)

USDA, [National Invasive Species Information Center](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. If my wilderness reaches 10 points and then a new aggressive invasive species is found, does my wilderness go back to a lower point level?

Yes, because a new, aggressive invasive species has the potential to spread and cause adverse impacts to other plants, animals, and/or ecological processes, and may significantly affect wilderness character. A 10-point score in this element reflects that all known invasive species have been treated and that treatments are effective.

2. What if I have non-native species that are not invasive; should I include them?

No, this element focuses solely on non-native species that are invasive because of their ability to spread and cause adverse impacts to other plants, animals, or ecological processes. For example, some non-native plants introduced on hikers' boots are found only along trails and they won't spread out from the disturbance zone of the trail.

3. My inventory, management plan, and treatment monitoring data are a few years old. Are they still considered adequate?

Whether the inventory, plan, or monitoring data is current and adequate is dependent on the species and location and should be determined in consultation with the unit's resource staff. For an aggressive species in ideal growing conditions, annual inventories to locate new infestations and annual monitoring to determine the effectiveness of past treatments may be necessary while in other situations a less vigorous effort may be adequate.

4. Do we get even 2 points if we only have an informal survey but have not taken any actions to respond to the invasive species that were seen?

No, to score 2 points some action needs to be taken. This may also depend on whether the unit has a weed management plan, and if so, what sort of direction it contains for the species observed. In addition, this may depend on how aggressive the species is, which would help determine how rapidly the unit needs to respond, as well as other input from the unit's appropriate resource specialists.

5. How do I score this element if there is no integrative species management plan but we do have formal surveys and have taken actions to eradicate and control nonnative invasive species? Would this count as 4 points or 8 points, or something else?

4 points, and to score higher an integrative species management plan is needed.

6. Does this element now include other invasive species, not just plants? How do I decide whether to select plants, terrestrial, or aquatic species?

Yes, any invasive species taxa is fair game to address in this element. Priorities are set locally by each Forest, but all Forests are required by policy (and Executive Order) to consider the full spectrum of invasive plants, pathogens, vertebrates, invertebrate, fungi, algae... and each of these taxa groups includes both aquatic and terrestrial invaders across the landscape.

7. The 10 Point Level states “The management actions identified in the integrative species management plan have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, and the treatment efficacy has been recorded in the corporate database.” Do the management actions have to have been successful to claim 10 points?

Technically, no. Monitoring treatment efficacy is very important and recording the results in the database is required. However, if the Forest treats an infestation of invasive species properly it is highly unlikely that they will see NO (zero) efficacy when they monitor the treatment. After all the requirements of the element have been properly achieved (planning, surveys, inventory, treatments, and monitoring) there will likely be a very strong program established that will result in a fairly high treatment efficacy level for each infestation treated. If the Wilderness manager accomplishes the full spectrum of required activities in the element, they should get the full 10 points.

Element: Air Quality Values

Version 2020.1 (02/19/2020)

Description: The impact of air pollution on wilderness resources has been monitored and evaluated to inform relevant environmental analyses and permitting processes.

Outcome: Critical loads, critical levels, or Wilderness Air Quality Value (AQV) thresholds have been established and current conditions evaluated, with the goal of protecting air quality values in this wilderness.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Critical Load: A quantitative estimate of exposure to one or more pollutants below which significant harmful effects on specified sensitive elements of the environment do not occur according to present knowledge (Nilsson and Grennfelt 1988, UNECE 2004). Informal Definition: The threshold of deposition below which specified harmful ecological effects do not occur (Porter et al. 2005). See also: [Critical Loads](#). Critical loads are typically expressed in terms of kilograms per hectare per year (kg/ha/yr) of deposition. Most published critical loads are for nitrogen and sulfur containing air pollutants that cause eutrophication or acidification of ecosystems. These pollutants originate from emissions of nitrogen and sulfur oxides (e.g., from combustion of fuels) and ammonia (e.g., from volatilization of fertilizers, manures, and composts and from catalytic converters in vehicles). They are transformed in the atmosphere and deposited to the environment as nutrients (nitrates, ammonium and ammonia) and acids (nitric and sulfuric acids). Deposition can be dry (gases and particulates), or wet (ions dissolved in precipitation). Most critical loads are for total (wet + dry) nitrogen, total sulfur, or both (e.g. kg N/ha/yr, Kg S/ha/yr or kg N+S/ha/yr). For more information, see the critical loads pages of the National Atmospheric Deposition Program website: [Critical Loads](#)

Critical Level: Similar to critical load but measured in units of concentration (e.g. parts per billion) in the atmosphere as opposed to deposition to the environment. Used primarily for ozone.

Sensitive Receptors: Specific types of features or properties within a wilderness that can be negatively impacted by air pollutants and which therefore may serve as indicators of changing conditions.

Sensitive Receptor Indicator: A measurable physical, chemical, biological, or social characteristic of a sensitive receptor.

Wilderness Air Quality Value (AQV): A scenic, cultural, physical, biological, ecological, or recreational resource which may be affected by a change in air quality as defined by the Federal Land Manager (a role specified for federal lands by the Clean Air Act).

Wilderness AQV Threshold: The minimum acceptable condition identified for each wilderness AQV.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	A wilderness air quality value plan has been developed that identifies wilderness air quality values, sensitive receptors and indicator(s). This plan has been reviewed periodically and revised as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Air quality plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title, signature date (MM/YYYY), and last review date (MM/YYYY) of wilderness air quality value plan
4 points²	A document has been produced that identifies the WAQV threshold, critical load, or critical level that will be used to protect each sensitive receptor indicator for this wilderness. This document has been signed by the Forest Supervisor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed document with WAQV threshold, critical load, or critical level that will be used to protect each sensitive receptor indicator for this wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and signature date (MM/YYYY) of air quality level protection document
6 points³	A monitoring baseline has been established for a priority sensitive receptor.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Baseline data stored in corporate database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of sensitive receptor and date (MM/YYYY) of baseline data entry into corporate database
8 points	Trends data for a priority sensitive receptor indicator have been collected and analyzed, and trends in air quality evaluated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Data analysis and evaluation, stored in corporate database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of sensitive receptor and date (MM/YYYY) of data analysis and evaluation entry into corporate database
10 points	A report has been prepared that 1) presents the baseline results, 2) describes any trends in air quality and the sensitive receptor indicator(s), and 3) determines if wilderness resources are currently protected from air pollution effects. The report has been provided to the Forest Supervisor(s) for this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative report provided to Forest Supervisor(s) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date air quality analysis report was transmitted to Forest Supervisor(s) (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

General: Data collected outside of a particular wilderness can be used for this element if (1) the specific sensitive receptor of interest is the same as a wilderness air quality value identified in your wilderness air quality plan; and (2) an air quality specialist can defensibly state that the condition of a sensitive receptor in one wilderness can be used to characterize the condition of the receptor in an adjoining wilderness.

- 1 - A Wilderness AQV plan is typically prepared for a multi-year period and may remain valid if there are no significant changes in air quality values, sensitive receptors or indicators.
- 2 - Identify, in the Wilderness AQV plan, if the local Interagency Monitoring of Protected Visual Environments (IMPROVE) monitoring site trends are meeting reasonable progress goals under the regional haze program.
- 3 - Monitor the sensitive receptor that is most sensitive and critical for your wilderness area. Some examples include water quality in high altitude lakes, ozone effects to bio indicators, and community or tissue analysis of lichens. For some sensitive receptors, a baseline can be established with one season's worth of data, whereas others may require multiple field seasons. These monitoring timeframes should be specified in the wilderness air quality value plan.

Supporting Resources:

Your regional air staff: [Air Program Contacts | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#)

US Forest Service Air Quality Portal. Additional reference materials and links to available science, including information on critical loads, how to develop monitoring plans to increase the reliability of critical load estimates and contact information for the staff within the Forest Service Air Program who can assist you with this process. [Air Quality Portal for Land Management Planning \(usda.gov\)](#)

Add EPA Critical Loads Mapper. Authoritative source for mapping deposition, critical loads, and critical loads exceedance. Provides on-the-fly reports summarizing available data for individual units and wilderness areas administered by the USFS, BLM, NPS, and USFWS. See also FAQ #5. [Critical Load Mapper](#)

Wilderness.net Air Quality Tool Box. Examples of air quality plans and other resources. [Wilderness Connect Air Quality Toolbox](#)

Visibility data (IMPROVE): Visibility status and trends data from monitors representing the 88 USFS Class I Wilderness Areas from the publicly accessible Federal Land Managers database: [Visibility Data](#). For a list and map of Class I Wilderness Areas [Class I Wilderness List - Forest Service Air Resource Management Program \(usda.gov\)](#).

Lichen data: Data from the Air and Forest Inventory & Analysis programs are publicly accessible from [the National Lichen and Air Quality Database](#). The current version is posted on Pinyon; ask your regional air staff. Includes species abundance and air pollution sensitivities, N and S levels in lichens, critical loads related metrics for species diversity, community based air quality scores, abundance of species used by wildlife, and modeled deposition and climate at survey sites for about 320 Wilderness Areas.

Surface Water Quality data. Surface water chemistry data are publicly accessible data are available from the [Federal Land Managers Air Quality Database](#). The complete dataset resides in the USFS Natural Resource Manager Air application database. Request help from your regional air program staff. Chief analytes are pH, buffering capacity, nitrates, phosphates, and other cations and anions.

Ozone data: to evaluate the critical level may be found at [Federal Land Manager Environmental Database](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

9. Why is the Element Outcome to protect the air quality values of the wilderness when I can't do anything about the air pollutants coming into the wilderness?

Air pollution has a significant effect on the natural quality of wilderness character, directly affecting plants, soil processes, and aquatic systems. The protection of air quality values in wilderness is an important part of the agency's statutory responsibility to "preserve wilderness character." Monitoring air quality data in wilderness provides air quality-related baselines, status and trends information that can be utilized to meet a variety of agency information needs. Specifically AQV data:

- i. Meets reporting requirements for the Wilderness Stewardship Performance and Wilderness Character Monitoring by documenting status and trends in wilderness air quality and/or air pollution sensitive resources.
- ii. Can be used in air quality assessments in Forest Plan Revisions under the 2012 Planning Directives to map and assess risk to air pollution-sensitive resources, including critical load exceedances for the following AQVs: lichens, herbs, trees, fish, and surface water quality.
- iii. IMPROVE visibility data are a cornerstone of the Clean Air Act Regional Haze Rule which aims to reduce haze in Class I Wilderness (88 WAs) to natural background levels by 2064. Every US state is gradually reducing haze. IMPROVE data are used to document state progress and inform USFS reviews of state implementation plans, which are revised every ten years.
- iv. Provides evidence of risks from air pollution to natural resources in Class I Wilderness. Under the Clean Air Act Prevention of Significant Deterioration state permitting USFS managers are required to review permit applications for new or modified major stationary sources of air pollution (e.g. power plants, mills, smelters) that could potentially degrade air quality in a class I wilderness. All AQV data can be cited in these reviews. Traditionally IMPROVE visibility impairment data have been used alone but quantification of ecological risks through inclusion of other AQV data helps back up manager recommendations for stronger controls or for approving the permit as submitted.

- v. Can be used in a variety of other assessments such as NEPA project level air quality analyses, Forest level monitoring reports, Watershed Condition Framework and Terrestrial Condition Assessment.

10. Does it matter if my wilderness is a Class I or Class II area?

No, our responsibility to protect air quality values in wilderness is the same regardless of whether they are Class I or Class II areas, and the contribution of air quality values to wilderness character is the same in both types of areas. What differs are the mechanisms available to us if air pollution impacts are documented.

11. If there is no wilderness air quality value plan for my wilderness, do I not even get 2-points?

No, please reach out to the Forest or Regional Air Quality Specialist/Air Program Manager to determine the status of the relevant Air Quality Value Plan.

12. Do I need to inventory and monitor all sensitive receptors identified in my wilderness air quality plan?

You may inventory and monitor any sensitive receptors of concern but you only need to select a single sensitive receptor to claim credit for this element. The intent is to focus on the receptor which is of highest priority for this wilderness.

13. What should I do if my Forest is located in an area with incomplete or unavailable national critical loads data (e.g., Alaska and Puerto Rico)?

The [EPA Critical Loads Mapper Tool](#) does not currently host deposition, critical loads, or critical load exceedance information for Alaska or Puerto Rico. Upgrades to include Alaska are anticipated between 2020 and 2022. Critical loads of nitrogen and sulfur deposition have been published for Alaskan lichens, trees, and a limited number of herbs, and there is deposition data for both AK and PR from the CMIP5 model; contact your regional Air Program manager for more information. Even if deposition has not been modeled for your area, measured data can be used to calculate critical load exceedances. For assistance with this process, please review the resources provided on the USFS [Air Quality Portal for Land Management Planning \(usda.gov\)](#) for Forest Planning or contact your regional [Air Program Contacts | US Forest Service \(usda.gov\)](#).

14. How often does a report need to be prepared to receive 10 points? Annually? Every 5 years?

The interval for periodic monitoring is dependent on the specific sensitive receptor and indicators identified in the plan. 10 points can be claimed as long as the frequency and intensity of your monitoring activities are consistent with the requirements specified in your plan.

Element: Natural Role of Fire

Version 2024.1 (05/29/2024)

Description: Wildfire and/or prescribed fire has been managed to allow fire to play its natural role in wilderness.

Outcome: Fire has been allowed to play its natural role in this wilderness.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Fire Management Direction: Desired conditions and management requirements for wildfires and prescribed fires as directed in the Forest Plan, an amendment to the Forest Plan, or applicable laws. Additional direction may be provided by national and regional policy. Supplemental guidance may be provided the Fire Management Reference System (FMRS) or individual operational plans.

Fire Management Reference System: The agency template for the National Interagency Fire Management Plan.

Initial Attack: An aggressive action to put the fire out by the first resources to arrive, consistent with firefighter and public safety and values to be protected. Fire is generally contained by the attack units first dispatched, without a significant augmentation of reinforcements, within two hours after initial attack, and full control is expected within the first burning period.

Prescribed Fire: Any fire intentionally ignited by management under an approved plan to meet specific management objectives.

Response to wildfire: Decisions and actions implemented to manage a wildfire based on ecological, social, and legal consequences, the circumstances under which a fire occurs, and the likely consequences on firefighter and public safety and welfare, natural and cultural resources, and other values at risk. Response to ignitions is guided by the objectives and strategies outlined in the land/resource management plan.

Wilderness Resource Advisor: A person assigned to an incident who has Resource Advisor (READ) or Resource Advisor Fireline (REAF) certification (N-9042) and/or is identified as technical specialist for wilderness (THSP) and has the expertise for wilderness law, policy and management much like an archeologist would be assigned for incidents with heritage concerns.

Wildfire: An unplanned ignition caused by lightning, volcanoes, unauthorized, and accidental human-caused actions and escaped prescribed fires.

Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDDSS): A interagency, web based application that helps agency administrators and fire managers make risk informed decisions for all types of wildland fires, regardless of complexity.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Fire management direction has been incorporated into Forest Plan Direction to manage wildfire and/or prescribed fire to allow for the natural role of fire in wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Plan or amendment with appropriate language regarding fire management in wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date (MM/YYYY) of forest plan with page(s) reference to relevant Forest Plan Direction
4 points²	Appropriate items and relevant wilderness direction are loaded into Wildland Fire Decision Support System (WFDDSS) Production and Training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness direction is uploaded into WFDDSS and ready for incident use. Wilderness Values at Risk are clear to Fire Managers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last review of WFDDSS with Wilderness Manager and WFDDSS Data Manager (MM/YYYY)
6 points³	The response to each wildfire and/or prescribed fire that occurred in this wilderness in this fiscal year met applicable fire management direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review of fire management planning direction by wilderness and fire staff/narrative stating outcome. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last evaluation of wildfire management response (MM/YYYY) and brief descriptions of any outcomes Enter "N/A" if this wilderness did not have any wildfires this year.

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox⁴	A post-season review of wilderness fire management practices has been conducted this fiscal year by Wilderness Program Managers and Fire Management Officers to evaluate how wilderness fires were managed, the effectiveness of fire management planning direction and to identify modifications to plans or practices that may be needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting notes or narrative about the review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last post-season review of wilderness fire management practices (MM/YYYY) and brief description of needed modifications to plans or practices (if any)
2 point checkbox⁵	A wilderness resource advisor (READ) or technical specialist (THSP) was assigned to each wildfire not contained during initial attack and each prescribed fire in this wilderness in this fiscal year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation from Incident Command paperwork showing name of wilderness resource advisor or technical specialist and/or wilderness resource advisor fire report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incident Action Plan with READ or THSP listed or Wilderness READ Report with Dates Enter "N/A" if this wilderness did not have any wildfires or prescribed fires this fiscal year

Explanatory Notes:

- 4 - A Forest Plan revision or amendment may be necessary to achieve this score if there is currently no language regarding wildfires in wilderness in the Land and Resource Management Plan (LRMP).
- 5 - "Appropriate items" are determined locally depending on type of fire ecosystem, Forest Plan Direction, and existing conditions.
- 6 - Natural ignitions in wilderness are managed for their natural role while protecting values that may be adversely impacted by fire both inside and outside of wilderness. Risk to values has been sufficiently reduced prior to fire through appropriate means including hazard fuels treatments, positioning of suppression equipment and resources, fireproofing facilities, and public information. The reduced risk affords more opportunities to manage fire in wilderness for resource benefit. To achieve this score, evaluation of wildfire management responses should clearly demonstrate outcomes consistent with wilderness wildfire planning documents and on the ground actions which supported the natural role of fire.

Wildernesses which did not have any wildfires this fiscal year can still claim 6-points, though this absence should be noted in the NRM documentation.

7 - Review should be documented for after action purposes. At the end of each fire season, wilderness program managers and Fire Management Officers shall:

- Evaluate the management of fires in wilderness
- Determine whether responses met applicable fire management direction
- Assess the effectiveness of the fire management planning direction
- Identify modifications to plans or practices that may be needed
- Document whether a wilderness resource advisor or technical specialist (THSP) was assigned to each wildfire in wilderness
- Enter all authorized and unauthorized motorized/mechanized incursions into the NRM Wilderness database, including those associated with Burned Area Emergency Rehabilitation activities

Since WSP reporting is done in the fall each year, it is assumed the accomplishment on this element will have taken place earlier in the fiscal year, reviewing the outcomes from the prior year's fire season. Wildernesses which did not have any wildfires this fiscal year are still expected to conduct a post-season review.

Involvement of the resource advisor should be commensurate with the type of fire. For example, during small, short duration, less complex fires, the Incident Commander may only need to consult with the READ prior to initial attack and that person should be available via radio or telephone. A READ or REAF should be assigned for longer duration fires. If there was no opportunity for a READ, REAF or THSP assignment for wildfires in wilderness this year, the 2-point checkbox can still be claimed although the absence of the advisors should be noted in the NRM documentation.

Supporting Resources:

WSP SharePoint, [Wilderness Fire Management Checklist](#): Developed to provide wilderness and fire managers with a checklist of wilderness topics and issues that should be considered when revising Forest Plans and Fire Management Plans.

Wilderness.net, [Fire Management Toolbox](#): Sample motorized/mechanized approval forms, delegation of authority letters, and resource advisor report samples.

[Wildland Fire Support Decision System](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Fire does not play a natural role in my wilderness so how do I score this element?

If fire is not a natural change agent in your wilderness, the LMP should adequately state this situation and it would most likely be appropriate to not choose this element.

2. What is the difference between the 6-point level review and the 2-point checkbox post-season review? It seems like the 6-point review is included in the 2-point checkbox review.

The 2 point check box is an annual review of the season's fires and practices in managing those fires. Even if each wildfire response this fiscal year met applicable fire management direction, conducting a post-season review of wilderness fire management practices allows a unit to evaluate not only how wilderness fires were managed, but also the effectiveness of the current fire management planning direction to identify modifications to plans or practices that may be needed.

3. The 6 point level seems to indicate that these points can fluctuate from year to year? For example, if there are 4 natural ignition fires in a wilderness that year, yet 1 fire did not meet applicable fire management direction, then you cannot reach 6 points and you fall back to 4 point level?

Correct, if a fire is managed contrary to fire management direction, then 6 points would not be achieved. This element was written specifically to fire management direction, rather than a particular fire response. Fire management direction should be sufficiently flexible to account for the adequate response to manage each fire based on a variety of conditions that vary spatially and temporally. Values at risk, fuel conditions, fire behavior, fire location, climate, and weather are a few of the considerations when determining individual wildfire response. If this element is chosen, the fire management direction would likely include managing fire as a natural process. Yet, the direction would need to address a process for evaluating each fire to determine conditions and circumstances under which this is possible. If the 1 fire in the example was either suppressed or managed without following the process to determine the response, then the maximum points would not be achieved.

4. Seems a Wilderness can easily achieve a score of 10 points without any wildfires, providing they have met the 2 & 4 point level?

This was allowed for because wildfire is not a regular occurrence. Lack of wildfire does not indicate a lack of active management for wildfire.

Element: Water

Version 2021.1 (06/21/2021)

Description: Water quality and quantity have been protected in this wilderness and actions have been taken, where appropriate, to maintain or restore natural conditions and processes.

Outcome: Water quality and quantity have been protected in this wilderness.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

National Core Best Management Practices for water quality (BMPs): Methods, measures, or practices selected by an agency to meet its nonpoint source control needs (2012 Planning Rule, 36 CFR 219.19). See also National Core BMP Monitoring Protocols (FS 990a, 2012).

Passive Restoration: Watershed restoration treatment actions that rely on maintaining the resiliency of riparian and aquatic ecosystems to absorb or recover from disturbance, primarily by adjusting or eliminating activities that alter hydrologic processes or degrade water quality and allowing an area to recover on its own (2008 Aquatic and Riparian Conservation Strategy, Forest Service Region 6) .

Water Quality Conditions: A description of the physical, biological, or chemical impacts to water quality (as outlined in the Watershed Condition Classification Technical Guide, FS-987, 2011).

Water Quantity Conditions: A description of the changes to the natural flow regime with respect to the magnitude, duration, or timing of natural streamflow hydrographs (as outlined in the Watershed Condition Classification Technical Guide).

Watershed Condition Framework (WCF): A six-step process developed by the Forest Service to: (1) classify watershed condition (Watershed Condition Classification, WCC); (2) prioritize watersheds for restoration; (3) develop watershed restoration actions plans; (4) implement integrated projects; (5) track restoration accomplishments; and (6) monitor and verify watershed conditions (FS-977, 2011).

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Data utilized to determine current WCF classifications have been compiled along with other relevant water documentation for this wilderness (e.g., language in the enabling legislation or information about legal water diversions). Current WCF classifications have been validated for water quality and quantity conditions in this wilderness through review of the most current data and local knowledge.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative detailing the compiled water information for each wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last evaluation (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	<p>Needed treatment actions (if any) have been identified, prioritized, and documented (narrative or geospatially) for watersheds in this wilderness. Passive restoration approaches have been emphasized, where appropriate. A narrative has also been included to explain the map, describe existing conditions, and explain how the current conditions and WCF conditions were determined;</p> <p><u>AND</u></p> <p>BMPs have been identified (in appropriate National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) documents and other relevant documents) for all management activities with a potential to impact water quality in this wilderness.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Treatment action document including narrative of watershed condition Current NEPA documents (Forest Plan, other environmental analysis) or other relevant documents (e.g., special use authorizations, contracts, annual operating plans) with BMPs for management actions affecting water quality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of prioritized treatment actions (brief) and date (MM/YYYY) of treatment document Title and date (MM/YYYY) of NEPA documents incorporating BMPs
6 points³	Priority treatment actions (including passive restoration approaches) affecting water quality or quantity in this wilderness have been implemented. <u>AND</u> National Core BMPs have been implemented for general management activities currently underway in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National BMP implementation and effectiveness monitoring data has been entered in the National BMP Program Interim Database (accessed within the web-based Citrix environment at the Forest Service Enterprise Data Center) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of BMP evaluated for effectiveness this fiscal year and date (MM/YYYY) of effectiveness monitoring results entry into the National BMP Monitoring Program Interim Database

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
8 points⁴	Priority treatment actions (including passive restoration approaches) affecting water quality or quantity in this wilderness have been implemented and at least one project has been monitored to determine treatment effectiveness. Effectiveness and implementation monitoring of at least one BMP has been completed in this fiscal year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of treatment effectiveness, including narrative detailing priority treatment actions • National BMP implementation and effectiveness monitoring data has been entered in the National BMP Program Database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of prioritized treatment actions (brief) • Name of project monitored to determine treatment effectiveness • Name of BMP evaluated for effectiveness (and implementation if applicable) this fiscal year and date of (MM/YYYY) data entry into the National BMP Monitoring Program Database
10 points⁵	The effectiveness of all treatment actions (including passive restoration approaches) has been evaluated and any needed changes to these actions have been implemented. BMP monitoring shows that management practices have been effective or corrective actions have been taken to resolve any deficiencies.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Narrative detailing treatment actions, effectiveness and adjustments to actions and BMP effectiveness monitoring in project files 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of last treatment evaluation for effectiveness (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - The WCF reports accomplishments and outcomes for each 6th-level hydrologic unit (at the 10,000-40,000 acre watershed scale). Each 6th-level Hydrologic Unit has a unique hydrologic unit code (HUC). WCF information is reported and stored in the Watershed Classification and Assessment Tracking Tool (WCATT). Watersheds should only be analyzed for this element if at least 20% of the area of the watershed is within this wilderness.
- 2 - Watershed treatment activities should be prioritized based on factors like downstream resources at risk, watershed values, infrastructure, etc. BMPs will be localized, most often in conjunction with projects and activities such as bridges and trails maintenance.

- 3 - Priority treatment actions are determined locally, and the level of intervention should be determined using the Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA) process. Wildernesses without identified treatments actions (as specified at the 4-point level) cannot score higher than 4-points.
- 4 - Effectiveness ratings indicate the level to which BMP's were effective at protecting water quality. Effectiveness monitoring questions include:
 - Was there unanticipated erosion or release of pollutants at the site?
 - Did pollutants reach the stream?
- 5 - Changes to actions could include project redesign, project curtailment, changes in type of action (passive restoration vs. active). A major component of the National Core BMP Program is identification of corrective actions and adaptive management. If corrective actions have been identified and implemented, then water quality is protected where it might not have been otherwise. Implementing adaptive management to prevent water quality issues in the future is also relevant to this scoring level.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Watershed, Fish, Air, Wildlife and Rare Plants National BMP Program intranet page](#): Provides information on National Core BMP monitoring protocols and forms, as well as links to the National Core BMP Technical Guide (Vol. 1), Interim National BMP Monitoring Database User Guide, and relevant webinar recordings.

USDA Forest Service, [Watershed Classification Assessment Tracking Tool](#): Details the tools and information available in the WCATT.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. I don't understand the WCF. Are there resources that can help with this information?

You can either coordinate with your unit's hydrologist or watershed specialist to obtain information about WCF or you can check out all the information about the WCF on the [Forest Service national website](#).

2. Do the WCF watersheds that I will be using to score this element need to be entirely within the Wilderness?

No, but at least 20% of the WCF watershed should be within the wilderness in order to utilize it for this element. Your scoring should be based on the portion(s) of WCF watersheds located in your wilderness and actions taken in wilderness, and based on actions taken in the watershed upstream of the wilderness if existing conditions are adversely impacting wilderness character.

3. At the 2-point level, who will review the WCF data to verify that they are valid for my wilderness?

Coordinate with your unit's hydrologist or watershed specialist on the review of WCF data to verify that they are valid for your wilderness. Narratives containing the compiled water information for this point level should include: the total number of WCF watersheds in this wilderness, their Condition Class Ratings, confirmation that the water quality and quantity indicator ratings have been validated, and any other relevant information that helps explain the indicator ratings (e.g., any special water quality designations or reasons for impairment).

4. What is the Watershed Classification and Assessment Tracking Tool (WCATT)? Who is responsible for reporting WCF info in this tool?

WCATT is a NRM application; you can explore the tool at [NRM WCATT Tracking Tool](#)

This tool is where WCF data are recorded and tracked. Coordinate with your unit's hydrologist or watershed specialist to learn who updates data in WCATT for your unit.

5. At the 4-point level, what does “passive restoration approaches have been emphasized” mean and how do I score this if there has been such an emphasis but active treatments are still taken?

Either approach, or a combination of the two, is appropriate at the 4-point level. Determination of recommended restoration actions should be coordinated through an Interdisciplinary Team in conjunction with the unit hydrologist or watershed specialist. Passive restoration is usually less expensive and may be easier to implement. In addition, restoration approach(es) would be driven by the “minimum necessary” standard, meaning that passive approaches have been taken if they achieve desired conditions, and more active treatments are taken if necessary, to achieve desired conditions.

6. Who is responsible for entering the effectiveness monitoring results in the National BMP Program Interim Database?

Coordinate with your unit's hydrologist or watershed specialist to learn who is coordinating BMP monitoring data entry. Your contributions are important to building a statistically valid data set nationwide. Learn more about the National BMP monitoring program on their [website](#).

7. How do I score this element if I don't need to use the WCF because a municipal water sampling site is just outside my wilderness that provides detailed water quantity and quality data, and these data are directly relevant to my wilderness?

If the watershed condition information from the WCF is not relevant to the management concerns in your wilderness, then treatment activities should be based on the most relevant data available, such as municipal water sampling information, and rated on the scoring criteria as applicable (i.e. implementation and monitoring of one or all needed treatments). BMP's should still be implemented along with any treatment activities. Relevant information should be communicated to the Unit hydrologist or watershed specialist for inclusion in the WCF.

8. A threat to water quality in my wilderness relates to human waste. How does that fit into this element?

The effect of human waste on water quality is of concern in a number of wildernesses with high visitation. Actions taken to improve human waste management, such as implementation and enforcement of regulations related to proper waste management or the closure of certain campsites, are considered treatment actions under this element.

9. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Understanding the perspective and wisdom Indigenous People have as it relates to the deliverables in this element gives us an opportunity to leverage our nation-to-nation and personal relationships into more effective and long-term management and stewardship of our wilderness stewardship efforts.

Element: Fish and Wildlife

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: The need to conserve and/or recover populations of indigenous fish and/or wildlife species in this wilderness has been evaluated and management actions taken, as necessary, in coordination with the state fish and wildlife agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate.

Outcome: Priority indigenous fish and/or wildlife species have been identified and have been conserved and/or recovered in this wilderness.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Conservation: Actions taken to safeguard indigenous fish and wildlife species or populations against a known threat.

Indigenous species: Those wildlife and fish species that historically occurred within a wilderness area without human assistance.

Recovery: (1) Improvement in status of a priority indigenous fish or wildlife species whose persistence in a wilderness is threatened or (2) successful reintroduction of a priority indigenous fish or wildlife species that was previously extirpated from a wilderness or portion thereof.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	An indigenous fish and/or wildlife management strategy has been established for this wilderness, in coordination with the state fish and wildlife agency and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service/National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy is in place and signed by appropriate line officer and has been reviewed and (if needed) updated within the past year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of indigenous fish and/or wildlife management strategy and signature date (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	Management actions to conserve and/or recover at least one terrestrial and one aquatic priority indigenous species in this wilderness have been implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management action map in GIS with narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of indigenous species Description of implemented management actions (brief) Date of management action map (MM/YYYY)
6 points³	Management actions for at least one terrestrial and one aquatic priority indigenous species in this wilderness have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative detailing priority actions Project file contains documentation of action effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management action evaluated for effectiveness (brief) and date of evaluation (MM/YYYY)
8 points⁴	All management actions identified in the strategy and determined to be the minimum necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness have been taken and evaluated, with changes to these actions implemented as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative detailing management actions Changes listed in strategy appendices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management actions evaluated (brief) and date of last evaluation (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox	The Forest Service has a current, signed Wilderness Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the state fish and wildlife agency, tribes, or applicable federal agencies (as appropriate) and/or a coordination meeting has been held with representatives from that agency/those agencies this fiscal year to discuss issues specific to fish and/or wildlife management in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Current MOU on file and/or meeting notes from yearly meeting are available in corporate database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title, signature date, and expiration date of MOU (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - All Forest Service units with wilderness management responsibilities should develop an indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy that identifies species and populations of management interest, assesses their current status, and identifies and prioritizes potential management actions. The plan should be wilderness-specific and consistent with wilderness management policy, but may include other adjacent wilderness areas and be at a larger landscape-scale.
- 2 - The actions must address one terrestrial and one aquatic priority indigenous species, though only if both are present. Wildernesses without aquatic priority indigenous species can focus exclusively on terrestrial species and vice versa.

If the indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy does not identify any management actions to recover or conserve at least one priority indigenous species in this wilderness, then this element cannot score more than 4 points (and the unit responsible for this wilderness would likely not select this optional element).

- 3 - Effectiveness ratings indicate the level to which management actions were effective at conserving or recovering species. Examples could include questions like:
 - What is the current species distribution and how does that differ from historic records?
 - Have documented issues that are impacting species persistence been addressed?

- 4 - Priority treatment actions are determined locally, with the levels of intervention should be determined using the MRA process and supported by analyses and decisions conducted in conformance with the National Environmental Policy Act.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Guidance for Developing an Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy](#) (October 2016)

USDA Forest Service, [Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy, Gila NF](#)

Wilderness.net, [Wildlife and Fish Toolbox](#): Contains example state-specific MOUs, etc.

Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, [Managing Special Provisions in Wilderness: Wildlife](#). Online course from Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What are “priority indigenous fish and wildlife” and who makes this determination?

“Priority indigenous” species are those that have been highlighted by Forest Service staff and partners at the local level as management priorities in a given wilderness in the foreseeable future. They may or may not be listed as Threatened, Endangered, Sensitive (Forest Plans developed under the 1982 Planning Rule), Species of Conservation Concern (Forest Plans developed under the 2012 Planning Rule) or for some other reason singled out for special treatment by federal agencies, state agencies, or non-governmental organizations. The only requirement is that they fit the definition of indigenous provided above. Identification of priority species and development and evaluation of conservation strategies for those species should be addressed during annual coordination meetings among the Forest Service and other relevant state and federal agencies, tribes, and partners with a shared responsibility for, or interest in, fish, wildlife, and wilderness management.

2. If you take management actions for an indigenous species yet you do not have an approved and signed indigenous fish and/or wildlife management strategy, can you get any points?

Correct, the 2-point scoring level is required before higher scores can be achieved. If management actions are already underway they can easily be incorporated during development of the indigenous fish and/or wildlife management strategy and then receive credit at the 4-point level. The purpose of requiring development of a strategy is to ensure that fish and wildlife management actions being taken in wilderness address the most pressing management needs identified by interdisciplinary USFS staff and key partners (e.g., state fish and wildlife agency, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, etc.). Strategy development need not require a major investment of staff

and partner time. See “Supporting Resources” for guidance and more information on the key components of an effective, concise, and low-investment strategy.

3. Must the strategy be all inclusive for all indigenous species of concern or is it acceptable to identify one or two?

The strategy does not need to be all inclusive. It should focus narrowly on the select species identified as management priorities by Forest Service staff and partners (i.e., “priority indigenous species”). The strategy should, at a minimum include one terrestrial and one aquatic priority indigenous species, though only if both are present. The purpose of this element is to pursue fish and wildlife management actions in wilderness in a manner that is mindful of wilderness stewardship responsibilities, not to create an exhaustive list of species of concern. The omission of any particular species from the list of selected priority indigenous species in a strategy should not be interpreted as meaning that species is not important, but rather that actively monitoring, surveying, or managing that species in a particular wilderness is not among the highest near-term priorities at this point in time.

For more detailed guidance, please refer to: USDA Forest Service, [Guidance for Developing an Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy](#) (October 2016)

4. Why does this element not list Threatened and Endangered fish and wildlife species? If a Wilderness has a Threatened or Endangered species for which there is major conservation concern, can this element be selected?

Absolutely. In fact the presence of one or more Threatened or Endangered species for which there is major conservation concern in a given wilderness is a great reason to select this element. Those species would be excellent candidates to consider as priority indigenous species during strategy development. See FAQ #1 for more information on selection of priority indigenous fish and wildlife species.

5. If species listed as Threatened or Endangered under the ESA are “priority” fish and wildlife, they are most likely affected by actions outside the wilderness. Why would these species be included as the outcome of a wilderness performance measure?

Efforts in wilderness to evaluate and further safeguard the status of species listed under the Endangered Species Act may be of particular importance given that wilderness may provide vestiges of suitable habitat for some imperiled fish and wildlife. In addition, efforts to safeguard or recover a Threatened or Endangered species in wilderness should be based on use of the minimum tool, as required by the Wilderness Act.

6. At the 2-point level, what does “coordination” between the different agencies (Forest Service, state, and potentially Fish and Wildlife Service) mean and how recent would this “coordination” need to be to count?

“Coordination” could take a variety of forms depending on the agencies involved. For example, face-to-face discussion, email, phone conversation, a MOU, or other means of communicating all qualify as coordination. The purpose behind this 2-point level is for Forest

Service staff to be communicating with relevant staff from other agencies as necessary to meet fish and wildlife management objectives while ensuring for the protection of the wilderness resource. There is no set period of time for how recent this coordination and communication needs to have happened; the key is that whatever coordination and communication that has occurred is still relevant.

7. At the 2-point level, what if there has been a “coordination” meeting among the different agencies but there is disagreement about fish and wildlife management priorities?

The Forest Service has the responsibility to coordinate with its partners but not necessarily be in agreement with them. Each partner has different missions and jurisdictions, and it’s important for the Forest Service to communicate its wilderness mission with its partners. Meeting to advocate for the protection of the wilderness resource in the absence of agreement on key management issues still qualifies for this score.

8. What is the point of having this element since many wildernesses will not get beyond the 4-point level because they have not identified “priority” species or taken actions on such species?

This element encourages each forest to evaluate whether or not there are fish and / or wildlife species that may be targeted for conservation or recovery efforts in a given wilderness. If there are no priority species, then the Forest may choose not to select this element.

9. At the 6- and 8-point levels, how will the effectiveness of management actions be determined?

The effectiveness of management actions can only be determined on a case-by-case basis through repeated evaluations over time. A monitoring plan designed to evaluate effectiveness of management should be developed in coordination with appropriate specialists (e.g., wildlife or fisheries biologist).

10. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

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Element: Plants

Version 2023.1 (05/26/2023)

Description: The need to conserve and/or recover populations of rare plant species or endangered and threatened tree species and to recover native plant communities in this wilderness has been evaluated and management actions taken, as necessary.

Outcome: Priority rare plant species, endangered or threatened tree species, or rare native plant communities have been identified and have been conserved and/or recovered in this wilderness.

Type: Natural Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Conservation: Actions taken to safeguard rare plant species, endangered and threatened tree species, or populations or rare native plant communities against a known threat or actions taken to identify the cause of decline in order to target effective management.

Endangered and Threatened tree species: A tree species determined by the US Fish and Wildlife Service to be an endangered or threatened species throughout all or a significant portion of its range.

Indigenous species: Those plant or tree species that naturally occurred within the geographic area that incorporates a wilderness.

Rare native plant community: Association or alliance level plant communities from the National Vegetation Classification or an equivalent classification occurring naturally within a wilderness area. Typically the community is considered to be critically imperiled, imperiled or vulnerable to extinction globally or within a state.

Rare plant species: A flowering or non-flowering plant species, lichen or fungus that is considered rare by a state heritage or a similar program. Typically the species is considered to be critically imperiled, imperiled or vulnerable to extinction globally or within a state.

Recovery: (1) Improvement in status of a priority indigenous plant species whose persistence in a wilderness is threatened or (2) successful reintroduction of a priority indigenous plant species that was previously extirpated from a wilderness or portion thereof.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points	A rare plant, a rare native plant community, or endangered and threatened tree species management strategy has been established for this wilderness, in coordination with appropriate state and federal agencies and other partners, as applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy in place and signed by appropriate line officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of rare plant, rare native plant community, or endangered and threatened tree species management strategy and signature date (MM/YYYY)
4 points	Management actions to conserve and/or recover at least one priority rare plant, rare native plant community, or endangered and threatened tree species in this wilderness have been implemented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Management action map in GIS with narrative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name of species Description of implemented management actions (brief) Date of management action map (MM/YYYY)
6 points	Management actions for at least rare plant, a rare native plant community, or endangered and threatened tree species in this wilderness have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative detailing priority actions Project file contains documentation of action effectiveness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management action evaluated for effectiveness (brief) and date of evaluation (MM/YYYY)
8 points	The effectiveness of all management actions identified in the strategy have been evaluated and changes to these actions have been implemented as needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative detailing management actions Changes listed in strategy appendices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management actions evaluated (brief) and date of last evaluation (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox	<p>The rare plant or endangered and threatened tree species is included in a U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) conservation agreement, habitat conservation plan, a candidate conservation agreement or a recovery plan. Monitoring information on the status and trend of the rare plant or endangered and threatened tree species and the condition of its habitat in the wilderness area is contributed to USFWS for a status review.</p> <p>OR</p> <p>The rare plant or endangered and threatened tree species is ranked as G1 species by state heritage offices or NatureServe or a rare plant community is ranked as G1 by the National Vegetation Classification.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Species included in agreement or plan with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Rare plant ranked as G1 species 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name and date (MM/YYYY) of agreement or plan with U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Name of rare plant or endangered and threatened tree listing and date of listing (MM/YYYY)

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Wildlife, Fish and Rare Plant \(WFRP\)](#)

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service, [Environmental Conservation System Online System](#): Listed Plants

NatureServe, [A Network Connecting Science with Conservation](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

11. What is meant by “rare” plant and who makes this determination?

Rare plants may be scarce because the total population of the species may have just a few individuals, be restricted to a narrow geographic range, or both. NatureServe, a non-profit conservation organization, has developed a consistent method for evaluating relative imperilment of species.

NatureServe's [Conservation Status Rank](#) are based on a one to five scale, ranging from critically imperiled (G1/T1) to demonstrably secure (G5/T5). Plants may also be considered rare by state heritage or similar programs.

12. What is a rare plant or rare native plant community management strategy? Must the strategy be all inclusive for all rare plants or is it acceptable to identify one or two?

Many rare plants that occur on the national forests and grasslands are best conserved by keeping their native habitats healthy. Periodic monitoring of rare plant populations can detect downward trends or alteration of their habitat which would otherwise go unnoticed. Some species, however, need active management in addition to habitat conservation. A rare plant or rare native plant community strategy should include management guidelines, habitat needs, recommendations for maintaining or restoring habitat, and mitigations for conditions that place species at risk. The strategy may include other activities based on individual species or ecological community needs. Please consult with a local botanist or vegetation ecologist for more information. All management actions put forth in the management strategy should abide by the minimum tool concept and should involve any interdisciplinary specialists necessary.

13. At the 6- and 8-point levels, how will the effectiveness of management actions be determined?

They are determined by the monitoring plan. It should test the objectives of the rare plant or rare native plant community strategy.

14. At the 8-point level, what is meant by “all” management actions? To claim the 8 points, does this mean all actions related to 1 species or all actions to all species you identified in the strategy (if more than one)?

These are the actions identified in the rare plant or rare native plant community strategy developed by the management unit. Management actions must be identified for all species if more than one species is identified.

15. What are the Strategy Appendices mentioned at the 8-point level? Do these appendices need to be completed at the 2-point level when developing a strategy?

These are appendices to the management strategy mentioned at the 2-point level. They can be added to the management strategy when changes are made as a result of measuring management action effectiveness.

16. Under the Endangered Species Act, what is used to determine if a species should be listed as endangered or threatened?

Under the Endangered Species Act, a species is an endangered or threatened species based on any of five factors: (A) The present or threatened destruction, modification, or curtailment of its habitat or range; (B) overutilization for commercial, recreational, scientific, or educational purposes; (C) disease or predation; (D) the inadequacy of existing regulatory mechanisms; (E) other natural or manmade factors affecting its continued existence.

17. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

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Element: Recreation Sites

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: Wilderness recreation sites have been located and their condition routinely assessed. Forest Plan Direction (or wilderness management plan or locally developed advisory document) has been developed and stewardship actions taken if conditions are not in compliance with direction.

Outcome: Wilderness recreation sites are managed to protect wilderness character.

Type: Undeveloped Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

National site monitoring protocol: A nationally developed protocol that includes a census of sites in all likely locations, and the collection of site coordinates, a condition class rating and recording of the number of administrative developments.

Recreation site monitoring plan: A plan that develops a wilderness-wide strategy for completing an inventory of recreation sites, including documentation of areas without established sites or areas where sites show only very light evidence of use. The plan addresses why the data are being collected and how they will be used, along with the data analysis protocol.

Recreation sites: Sites demonstrating observable impacts from repeated visitation, including campsites, day use sites and other recreation destinations, such as climbing areas.¹

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points²	A recreation site monitoring plan is in place along with a recreation site impact monitoring protocol, which conforms to the national site monitoring protocol at a minimum.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness recreation site monitoring plan Wilderness recreation site monitoring protocol, which conforms to the national site monitoring protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and completion date (MM/YYYY) of recreation site monitoring plan/impact monitoring protocol Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
4 points³	A recreation site inventory has been conducted in a substantial portion of the wilderness using the monitoring protocol within the past 5 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed recreation site inventory in a substantial portion of the wilderness, no more than 5-years old 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date inventory was completed in a substantial portion of the wilderness (MM/YYYY)
6 points⁴	A recreation site inventory has been completed for all “likely locations” in this wilderness using the monitoring protocol within the past 5 years. The data have been entered in an electronic format and subsequently analyzed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed recreation site inventory of all likely locations in this wilderness, no more than 5-years old Data entry of all recreation sites into appropriate database or spreadsheet has been completed Data analysis of recreation site data completed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date inventory was completed in the wilderness (MM/YYYY) Date data entry into electronic format was completed (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder Date inventory data analysis was completed (MM/YYYY)
8 points⁵	Direction exists for the management of wilderness recreation sites in either the Forest Plan, wilderness management plan, or locally developed advisory document. This direction has been reviewed and determined to be sufficient to protect wilderness values. New direction has been developed and implemented as needed to protect wilderness character. A need for new direction is a local determination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Plan, wilderness management plan, or locally developed advisory document contains direction sufficient for management of recreation sites and protection of wilderness character 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date (MM/YYYY) of Forest Plan, wilderness management plan (with page references to wilderness recreation site direction), or locally developed advisory document Date of last review of sufficiency of direction (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
10 points	If monitoring shows that current conditions are not compliant with desired conditions (according to management plan direction), appropriate actions have been taken. If conditions are within desired condition, no further actions are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed evaluation comparing recreation site condition against Forest Plan, wilderness management plan, or locally developed advisory document. Identification and implementation of actions to bring recreation sites back within desired conditions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date (MM/YYYY) of evaluation comparing current conditions with management direction Description of management actions (enter "N/A" if no further actions are needed)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Impacts associated with climbing routes may be included in either this element or the Trails element, but should not be included in both. Ground disturbance associated with belay and staging areas would be monitored as recreation sites using the Minimum Recreation Site Monitoring Protocol. Cliff impacts would be monitored under the Trails element, specifically User Developed Trails.
- 2 - The recreation site inventory protocols used must meet or exceed the monitoring required to meet the “national minimum protocol” (see **Supporting Resources** below). Ideally, recreation sites should be georeferenced to support spatial analysis.
- 3 - A “substantial portion” is not directly quantifiable but should include a survey of at least 50% of the area containing likely sites.
- 4 - Suitable electronic formats include: MS Access database, MS Excel spreadsheet or NRM-Wilderness Recreation Site Monitoring module. Examples of types of analyses include average impact score or campsite density.
- 5 - To achieve the 8-point score, direction in either the Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document must be specific enough to lead you to take action when a threshold is surpassed. For example, direction might stipulate that campsites in Frissell Condition Classes 3, 4, and 5, must be restored to Class 2 or better.

Supporting Resources:

WSP SharePoint, [Recreation Sites WSP Tools and Templates](#)

Wilderness.net, [Recreation Site Monitoring Toolbox](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:**1. What does a recreation site monitoring plan look like and what are the components?**

A recreation site monitoring plan provides information that is relevant to the implementation of the recreation site monitoring protocol in your wilderness. It must be valid for your area and take into consideration issues like levels of use, impacts from this use, minimum frequency of monitoring needed given use levels (if it is more often than the 5-year interval specified in the above scoring guidelines), whether specific parameters beyond those included in the national site monitoring protocol should be monitored in your wilderness, who is responsible for conducting monitoring, when monitoring data will be collected (because time of year affects some impacts), where monitoring data are stored, and how monitoring data are used.

2. What does a wilderness recreation site monitoring protocol, which conforms to the national site monitoring protocol as a minimum, look like? Why would I do anything additional?

The “minimum site monitoring protocol” defines the minimally acceptable level of monitoring that must be accomplished to claim credit for this element. Forests are encouraged to go beyond this protocol, but at minimum this protocol must be applied. Individual protocols are typically adapted from the national protocol to include additional local issues of concern and/or to meet forest plan direction. It is permissible to change units of measure within the minimum protocol (e.g., tree damage could be recorded as a percentage of trees that are damaged, rather than a count of damaged trees).

3. My protocol is more detailed than the national protocol but I’ve only inventoried sites in my high use areas. Can I claim credit for this element?

The protocol requires that a census be taken of all likely sites. Your wilderness will fully meet this element when all of these sites have been visited. An inventory of low use sites is valuable for the information that enables us to protect outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. Monitoring allows us to detect any changes that may compromise these opportunities. Research shows that low use sites deteriorate quickly if they begin to receive more use, while high-impact sites often do not change. An example is the effect of displacement of use and impacts from high use areas due to implementation of management actions.

4. What is considered a completed analysis of the recreation site data?

A completed data analysis summarizes results and evaluates the site data comparing recreation site conditions against Forest Plan, wilderness management plan, or locally developed advisory document direction or standards to observe any deviation from desired conditions. Data are often summarized by geographical region (e.g., travel zones) and by type of impact (e.g., median level of tree damage). Analysis should include a map of site locations, if spatial data were collected.

5. Requiring a re-inventory every five years seems unrealistic, especially for large wildernesses with many sites. Why is this requirement so restrictive?

While it is acknowledged that the task of completing a complete inventory of recreation sites is a large undertaking for certain wildernesses, wilderness science strongly indicates that impacts from campsites and day use sites can appear and expand dramatically within a few years when recreation levels and patterns change in a wilderness. If this element allowed for a more relaxed timeframe, we wouldn't be able to state with confidence that we fully understood the trends in recreation impacts that were occurring in a wilderness. Some wildernesses plan to have a push to complete all their monitoring in a single year, while others complete 20% per year, over five years.

6. What do I do about campsites mapped on an old inventory that I can't re-locate?

A major purpose of campsite monitoring is to locate all campsites within a wilderness area. By mapping and then searching all areas where campsites are likely to be found, the previously inventoried sites will either be found and included or they will be considered to have disappeared and not be included in the new inventory. Documenting improvement is an important part of monitoring trends

7. How are climbing impacts documented under this protocol? Is the measured impact the actual cliff face or the ground disturbance associated with belay and staging areas?

Ground disturbance due to climbing should be measured under the Recreation Sites element and any cliff impacts should be measured under the User Developed Trail element

8. How do we know if our management direction is sufficient for management of recreation sites and protection of wilderness character?

Monitoring will determine if management direction is met and if wilderness character is protected. If degradation of the wilderness resource is occurring, but is within the established direction, then the direction is not sufficient and should be reviewed and adjusted. Decisions about sufficient management direction are locally made. It is advisable to confer local resource specialist and wilderness staff. Monitoring should provide trend information regarding the number and impact of recreation sites may suggest that management practices need to change.

9. If I have not been able to put my data into NRM Wilderness, what are some examples of other acceptable databases?

We strongly encourage the use of NRM Wilderness because that is the most viable option we can recommend. Its use is institutionalized and, unlike most locally developed systems, its long-range existence is not dependent upon any one person. However, this element does not require use of NRM Wilderness because some units have developed locally databases or spreadsheets that fully meet their needs. Examples of other software which support analysis include other database management systems, such as MS-Access, as well as spreadsheets, such as MS-Excel.

Element: Trails

Version 2024.1 (05/16/2024)

Description: Trails need to be managed to provide quality wilderness experiences while minimizing biophysical impacts.

Outcome: Wilderness trails are managed consistent with protecting wilderness character.

Type: Undeveloped Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

National Forest System Trail (NFST): A forest trail other than a trail which has been authorized by a legally documented right-of-way held by a State, county or other local public road authority.

Trail Assessment and Condition Survey (TRACS): The Forest Service's required methodology for conducting trail inventory, condition assessment and prescriptions for NFSTs.

Trail Assessment and Condition Overview Survey (TACOS): A newly approved methodology utilizing Field Maps for conducting trail inventory, condition assessment and prescriptions for NFSTs that can then be automatically uploaded into NRM.

Trail Management Objective (TMOs): Documentation of the intended purpose and management of an NFST based on management direction, including access objectives.

Unauthorized Trail: An unauthorized trail that is not a recognized as an NFST or is not permitted and does not receive routine maintenance.

Scoring and Deliverables:**National Forest System Trails:**

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	TMOs have been established and approved for all NFSTs in this wilderness. These objectives have been reviewed, when already in existence, to determine if they are consistent with wilderness management objectives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> incurrent TMOs recorded in NRM Trails 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date evaluation of TMOs was last completed (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	All NFST's in this Wilderness have been assessed for conformance with the TMO's and documented with completed TRACS surveys in NRM OR all NFST's in this Wilderness have been assessed utilizing the Trail Assessment and Condition Overview Survey (TACOS) tool and documented in NRM within the past 10 years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assessment survey results documented in NRM 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date assessments for all NFST's within the Wilderness were completed utilizing TRACS or TACOS. (MM/YYYY)
6 points³	Management actions have been taken when current conditions for NFST's in this Wilderness do not conform with the TMO's OR management actions have been taken to address issues identified in the TACOS surveys.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All NFST's in conformance with TMO's OR all NFST's have a Condition Rating or Physical Sustainability Rating of 4 or above 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management actions (brief) Date (MM/YYYY) when all NFST's determined to be in conformance with TMO's OR when all NFST's have a Condition Rating or Physical Sustainability Rating of 4 or above

User Developed Trails:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points⁴	A documented protocol has been used to survey user developed trails in all “priority areas” in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Survey data for priority areas complete with documented protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of user developed trail monitoring protocol Date survey was completed (MM/YYYY)
4 points⁵	A management plan to address user developed trails has been developed and is being implemented to address the high priority resource needs identified by each unit consistent with forest plan direction.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> User developed trail management plan Implementation of management actions to address priority issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date management plan was completed (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder Description of management actions (brief)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - District Ranger-approved TMOs exist for each NFST in this wilderness area. TMOs are reviewed for consistency with wilderness management objectives and inconsistencies identified for discussion with the Trail Manager and District Ranger. Potential inconsistencies may include trail class, managed uses, prohibited uses, and trail-specific design parameters compared with intended levels of opportunity for solitude, capability of the trail and adjacent resources to absorb trail use impacts, etc.
- 2 - The four point level requires an assessment of all NFSTs in a wilderness for conformance with the TMOs within the last 10 years. While TRACS surveys provide plenty of data to support this assessment, they are not required for all NFSTs within the wilderness, and the miles of trail required by the WO annually for TRACS surveys is not nearly sufficient for the 10 year assessment. The newly created TACOS methodology which came online in 2024, is also now also an approved method of collecting this trail condition information.
- 3 - Management actions may include: trail reroutes, reconstruction, rehabilitation, temporary closures, restrictions or other changes.
- 4 - A “national minimum protocol” has been developed for “social trail monitoring” and is available through the Supporting Resources below.

Units may decide to use a locally developed protocol, which is allowed only if it meets or exceeds the rigor included in the “national minimum protocol.”



Units may also utilize the newly developed “Unauthorized Wilderness Trails Management Plan Template” available in the Supporting Resources below.

Unauthorized trails can include climbing routes on rock faces, if determined locally to be a management issue of concern.

- 5 - Management actions may include: continued monitoring, trail closure and/or obliteration, or decision to include trail in the NFST official inventory.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [RHR Integrated Business System – Trails](#): Extensive trail reference materials including:

- [Trail Management Objectives](#): Includes TMO overview & instructions and the TMO Form
- [Trail Fundamentals and TMOs](#): See “Trail Fundamentals Reference Package” for guidance on Trail Management Objectives, Trail Class Matrix, Managed Use, Designed Use, Design Parameters and CASM survey accuracies.
- [TRACS: Trail Assessment and Condition Surveys](#)
-  [TACOS Training](#): Trail Assessment and Condition Overview Surveys guidance documents
- [Trails Infra Training- monthly sessions-TRACS TACOS.mp4](#) – TACOS training recording with live demo and Q & A.
-  [Parametric Rating Scale 2-7-24.xlsx](#) – Guide to establishing Overall Condition Ratings and Physical Sustainability Ratings for NFSTs.
- [Trail Data and Reporting Requirements](#)

Oregon State University, [Minimum Protocol for Social Trail Monitoring](#): the “national minimum protocol” for monitoring unauthorized trails.

Oregon State University, [Social Trail Monitoring in the Menagerie Wilderness](#)

“Unauthorized Wilderness Trail Management Plan Template” - create early summer 2024

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. The TMO, TRACS and TACOS are clear, but how do these relate to protecting wilderness character, which is the outcome for this element?

Hopefully the TMOs are, or can be, related to protecting wilderness character via their connection to all wilderness management direction. TMOs dictate frequency of maintenance actions, which in part play into protection of the natural quality, and specify trail class, which helps to preserve more challenging hiking, etc. opportunities. TRACS and TACOS require an inventory of trail structures and help us monitor our trail conditions. Not meeting trail design parameters will most likely lead to negative impacts to resources, such as erosion.

2. Who is responsible for reviewing TMOs and their consistency with wilderness management objectives?

If the wilderness manager finds the TMOs are outdated or inconsistent, they need to make sure TMOs and management objectives correspond with permitted wilderness uses on those trails.

3. Are Trail Management Objectives the same as my Forest Plan direction?

TMOs may or may not be the same as Forest Plan direction. Some Forest Plans have specific desired conditions for system trails both inside and outside wilderness. Others refer to a Wilderness Management Plan in the appendices of the Forest Plan, or in reference to a stand-alone Wilderness Management Plan. Some Forest Plans refer to national design parameters. You need to be familiar with your Forest Plan Direction wilderness management plan direction, national design parameters, and any wilderness-specific legislation.

4. Under the unauthorized trail section, do I need to have all areas, beyond priority areas, surveyed before I can move to 4 points?

The idea is to have your priority areas surveyed, monitored, and management actions taken on a routine basis. All areas that are likely to have unauthorized trails should eventually be at least inventoried, if possible, but that is not required for the 4-point level. The national minimum protocol and Unauthorized Wilderness Trail Management Plan template provides more direction.

5. Is there a recommended protocol for us to use for inventorying unauthorized trails?

Yes, a “national minimum protocol” has been developed in partnership with Oregon State University and the Deschutes and Willamette National Forests and is available in the Supporting Resources listed above. A test application (report) from the Menagerie and Mt. Washington Wildernesses is also provided. An “Unauthorized Wilderness Trail Management Plan” template was also developed by the Wilderness Information Management Steering Team (WIMST) in 2024.

6. “Management actions” are mentioned under the 6-point level for NFSTs for when a trail is not in conformance with the TMOs. Can you provide some examples?

Management actions should be taken when a trail is not in conformance with the TMOs or to address issues identified in the TACO surveys. Such actions can range from relatively simple actions modifying routine maintenance parameters, such as clearing width and height, to more

dramatic measures, such as rerouting the trail. Other actions might include trail clearing, replacement of broken structures, construction of new structures to address new or persistent problems, signage installation or maintenance, etc.

7. I am not familiar with the new TACOS tool and its applications in wilderness, how do I learn more about this and the new Trail Condition Rating and Physical Sustainability Ratings?

The TACOS tool was developed in 2024 utilizing Survey 123 and Field Maps applications to provide a mobile trail data collection tool that can input trail data surveys directly into NRM. It is now considered an approved data collection method for the 1% random sample trail surveys (TRACS) as well as an approved method for increasing scores for WSP in the Trails Element. Links to guidance documents and trainings for getting started with TACOS are provided in the Supporting Resources section as well as a link to a spreadsheet describing the new Overall Condition and Physical Sustainability Ratings.

Element: Non-compliant Infrastructure

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: This wilderness has been inventoried for all infrastructure and those items determined to not be in compliance with the Wilderness Act have been removed.

Outcome: This wilderness is without non-compliant infrastructure.

Type: Undeveloped Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA): A two-step analysis used to determine if an administrative action is necessary in wilderness and, if so, the minimum means of accomplishing the objective. The minimum means are generally those which have the least negative (or the most positive) effect on wilderness character.

Non-compliant infrastructure: Those human-constructed features determined to not be necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of this wilderness for the purpose of the Wilderness Act, or for other applicable laws. Cultural resources determined to be integral to wilderness character will not be considered non-compliant infrastructure.

Significant Infrastructure: Constructed features of enough size or importance to warrant specific entry into the Forest Service corporate database. This includes buildings and bridges but typically excludes minor trail features such as signs and culverts.

Scoring and Deliverables¹:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points	An inventory of all significant infrastructure has been completed, records entered into the applicable corporate database (e.g., bridges, facilities), and linked to the appropriate wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Records for all significant infrastructure have been entered into NRM-Wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date inventory was completed (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
4 points¹	A coarse screen has been developed locally to identify the types of infrastructure deemed to be non-compliant and/or inappropriate for this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed evaluation of significant infrastructure in this wilderness and identification of non-compliant infrastructure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of evaluation (MM/YYYY) and listing of non-compliant infrastructure
6 points	All non-compliant infrastructure has been evaluated using the MRA process to determine the appropriate management action, including removal from this wilderness. A budget and timeline for all proposed management actions have been developed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed MRAs for all non-compliant infrastructure Documentation describing appropriate management actions to all non-compliant infrastructure, with budget and timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and signature date (MM/YYYY) MRA document(s) Date of completed budget and timeline (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
8 points²	Appropriate management actions have been taken on all non-compliant infrastructure in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation describing how all non-compliant infrastructure issues have been appropriately addressed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management actions taken to address non-compliant infrastructure (brief)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2-point checkbox	There are no new additions of non-compliant infrastructure in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Affirmation from forest staff with wilderness responsibilities that there were no new additions of non-compliant infrastructure during this fiscal year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last assessment (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Wildernesses without infrastructure deemed to be non-compliant can claim no higher than 4-points (and forests would likely not select this optional element).
- 2 - The 8-point level does not remain static indefinitely, but instead, can only be claimed for 5-years following the implementation of the management actions addressing the non-compliant infrastructure. After 5-years, the incremental scoring returns to 4-points. A unit might change elements at this point as this element no longer reflects one of the highest stewardship challenges in this wilderness.

Supporting Resources:

Wilderness.net [Minimum Requirements Analysis](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1. Does a “Future Use Determination” of wilderness buildings, or your local planned use of that facility, count as MRA if the same questions are essentially answered?**

If the Future Use Determination documents that the structure(s) is 1) necessary for the administration of the wilderness area for wilderness purposes, and 2) that it is the minimum necessary for achieving that objective, convert it into an official MRA. If the Future Use Determination does not answer these two questions, then it is not sufficient to be an MRA and one needs to be completed..

- 2. If the MRA has already been completed via the Forest Plan and/or the Wilderness Management Plan, will that suffice?**

Yes, if the MRA is current, a budget and timeline for management actions has been developed, on-going monitoring is in place to ensure that non-compliant infrastructure is not being developed, appropriate action has been taken on existing non-compliant infrastructure, and all has been recorded.

- 3. Should I consult the Heritage/Archaeology shop concerning buildings that may be eligible for the historical register to have that for the record?**

Absolutely. In fact, they may have already completed certain documents that you can use for this element saving you time.

- 4. Does a line officer have to sign the MRA? If so, is it the Forest Supervisor?**

Yes, a line officer must make the determination of the minimum requirement. Follow Forest Service Manual direction and any Regional or Forest supplemental direction for delegation of authorities. Make sure delegations, if any, are current and legitimate..

5. What if a building is determined unnecessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of this wilderness, but it's used by other agencies or part of a special use permit?

Review the MRA decision and if it is outdated, complete a new one. If the MRA is current, make sure that the use of that building by other agencies or permittees is really necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of your wilderness. If it is not and you keep the building, you can't claim the 8 points until the special use permit is amended, revoked, or not renewed, and the building removed.

6. What is the difference between this element in relation to the “primitive and unconfined recreation” element?

This element focuses on those human-constructed features that aren't vital for the administration of your wilderness. This may or may not include cultural resources. For example, old cabins no longer determined to be the minimum necessary for administrative uses and that are not deemed to be cultural resources by heritage staff may be considered for removal. The primitive and unconfined element focuses on administratively provided facilities for visitors such as highly developed trails, designated campsites, pit toilets, fire grates, etc., which are intended to reduce the level of challenge and decrease opportunities for self-reliant recreation

7. Under the 4 point section, what does a “coarse screen” mean?

A coarse screen could be the first set of broad criteria you use to determine if infrastructure is appropriate in your wilderness. For example, the cultural value of infrastructure might be a component of a coarse screen. There may be criteria or direction developed locally that identifies the types of infrastructure deemed to be non-compliant and/or inappropriate for your wilderness. A coarse screen can be as detailed as necessary for your needs.

8. Does this element include trail shelters such as those along Appalachian Trail or are those structures accounted for under the Primitive and Unconfined element?

Trail shelters would be included in the Primitive and Unconfined Recreation element. Non-compliant infrastructure within the Undeveloped Quality focus on non-recreational physical developments, such as dams, administrative buildings, roads, utility infrastructure, and grazing infrastructure, just to name a few. The Primitive and Unconfined Recreation element focuses on the presence of facilities that decrease opportunities for self-reliant recreation. Trail shelters, such as those found along the Appalachian Trail, are administratively provided or permitted and for visitor convenience. . If designating legislation calls for the retention of structures, such as trail shelters, they could be addressed under the Other Special Provisions element.

Element: Motorized Equipment/Mechanical Transport Use Authorizations

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: Use of motorized equipment and mechanical transport in this wilderness is prohibited unless deemed as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of the Wilderness Act.

Outcome: Authorized motorized equipment and mechanical transport use has been minimized in this wilderness.

Type: Undeveloped Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA): A two-step analysis used to determine if an administrative action is necessary in wilderness and, if so, the minimum means of accomplishing the objective. The minimum means are generally those which have the least negative (or the most positive) effect on wilderness character

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Appropriate forest staff are trained and knowledgeable in how to conduct a MRA.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented determination of the “appropriate forest staff” for this wilderness and the status of their MRA training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of training offered (brief) Date of last inventory of forest staff’s training/knowledge
4 points²	All authorizations for motorized equipment and mechanical transport use (emergency, administrative, special provision) have been entered into the corporate database.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All motorized equipment and mechanical transport use authorizations are entered into NRM-Wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date data entry into NRM database was completed (MM/YYYY). Enter “N/A” if there were no motorized equipment and mechanical transport use authorizations this year.
6 points	All administrative authorizations to use motorized equipment or mechanical transport are supported by an MRA; <u>AND</u> all emergency authorizations have documented approval from the appropriate line officer or are within the authority recognized in existing MOUs, other agreements or MRAs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed MRA documentation for all administrative authorizations Authorization to use motorized equipment for emergency purposes contained in the delegation letter from appropriate line officer to the Incident Commander and MRA Summary of other relevant MOUs and other agreements that may be applicable 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and signature date (MM/YYYY) of MRA document(s) Date evaluation of emergency authorizations was completed (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox	Up-to-date MOUs, or other formal agreements, are in place with all applicable entities, such as state fish and wildlife agencies, and local search and rescue, covering the appropriate use of motorized equipment and mechanical transport inside wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MOUs or other agreements are in place with all appropriate entities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title, signature date, and expiration date of MOUs (MM/YYYY)
2 point checkbox³	Trends in motorized equipment and mechanical transport use, including emergency authorizations, have been assessed and presented in this fiscal year to the Forest Supervisor and reported to the Regional Wilderness Program Manager.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of trends in motorized equipment and mechanical transport use Meeting notes from annual meeting with the Forest Supervisor, transmitted to the Regional Office. Situations in which a request to use motorized equipment or mechanical transport was denied should also be noted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief summary of trends and date motorized equipment and mechanical transport use was transmitted to Forest Supervisor (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - The determination of which staff should receive MRA training is a local determination but typically those staff who might request authorization to use motorized equipment or mechanical transport in wilderness should be trained. These staff may include, but are not limited to: wilderness managers, fire management staff, range conservationists, fish and wildlife specialists, and law enforcement personnel.
- 2 - Data must be entered by the upward reporting date for the fiscal year in which they occurred. The corporate database for motorized equipment/mechanical transport use authorizations is NRM-Wilderness.

Trends in motorized equipment/mechanical transport use should contain 5-years data, at a minimum. The document [Trends in Motorized Equipment and Mechanical Transport](#) provides information on how to run a query in NRM to pull the data needed to assess the 5-year trend.

Supporting Resources:

Wilderness.net, [Minimum Requirements Analysis](#)

Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands, [Writing a Minimum Requirements Analysis](#) : Arthur Carhart Center online training module.

Frequently Asked Questions:**1. Can we use trend information from prior year reporting that would cover the 5 years such as 2010-2014?**

Yes, you can use prior year information if you have also completed the deliverables associated with the 2, 4 and 6 point scoring levels and you are certain that all motorized use authorizations over the past 5 years have been entered into NRM Wilderness. Additionally, all other conditions required for the 2, 4 and 6 point scores must have been achieved during this time period, an analysis of trends in motorized equipment and mechanical transport was performed over this period, and these trends are presented to the Forest Supervisor and reported to the Regional Wilderness Program Manager.

2. Having MOUs or any other formal agreements in place with all collaborative entities and having them up-to-date, seems like a high bar. What if you need 4 formal agreements, but only have 3 done?

Not all agreements must be in place to score this 2-point checkbox. Except for situations involving search and rescue or other emergencies, consider ceasing operations until an MOU or formal agreement is in place. If the MOU or formal agreement is expired, the MOU content may no longer be valid, and you may be operating under a letter of direction from the line officer in the interim. It depends on the authorities and if it's programmatic work. To be on the safe side, call your grants and agreements specialist for guidance.

3. What if your wilderness is on an international border and there is continual Department of Homeland Security (DHS) administrative use of motors, but they will not give you their use information to enter into NRM because it compromises national security?

Make sure you have up-to-date MOUs, or other formal agreements, in place with DHS or other applicable entities, such as state fish and game and local search and rescue organizations, and that these instruments cover the appropriate use of motorized equipment and mechanical transport inside wilderness. Reporting requirements/protocols, along with an MRA should already be in place and outline all possible emergency scenarios. Seek help from your Forest and Regional Program Managers to work with appropriate line officers and alert you to any over-arching regional or even national agreements to resolve this issue.

4. Do we enter administrative motorized use that wasn't authorized, for example, DHS, Department of Natural Resources, County, etc.?

The database, as currently designed, only accommodates authorizations. Wilderness staff are encouraged to work with their local law enforcement personnel to file incident reports when unauthorized use is recorded, to ensure these records get entered into Law Enforcement and Investigations Management Attainment Reporting System..

5. Will the forms still be based on fiscal year instead of calendar year?

Yes. All annual reporting is still conducted on a fiscal year basis.

6. How will leadership be expected to use the annual trend reports? Is lessening administrative motorized/mechanized use part of their performance evaluation?

Annual trend reports and their use are not specified in the line offer evaluation. However, if there was a concerning trend it would be good to know about it and bring your concern, along with 2320 handbook, to the line officer. Additionally, trends in administrative authorizations will be tracked as part of WCM.

7. At the 4-point level, what if my forest supervisor has authorized use of motorized/mechanized uses through our forest plan but not through an MRA?

We suggest that if the MRA used to authorize motorized/mechanized activities in the Forest Plan is older than 5 years, than the MRA be reviewed, revised as needed, and signed off again by the Forest Supervisor.

8. **At the 4-point level, what does “all authorizations...for special provisions” refer to (e.g., if my wilderness allows aircraft landings as a special provision and we have outfitter/guides authorized to land planes in the wilderness, do I need to record each of these outfitter/guide permits as an authorization in the NRM-Wilderness database)?**

Yes, authorizations for motorized equipment and mechanical use as related to special provisions are to be entered in the NRM Wilderness database annually under the TYPE = SPECIAL PROVISIONS and the appropriate SUBTYPE, such as “COMMERCIAL LIVESTOCK MANAGEMENT”. Often detailed use numbers are not known, but generalized categories of use, such as “MULTIPLE PIECES OF EQUIPMENT / MULTIPLE DAYS” can be recorded.

9. **What does “administrative authorization” refer to? Are these just Forest Service activities, or does this also include other agencies, partners, etc.?**

This includes all administrative use approved by a line officer. For example, you may have DHS, Department of Natural Resources, County, Environmental Protection Agency, state agencies, United States Geological Survey, Research Stations, Universities, etc. authorized to use motorized equipment in wilderness based on a MRA and the appropriate level of NEPA.

Element: Agency Management Actions

Version 2016.1 (06/01/2016)

Description: This element tracks managerial restraint in wilderness stewardship by tracking actions that intentionally manipulate the biophysical environment.

Outcome: Managerial restraint is exercised to protect the untrammeled quality of wilderness character.

Type: Untrammeled Quality – Mandatory Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Manipulate: To artificially control or influence.

Minimum Requirements Analysis (MRA): A two-step analysis used to determine if an administrative action is necessary in wilderness and, if so, the minimum means of accomplishing the objective. The minimum means are generally those which have the least negative (or the most positive) effect on wilderness character.

Trammeling action: A human endeavor that intentionally controls or manipulates the land's self-will; any management action that intentionally manipulates controls, hinders, or restricts any aspect of the ecosystem.

Untrammeled: A fundamental goal of wilderness stewardship that ecosystems are essentially unhindered and free from modern human control or manipulation.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	The Forest Supervisor has sent a letter to all staff, within the past two years, describing the importance of the untrammelled quality of wilderness character and how the Forest will track and evaluate trends in management actions that affect it.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Letter to file 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of most recent letter from Forest Supervisor (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
4 points²	Forest wilderness staff have identified key forest personnel who need to track trammeling actions and have held a meeting or conference call this fiscal year with those contacts emphasizing the importance of this aspect of wilderness character and their role in tracking these actions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Notes from a conference call or meeting that identify key personnel and items discussed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of notes from most recent meeting or conference call (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
6 points³	Wilderness staff have compiled information from resource specialists on trammeling actions and entered this information into the corporate database during this fiscal year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete fiscal year record of all trammeling actions stored in corporate database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date information was last entered into NRM database (MM/YYYY)
8 points⁴	Forest wilderness staff have presented and discussed trends in trammeling actions and their implications with the Forest Leadership Team (FLT), and these annual trends are reported to the regional wilderness program manager for this fiscal year.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Presentation, briefing paper, or some other documentation of what was discussed at the FLT/sent to the regional wilderness program manager 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date report on trammeling actions was transmitted to the regional wilderness program manager (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2-point checkbox⁵	All authorized trammeling actions in this wilderness, of a non-emergency nature, have been evaluated through the MRA process or other appropriate analyses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> MRAs stored by year and location in corporate database 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and signature date (MM/YYYY) of Minimum Requirements Analysis document(s) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder OR ... statement that no trammeling actions occurred this fiscal year

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - The letter should identify the person responsible for maintaining and keeping records, as well as fiscal year due dates for staff reporting.
- 2 - “Key personnel” is a local judgment but may include specialists in the areas of vegetation management, range management, fisheries, fire management, wildlife biology, and heritage. Others may be included depending on issues. Staff should be instructed to also coordinate with outside agencies (other federal, state, local) to record their actions.
- 3 - “Corporate database” can be developed by the forest. At a minimum it should identify the wilderness, locations, type of action, and reason for the action.
- 4 - The FLT discussion should include types of trammeling actions and the reasons given for each, recommendations for changes in the future, and overall trends in trammeling actions over previous years. The report to the Regional Wilderness Manager can be a simple white paper, a link to the corporate database or other format that details the relevant information.
- 5 - MRAs ideally should be prepared by the specialist proposing the action, reviewed by wilderness staff, approved by the appropriate line officer, and filed in the corporate database.

Units without any trammeling actions in a given fiscal year can claim the 2-point checkbox.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Wilderness Character Monitoring Technical Guide](#): Includes detailed information on how to monitor trends for specific actions.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Why doesn't this element track the actual trends in the number of trammeling actions and reward those units able to keep the number flat or decreasing?

This question gets at the fundamental difference between WSP and WCM. Under WCM, the protocol for establishing a baseline and evaluating trends evaluates the number of trammeling actions that occur within a wilderness over time. WSP on the other hand, attempts to evaluate the stewardship actions we take to influence these outcomes.

2. Does this element track only efforts to evaluate agency trammeling actions or all trammeling actions, including those by other agencies and the public?

This element tracks only the stewardship actions related to trammeling actions authorized by the Forest Service, whereas WCM tracks the number of trammeling actions authorized and unauthorized by the Forest Service.

3. How do I score this element if the Forest Supervisor and/or resource specialists are not willing to make progress on this element?

This performance measure attempts to evaluate how well agency staff steward the wilderness resources. It is not just a measurement of what is accomplished by wilderness staff, but also evaluates the involvement of line officers and other resource staff. If the Forest Supervisor and other resource staff are unwilling to make progress on this element, the accomplishment scores you can claim will be limited.

4. The 2-point level requires a letter from the Forest Supervisor. Should this letter be a jointly signed letter for wildernesses managed by multiple national forests?

Yes, ideally the letter should be signed by each forest supervisor with a management responsibility for a particular wilderness. Less ideally, but still adequate, separate letters can be issued by the respective forest supervisors. The key point is that agency staff with responsibility for management of wildernesses are reminded every couple of years of the importance of the untrammelled quality of wilderness character, with specific plans for how the local units plan to track and manage this quality.

5. Isn't there a tension between showing restraint under this element, and trying to address resources concerns through active management in other elements?

In a simple word, YES. This is the foundational conflict in wilderness stewardship; trying to “do the right thing” while also recognizing the basic proposition that wildernesses should be wild and free-willed. One of the primary outcomes from WCM will be the evaluation of how well we are managing this inherent divide.

6. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Understanding the perspective and wisdom Indigenous People have as it relates to the deliverables in this element gives us an opportunity to leverage our nation-to-nation and personal relationships into more effective and long-term management and stewardship of our wilderness stewardship efforts.

Element: Opportunities for Solitude

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: This wilderness has adequate direction, monitoring, and management actions to protect outstanding opportunities for solitude.

Outcome: Outstanding opportunities for solitude have been preserved in this wilderness.

Type: Solitude Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Encounter: When a person or group becomes aware of the presence of another person or group within the wilderness.

Monitoring area: A defined geographical space within which encounter data are collected. It can be a trail corridor, a destination, an off-trail area, or a combination of these. It should make sense from a managerial visitor use perspective.

Solitude monitoring plan: A plan that develops a wilderness-wide strategy for evaluating outstanding opportunities for solitude, including the delineation of monitoring areas.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points	A solitude monitoring plan has been developed for this wilderness along with a solitude monitoring protocol, which, at a minimum, conforms to the national solitude monitoring protocol.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Solitude monitoring plan • Solitude monitoring protocol 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
4 points	A baseline inventory of current conditions for opportunities for solitude has been completed in the selected monitoring areas for this wilderness (per the national minimum protocol) within the past 10 years and data have been entered in an electronic format to support subsequent analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Baseline inventory of opportunities for solitude completed, within the past 10 years • All data entered into appropriate database or spreadsheet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date of survey completion (MM/YYYY) • Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
6 points	If monitoring shows that unacceptable levels of degradation exist, management actions have been taken in targeted areas. If conditions are determined to be stable or improving, no further actions are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Documentation of the management actions taken to improve opportunities for solitude 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Description of management actions (brief) • Enter "N/A" if no further actions are needed
Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
Enhanced Monitoring 2 point checkbox	Solitude monitoring has been conducted in this wilderness and yields statistically valid data for all areas where 80% of use occurs (i.e. monitoring confirms), at a minimum, to the national "enhanced" protocol. If a Forest or Wilderness Management plan contains direction or standards, this monitoring yields sufficient data to determine if conditions are outside of that direction/standards.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data have been entered into appropriate database or spreadsheet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date more extensive monitoring was completed in the wilderness (MM/YYYY) • If appropriate, date comparison of data against Plan Direction was completed (MM/YYYY).
Plan Direction	Direction for protecting opportunities for solitude has been incorporated into the Forest Plan, Wilderness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Direction for protecting opportunities for solitude incorporated in the Forest Plan, 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Title and year (MM/YYYY) of Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox¹	Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document.	Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document. If enhanced monitoring has been done, monitoring data are compared against Plan Direction.	document. (with page references to Plan Direction). Include page reference.

Explanatory Notes:

1. To achieve this 2-point checkbox, direction in either the Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document must be specific enough to lead you to take action when a threshold is surpassed. An example of a specific standard is: “the number of groups encountered per day during peak recreation use seasons should not exceed 12.”

Supporting Resources:

WSP SharePoint, [National Minimum Protocol for Monitoring Solitude](#)

WSP SharePoint, [Classification of Forest Service Wildernesses for Monitoring Solitude](#)

WSP SharePoint, ["Enhanced" Protocol for Monitoring Opportunities for Solitude in Wilderness](#)

Wilderness.net, [Visitor Use Management](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What are some examples of forest plan direction for solitude?

The following items exemplify some of the direction commonly found in forest plans or wilderness management plans. These are just examples of indicators of social conditions, and some require closure orders to enforce; your individual wilderness may dictate the use of a selection of these examples or of different indicators entirely. Standards are often set for:

- Number of encounters with other visitors
- Number of visible or audible campsites

These indicators are often used to support Forest Plan standards such as

- Wilderness recreation opportunity classes
- Quotas/permit requirements
- Group size
- Length of stay limits

2. What methodologies are there to monitor and evaluate opportunities for solitude?

See **Supporting Resources**, above for the National Minimum Protocol for Monitoring Solitude and the Enhanced Protocol. These protocols are based on the assumption that encounters are the best available indicator of opportunities for solitude. Additional methods may include using required permits, self-registration, or trail traffic counters to monitor how many people are using the wilderness at specific entry points. You can also estimate visitor experience of solitude by conducting entry and exit interviews at certain trailheads to determine amount and type of use. Whichever method is used, it should be consistently repeated every five to ten years to enable tracking trends.

3. How often do I need to monitor for solitude and do I need to monitor the entire wilderness each time?

The national minimum protocol recommends monitoring at least every five years, but not to wait longer than ten years. The extent of the area monitored will be based on the monitoring areas established in your solitude monitoring plan, as well as the monitoring frequency of those areas. The minimum protocol does not recommend collecting data from low use areas (defined as receiving about less than 10% of the use to a wilderness). It is assumed that encounter rates in these areas will be extremely low. It is not efficient to monitor encounters in such areas, and therefore the protocol does not require it. However, managers may choose to monitor in low use areas if they have reasons to do so.

- 4. The forest plan direction for my wilderness is now 10 years old but when we last did monitoring five years ago, conditions were stable and there was no need for further actions. Can I score 10 points each year (assuming all other point-level requirements are met) until subsequent monitoring indicates a need for change in direction or management action?**

Yes, if in your best professional judgment, conditions really are stable or improving. The frequency of monitoring and need for change in management actions will vary depending on the use and location of each wilderness.

- 5. At the 4-point level, what does “appropriate database or spreadsheet” mean?**

NRM-Wilderness does not support baseline inventory information for solitude. Examples of software which support analysis include other database management systems, such as MS-Access, as well as spreadsheets, such as MS-Excel, or GIS for mapping and data storage.

- 6. To claim the Enhanced Monitoring 2-point checkbox, “more extensive solitude monitoring” needs to be conducted. Please explain this further.**

The national minimum protocol does not generate data that can be used to draw statistically valid inferences about encounters, because it relies on a convenience (non-random) sample of observations. In situations where managers suspect that opportunities for solitude are at risk, they may wish to develop additional monitoring indicators and conduct more intensive or repeatable sampling. One way to do this is to substitute a random sample of dates for a convenience sample. An “enhanced” version of the national minimum protocol has been developed that does provide statistically valid estimates of solitude and is found in the Supporting Resources above.

- 7. At the 6-point level, what does “targeted areas” mean? If there are 10 “targeted areas” and management action is taken at only one such area, is this sufficient to achieve 6 points?**

“Targeted areas” refer to those areas where monitoring shows that unacceptable levels of degradation exist. This is determined by comparing the monitoring data with the Direction in the Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or other locally developed advisory document. The scoring for this element requires that management actions are taken at all targeted areas where conditions are unacceptable.

Element: Primitive and Unconfined Recreation

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: Managers for this wilderness know the location of administratively provided facilities that degrade opportunities for primitive recreation and the existence of management restrictions that affect unconfined recreation and have ensured these are required to protect other wilderness values.

Outcome: Opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation have been protected in this wilderness.

Type: Solitude Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Administratively provided facilities: Facilities or items that increase visitor convenience (e.g., metal fire rings, hitching poles and bear boxes). These facilities also include more highly developed National Forest System Trails (Trail Classes 3-5), as currently defined in the draft WCM protocol.

Primitive recreation: Type of recreation that requires primitive travel and visiting an environment with minimal or no facilities.

Unconfined recreation: Type of recreation in which visitors experience a high degree of freedom over their own actions and decisions.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points	Existing conditions have been assessed by conducting an inventory of those administratively provided facilities that diminish opportunities for primitive recreation, as well as regulations that limit unconfined recreation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed inventory of facilities that diminish opportunities for primitive recreation Completed assessment of regulations that diminish opportunities for unconfined recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date inventory of facilities was completed (MM/YYYY) Date assessment of regulations was completed (MM/YYYY)
4 points¹	Direction for protecting opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation has been established and documented in the Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relevant excerpts from Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document with direction for protecting opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date (MM/YYYY) of Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document (with page references to primitive and unconfined recreation direction)
6 points²	Existing conditions have been compared against Direction (as defined in the 4 point level). If conditions are not in line with the Direction, specific work items have been identified, priorities assessed and scheduled; OR If conditions are consistent with Direction, no further actions are needed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documented evaluation of existing conditions compared against Direction Documented identification, prioritization, and scheduling of management actions to align existing conditions with Direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date when existing conditions were compared against Direction (MM/YYYY) Date when work item schedule was developed or last refreshed (MM/YYYY) Enter "N/A" if conditions are consistent with Direction
8 points	Management actions have been implemented to protect opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation, consistent with the Direction for this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation describing management actions implemented to align existing conditions with Direction 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of management actions (brief) and dates completed (MM/YYYY)
10 points	The management actions have been monitored and evaluated for effectiveness, and additional management actions have been identified, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation that describes the monitoring of management action 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date when management actions were last evaluated (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
		monitoring and the effectiveness evaluation	

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - To achieve the 4-point score, direction in either the Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or locally developed advisory document must be specific enough to lead you to take action when a threshold is surpassed. For example, Direction might state that “directional signs without distances will be placed only at major intersections. All other signs will be removed.”
- 2 - Wildernesses in which current conditions for primitive and unconfined recreation are consistent with the area’s management objectives, and therefore do not require any direct management actions, cannot score more than 6-points. In this scenario, the unit would likely not select this optional element.

Supporting Resources:

Wilderness.net, [Visitor Use Management](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. How do you know if a facility diminishes opportunities for primitive recreation? Is it assumed that all facilities diminish?

It is not assumed that all facilities diminish opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation. A thoughtful assessment is required to make this determination. When inventorying facilities, identify those that offer convenience and comfort as opposed to those that promote self-reliance and self-discovery. Don’t get hung up on the intended purpose of the facility; the important consideration is how the facility is actually used and its effect on the visitor experience. For example, facilities that are put in place for resource protection (e.g., trail structure to protect from streambank erosion) may also provide convenience to the wilderness visitor by allowing for an easier path through the wilderness. This diminishes those opportunities for self-reliance and self-discovery. Other examples include metal fire rings, hitching poles, bear boxes, toilets, shelters, large bridges, developed water sources, and signs, since they aid visitor convenience. It is strongly recommended that you consult with the list provided in the Wilderness Character Monitoring framework.

2. Why does the “administratively provided facilities” definition only include more highly developed trails (class 3-5) rather than all trails?

Trail classes indicate the prescribed state of development for a trail, which dictates its intended design and management parameters. This level of development is arranged along a continuum: minimally developed (Class 1), moderately developed (Class 2), developed (Class 3), highly developed (Class 4), and fully developed (Class 5). Class 3-5 trails are considered to offer more convenience due to the increased standard of development in the trail design.

3. Does “administratively provided facilities” include facilities under special use permit?

Yes. Facilities under special use permit should be included in the inventory if they serve a recreation purpose (e.g., outfitter/guide camp). Facilities that do not have a primary recreation purpose should not be included.

4. How do you know if a regulation diminishes opportunities for unconfined recreation? Is it assumed that all facilities diminish?

Not all regulations impinge on visitor freedom, and there is a range of impact. For example, “pack it out” requirements probably don’t affect the feeling of unconfined recreation, while requiring visitors to camp at a designated campsite could significant impact such feelings. A thoughtful assessment is needed, and decisions about what to include and exclude should be well documented. It is strongly recommended that you consult the WCM framework for a list of regulations that affect opportunities for unconfined recreation. Examples include: campfire and camping restrictions, fees, permits, human waste, length of stay, stock use, swimming/bathing, area closures, group size limits, and dog restrictions.

5. What are some examples of management restrictions or regulations that affect unconfined recreation?

Some examples include group size limits, prohibitions of campfires, permit/quota systems, designated campsites, campsite setbacks, and restrictions on stock use. See the WCM framework for a complete list.

6. What are some examples of management objectives for primitive and unconfined recreation?

The following items exemplify some of the direction commonly found in forest plans or wilderness management plans. These are just examples; your individual wilderness may dictate the use of a selection of these examples or of different objectives entirely.

- Maintain trails and primitive facilities that are in harmony with the natural environment and that promote primitive recreation opportunities.
- Feature facilities designed primarily to provide resource protection.
- Emphasize challenge and risk instead of convenience.
- On-site regimentation and controls are very rare.
- Signing is limited to directional information and safety.
- There are no on-site interpretive facilities.
- A minimal number of signs should be provided for resource protection and directions at trail junctions.

7. Do all management actions have to be met to achieve the 8-point level, or just the highest priority actions?

The 6-point level requires identification of management actions, prioritization, and scheduling. To achieve the 8-point level, all management actions would need to be completed in accordance with the established schedule.

8. Can you score the 8-point level if you have infrastructure, but it is determined through MRA that “benign neglect” and not removal are the best course of action?

Yes. If the MRA determines the best course of action is leave it in place and degrade over time, then this action would be considered implemented.

9. How do you know if the management actions are effective? What methodologies are there to monitor and evaluate if opportunities for primitive and unconfined recreation are being provided?

The goal of this element is to align existing conditions with desired conditions. The 6-point level requires identification of management actions to achieve this. Once actions are implemented, compare the resulting condition with the desired conditions to determine if they align. If not, identify additional actions to achieve the desired conditions or other plan direction.

10. How often do I need to update or revisit the inventory of administratively provided facilities and management restrictions?

As new facilities or restrictions are proposed, these should be assessed against the effects to primitive and unconfined recreation. If the facilities or restrictions are put in place, the inventory should be updated to reflect this change. There is no required timeframe to update the inventory; updates should be done as needed when new facilities or restrictions are put in place.

11. Why can I only achieve the 6-point level if I don't need to do management actions? It seems like this scoring system "penalizes" a wilderness that has appropriate facilities or regulations that do not impair this wilderness quality.

If a unit determines the wilderness has appropriate facilities or regulations that do not impair this wilderness quality, then this element cannot score more than 6-points. The unit would likely not select this optional element.

Element: Cultural Resources

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: Cultural resources in wilderness have been inventoried and management direction documented in a cultural resources plan. Those resources determined to be integral to wilderness character by Wilderness and Heritage Staff have been protected from degradation.

Outcome: Cultural resources integral to wilderness character have been protected from degradation.

Type: Other Features Quality – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Cultural Resource: Prehistoric, historic, archaeological or architectural structures, places or objects and traditional cultural properties (FSM 2360.5).

Cultural resources integral to wilderness character: Priority heritage assets and other cultural resources that enhance the area's meaning, significance, and distinctiveness as wilderness.

Priority Heritage Asset: Those heritage assets of distinct public value that are or should be actively maintained and meet one or more of the following criteria:

1. The significance and management priority of the property is recognized through an official designation such as listing on the National Register of Historic Places or on a State register.
2. The significance and management priority of the property is recognized through prior investment in preservation, interpretation, and use.
3. The significance and management priority of the property is recognized in an agency-approved management plan.
4. The property exhibits critical deferred maintenance needs and those needs have been documented. Critical deferred maintenance is defined as a potential health or safety risk or imminent threat of loss of significant resource values.

Cultural Resources Plan: A planning document that addresses cultural resources integral to wilderness character in the wilderness area. The document includes inventory strategy, monitoring and schedule, and management actions appropriate to wilderness administration. It can be the stand-alone equivalent to a Historic Property Plan (FSH 2309.12.05), or component of another plan, such as a Wilderness Management Plan, or Heritage Program Plan (FSM 2362.3).

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	A Cultural Resources Plan has been developed to provide general direction addressing cultural resources integral to wilderness character in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A stand-alone plan or section in another plan (e.g., wilderness management plan) that addresses management of cultural resources within wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date of cultural resources plan (MM/YYYY)
4 points	A survey for cultural resources in this wilderness has been completed.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of survey completed in wilderness (e.g., forms, reports) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date survey for cultural resources was completed (MM/YYYY)
6 points²	An evaluation has been completed to determine which cultural resources are integral to wilderness character and the Cultural Resources Plan has been updated accordingly.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation included or updated in Cultural Resources Plan, describing integral resources and the determination criteria 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date evaluation of cultural resources integral to wilderness character was completed (MM/YYYY)
8 points³	Monitoring of all known cultural resources integral to wilderness character in this wilderness has been completed within the past five years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Condition assessments completed, which also contribute to managing the Heritage Program to standard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date monitoring of cultural resources integral to wilderness character was completed (MM/YYYY)
10 points⁴	If monitoring reveals that cultural resources integral to wilderness character are being degraded, appropriate management actions have been taken, consistent with the Cultural Resource Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative describing trends and actions taken to address each degraded resource, if necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of monitoring actions taken (brief)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Cultural resources plan should address the following: cultural resources present, how many are eligible for the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) , how many need evaluations for the NRHP Register; information gaps; an assessment of Priority Heritage Assets present; possible management actions appropriate within wilderness that could occur.

- 2 - Determination of resources integral to wilderness character could include, but are not limited to, cultural resources mentioned in legislative history, of significant historical and present importance to tribes, and those that contribute to visitor experience and awareness of wilderness values. If a unit conducts an evaluation of surveyed cultural resources and determines a wilderness does not contain any cultural resources integral to wilderness character, this element cannot score more than 4-points. Managers would likely not select this optional element.
- 3 - Monitoring at the 8-point level follows the condition assessment format of the Forest Service Heritage Program. Condition assessments are required on priority heritage assets every five years and provide a means to determine condition trends and costs of repair for deferred maintenance. Format for condition assessments is described in the NRM Heritage module.
- 4 - Consider effects of vandalism, grazing, increased visitor use, fire and benign neglect when evaluating for degradation. Management actions could include closures, restrictions, increased protection or rehabilitation.

Supporting Resources

Wilderness.net, [Cultural Resources Toolbox](#): Contains information on laws and policy regarding cultural resources in wilderness.

USDA Forest Service, [National Heritage Information Management Initiative](#): Established to develop and implement an information management environment to provide heritage specialist and others with heritage information for analysis, reporting and decision-making.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. Who has the final say as to which cultural resources are integral to wilderness character? Is that a line officer determination? What if management is shared by multiple units?

Determining which cultural resources are integral to wilderness character should be an interdisciplinary process that includes, at a minimum, wilderness and heritage staff from all units that share management of the wilderness. Once a Cultural Resources Plan is complete, it should be signed by the appropriate line officer(s).

2. Should the Cultural Resources Plan address Indian Sacred Sites and Traditional Cultural Properties?

Traditional Cultural Properties that are also identified by Indian Tribes as Sacred Sites under Executive Order 13007 and that are determined to be integral to wilderness character should be addressed in the Cultural Resources Plan. Wilderness, Heritage, and Tribal Relations staff should work together to resolve any site-specific questions about the appropriate scope of the Cultural Resources Plan. See also FSM 2363.17

(Identifying Traditional Cultural Properties and Sacred Sites) and FSM 2362.24 (Evaluating Traditional Cultural Properties and Sacred Sites) for more information.

3. How much of the wilderness must be surveyed to score 4 points?

The necessary scope of the survey may vary for each wilderness. But to score 4 points, the completed cultural resource survey must be consistent with the inventory strategy described in the wilderness's Cultural Resources Plan. Wilderness and Heritage specialists should work together to develop a survey strategy or generate a site probability model for the wilderness area. Site probability models typically include variables such as slope, water, and vegetation. Forests should also consider including areas where human impact is likely (e.g., trails, camp locations, etc.), as often the location of current human use coincides with past use of the landscape. Local knowledge from wilderness staff or other wilderness users (e.g., hiking groups, outfitters and guides, etc.) who have experience in the backcountry should be included. For example, wilderness rangers may have encountered cultural resources that heritage staff have not formally recorded; this information is useful for identifying priority survey areas.

4. Are there tools/guides to assist in the evaluation of whether specific cultural resources are integral to wilderness character?

To begin, reference the founding legislation for the wilderness and any supporting documents that may have preceded designation. In addition, utilize Heritage program metrics and designations that convey the importance of the cultural resources to that wilderness area. Wilderness and Heritage staffs should work closely to identify cultural resources integral to wilderness character.

5. Priority Heritage assets seem to have a robust requirement for meeting a set of predetermined criteria. Other Cultural Resources, however, do not seem to have a similar criteria. If a cultural resource is not a Priority Heritage Asset, how do we determine its significance?

This will be a local determination based on case for significance brought forward by the Wilderness and Heritage staff.

6. Do we consider the effects of nature (freezing/thawing, rain, wind, etc.) as part of “degradation” or only those actions taken by people, such as vandalism?

Once historic properties have been identified and evaluated, protection measures eliminate, reduce, or mitigate harm to the those properties that result from natural processes, illegal activities, overuse, and effects of Forest Service or Forest Service-authorized activities.” (FSM 2360.63 Heritage Program Management). A Cultural Resource Plan could also provide for management objectives that determine which cultural resources would not be actively protected from natural processes degradation due to their location in the wilderness. However, before doing so, a National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 consultation would need to occur with the applicable State Historic Preservation Officer, Tribes, and other interested parties to describe and document this approach, its effects, and mitigation measures that may be needed for adverse effects.

- 7. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?**

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Understanding the perspective and wisdom Indigenous People have as it relates to the deliverables in this element gives us an opportunity to leverage our nation-to-nation and personal relationships into more effective and long-term management and stewardship of our wilderness stewardship efforts.

Element: Livestock Grazing

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: Management of commercial livestock grazing authorized in this wilderness has been reviewed for consistency with wilderness stewardship values.

Outcome: Commercial livestock grazing in this wilderness is consistent with Congressional Grazing Guidelines and the preservation of wilderness character.

Type: Special Provisions – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Allotment: A designated area of land available for livestock grazing.

Allotment Management Plan (AMP): AMPs contain pertinent livestock management direction from project-level, allotment-specific NEPA decisions. AMPs also refine direction in the project-level NEPA decisions deemed necessary by the deciding official. Management direction in the AMPs must be within the scope of the NEPA decision. They are developed in consultation with the affected grazing permit holder(s).

Commercial livestock grazing: Grazing that occurs in wilderness under the auspices of an active grazing permit.

Congressional Grazing Guidelines: House Report 96-617, appended to the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 and incorporated by reference in the Arizona Wilderness Act of 1990. Among other things, the Congressional Grazing Guidelines provide that activities or facilities established prior to the date of an area's designation as wilderness should be allowed to remain in place and may be replaced when necessary for the permittee to properly administer the grazing program.

Grazing Permit: Any document authorizing livestock to use National Forest System or other lands under Forest Service control for the purpose of livestock production.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	The “Wilderness Grazing Checklist” has been utilized to review all grazing permits in this wilderness, identify any wilderness-specific concerns and prioritize individual allotments for monitoring and management.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the completed Wilderness Grazing Checklist for each permit 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date Wilderness Grazing Checklist was last reviewed for all grazing permits in this wilderness (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	General, routine monitoring (range and riparian condition, etc.) and monitoring of wilderness-specific concerns occurs on grazing allotments identified as priorities in this wilderness. Corrective management actions (including permit modification) have been taken on these priority allotments, as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation (signed letters/memos/inspection forms) of corrective management actions and results of inspections on priority allotments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of monitoring (brief) Description (brief) and dates (MM/YYYY) of corrective management actions taken (if applicable)
6 points³	General, routine monitoring (range and riparian condition, etc.) and monitoring of wilderness-specific concerns occurs on all active allotments inside this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Applicable documentation (signed letters/memos/inspection forms) for all allotments 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describe types of general, routine monitoring taken (brief)
8 points⁴	Corrective management actions (including permit modification) have been taken, as needed, on all active allotments inside this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Documentation of corrective management actions and results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description (brief) and dates (MM/YYYY) of corrective management actions taken (if applicable)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox⁵	All allotments in this wilderness have AMPs that incorporate the appropriate items from the “Wilderness Grazing Checklist.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A copy of the completed Wilderness Grazing Checklist for each AMP and/or copies of AMPs referencing appropriate items from the checklist 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date AMPs were last evaluated for consistency with Wilderness Grazing Checklist (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Examples of wilderness specific concerns include type and frequency of permittee access and maintenance; conflicts between visitors and livestock in popular camping areas; grazing or other impacts from livestock consistently found outside of allotments; trailing and concentration of livestock near riparian corridors, and identification of potential impacts to natural quality indicators for wilderness character.
- 2 - “Corrective management actions” a variety of administrative actions that are developed in compliance with the Congressional Grazing Guidelines. Examples include, are not limited to: direction to permittees to change/modify infrastructure or actions; notices of non-compliance, suspension, and/or cancellation of part or all of a permit in response to a permit holder’s failure to comply with the terms and conditions of the grazing permit and; adjustments to other uses occurring in the allotment, such as recreation. “Priority” allotments would be determined by local units and would include those that show a high potential for long-lasting and extensive impact to wilderness character.
- 3 - Monitoring of wilderness-specific concerns may involve collaborative efforts by wilderness managers and range specialists, depending on the specificity and breadth of concerns.
- 4 - If no corrective management actions are necessary on any allotments in this wilderness, the 8-point level cannot be satisfied (and a maximum of 8 total points is available to be scored for this element).
- 5 - AMPs contain the pertinent livestock management direction from a project-level NEPA decision that authorizes grazing on one or more allotments. AMPs should be reviewed whenever a new permit is issued to determine if situations exist that would require an updated NEPA analysis.

Supporting Resources:

WSP SharePoint, [Wilderness Grazing Checklist](#)

USDA Forest Service, FSM 2322.22, Exhibit 01, [Congressional Grazing Guidelines](#) Contains the entire text of the Congressional Grazing Guidelines

USDA Forest Service, [Rangeland Management Policy](#) (FSH 2209.13, chapter 90)

US Government Publishing Office, [36 CFR Part 222](#) - Range Management

US Government Publishing Office, [36 CFR Part 293.7](#) – Grazing of Livestock in Wilderness

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What criteria could be used to identify an allotment as a priority for the 2 and 4 point levels?

Criteria to identify priority allotments may include:

1. Motorized use is authorized within wilderness.
2. Range improvements are authorized (structural or non-structural) within wilderness.
3. Monitoring specified in the AMP or Annual Operating Instructions (in absence of AMP) is not routinely accomplished.

2. How often should wilderness specific monitoring take place?

The monitoring schedule should be based on a schedule that is adequate to protect wilderness values and is outlined in the Annual plan of operations. This should be based on periodic coordination between the wilderness and range staffs, as well as other interdisciplinary team members as necessary.

3. What if the routine monitoring (non-wilderness-specific) plots are not located in the Wilderness and are routinely monitored? Can we claim monitoring credit?

Grazing plots need to be monitored both inside and outside wilderness.

4. At the 4- and 6-point levels are there guidelines for what type of monitoring is acceptable?

The AMP should include a monitoring plan and incorporate the wilderness grazing checklist.

5. Why is there duplication between the grazing permit checklist and the AMP checklist?

Permits may need to include more information if an AMP has not yet been developed.

6. How often are permits and AMPs reviewed/revised?

Permits should be reviewed every time a permit expires or is waived; ideally this would occur annually. Review or revision of an AMP is triggered by (1) issuance of a new permit within the allotment and (2) changes in environmental conditions.

7. Why can I only achieve the 6-point level if I don't need to do management actions? It seems like this scoring system "penalizes" a wilderness that has appropriate facilities or regulations that do not impair this wilderness quality.

If a unit determines the wilderness has appropriate facilities or regulations that do not impair this wilderness quality, then this element cannot score more than 6-points. The unit would likely not select this optional element.

Element: Outfitters and Guides

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: The types and amounts of outfitting and guiding in this wilderness are appropriate, and outfitters and guides model appropriate wilderness practices and incorporate awareness of wilderness values in interactions with clients.

Outcome: Outfitter and guide programs are managed to realize and communicate the various benefits of wilderness, recreational and otherwise.

Type: Special Provisions – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Appropriate wilderness practices: Practical conservation techniques, such as Leave No Trace, designed to minimize impacts of visitors on the wilderness resource.

Awareness for wilderness values: Building an understanding of the need for the preservation of unimpaired conditions, and an awareness of ecological, geological or other features of scientific, educational, scenic or historical value.

Capacity Analysis: A process used to assess the amount of use and types of activities that may be conducted without detrimental environmental and associated impacts.

Commercial Services Needs Assessment: A process used to determine the public or agency need for authorized outfitting and guiding activities and its extent necessary in wilderness.

Compliance Review: Review conducted by an Authorized Officer to determine whether enforcement action based on noncompliance with the terms and conditions of a special use authorization is appropriate (FSM 2716.05).

Extent Necessary Determination: A process used to determine (1) whether outfitting and guiding activities are necessary in the wilderness; (2) the amount of these activities that are necessary; and (3) that the amount of outfitting and guiding that is determined to be necessary would not impair wilderness character. Only authorize the amount that is determined to be needed as long as it does not impair wilderness character.

Inspection: On-site monitoring of an authorized activity or facility to assess conditions and inform a compliance review (FSM 2716.05).

Monitoring: The actions needed to ensure compliance with the terms and conditions in a special use authorization (36 CFR 251.51).

“Inspections and monitoring is current”: Inspections occur at least once every 5 years for priority use permits. In addition, conduct performance evaluations for holders of priority use permits annually for permits in probationary or unacceptable status (FSH2709.14, 53.1s). For temporary use permits, monitoring occurs at least once within the duration of the permit.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Appropriate Wilderness Practices

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Operating plans for priority use and temporary use outfitting and guiding permits for this wilderness direct outfitters to model appropriate wilderness practices and incorporate awareness for wilderness values in their interaction with clients and others.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Operating plans for all permitted outfitters have wilderness specific conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date outfitter and guiding permits were evaluated (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	Monitoring is current on all outfitter and guide permit holders to evaluate if they are implementing appropriate wilderness practices and awareness of wilderness values in their operating plans. Any non-compliance issues for priority use permit holders have been noted in the performance rating and discussed with the outfitter. Unsatisfactory temporary permit holders are not authorized to operate in this wilderness for five years.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Inspection forms (form FS-2700-1, as well as local inspection forms) on file and dates recorded in NRM-Special Uses (SUDS). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date monitoring was completed on all outfitter and guide permit holders and recorded in NRM-Special Uses (SUDS) (MM/YYYY)
6 points³	All outfitter and guide permit holders are implementing appropriate wilderness practices and awareness of wilderness values contained in their operating plans.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring and Inspection forms (form FS-2700-1) showing documentation of acceptable operation in wilderness practices and awareness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of last completion of Monitoring and Inspections forms (form FS-2700-1)

Commercial Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points⁴	An Extent Necessary Determination, Commercial Services Needs Assessment and Capacity Analyses have been completed for outfitter and guide operations in this wilderness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed Extent Necessary Determination, Commercial Services Needs Assessment and Capacity Analyses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date (MM/YYYY) of Extent Necessary Determination, Commercial Services Needs Assessment and Capacity Analyses
4 point⁵	A NEPA decision has been made on the allocation of commercial use, including the appropriate type, amount, location and timing of commercial services in this wilderness, as supported by the Extent Necessary Determination, Commercial Needs Assessment and Capacity Analysis.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Signed Decision Notice of environmental assessment or other environmental analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title of NEPA analysis document and date of signed Decision Notice(MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Relevant content may be identified, discussed, and jointly agreed to during annual meetings, or as operating plans are revised. Specific required practices may be tailored to individual outfitters and guides in order to make them achievable.
- 2 - Examples of ways to monitor include field visits, feedback from clients, and inspection of assigned sites. Documenting and correcting unsatisfactory operation in this realm follows the same process as is used for other operation issues (form FS-2700-1, letters, meetings, probation, etc.).
- 3 - This should be determined during monitoring and inspections (see form FS-2700-1) based on the holder's operating plan and permit requirements or on a performance evaluation, when it applies.
- 4 - Capacity analysis should show outfitter-guide allocation as a percentage of visitor capacity, with reasoning on how it was determined.
- 5 - Decisions shall be made based on the appropriate level of NEPA analysis. It may be most effective to complete a programmatic EA. Generally, it is not advisable to have specific numbers of outfitters and type in the Forest Plan, as situations and objectives can change in short periods of time.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service, [Special Uses Webpage](#)

USDA Forest Service, [Outfitting and Guide Links](#)

Wilderness.net, [Commercial Services Toolbox](#) : Contains case law and examples of extent necessary, capacity and needs assessments.

Frequently Asked Questions:

- 1. Some temporary permits authorize very short duration use (e.g. one week-long trip, or even just one day). Is monitoring to evaluate if they are implementing appropriate wilderness practices and awareness of wilderness values really required for all temporary permits to be able to claim 4 points?**

Yes, although this may not necessarily require inspections. FSM 2716.51 directs us to prioritize monitoring based on likelihood of adverse impacts. Temporary, short-duration permits with a low likelihood of adverse impacts may not rank high for inspections, but monitoring for timely land use fee payment, compliance with operating plans (required for all temporary permits), holder understanding of the terms and conditions of the authorization, and compliance with non-discrimination requirements may be pertinent. Monitoring related to these permits can include ensuring that the permit holder has the skills needed and understands that the operating plan directs them to model appropriate wilderness practices and incorporate awareness for wilderness values in their interaction with clients and others. Unsatisfactory temporary permit holders (as determined by the applicable line officer) are not authorized to operate in this wilderness for five years. Review FSM 2716.5 for the Purpose of Monitoring and Compliance Reviews and 2716.51 for Prioritization of Monitoring. NOTE: Some level of monitoring may be required for all permits (FSH 2709.14, 53.1r(5)), but some temporary permits may only constitute one trip. FSM directs us to prioritize monitoring based on likelihood of adverse impacts and the type of authorized use. As mentioned above, refer to a local level determination of whether the permit ranks high enough for inspection.

- 2. What are some examples of how an outfitter and guide may model/incorporate awareness of wilderness values into their activities?**

Wilderness outfitter/guides are expected to provide some understanding to clients of how the Wilderness Act of 1964 and (if applicable) your wilderness designating legislation affects management of your wilderness area. Examples of how special provisions may result in different management than other wilderness areas should be a part of the message. Some examples include: Interpret natural processes, historic and cultural facts, and wilderness ethics for clients; encourage clients to seek more information by having reading materials either in the field, accessible in the place of business, or available by reference; allow natural conditions and processes to shape clients' experience, rather than providing only for the ease and convenience of the clients; follow and promote leave-no-trace principles and practices; provide a wilderness

experience by adhering to the group sizes agreed to in the operating plan and by remaining a respectful distance away from other users whenever possible.

Guides should describe in their operating plans how they will inform clients about wilderness values, leave-no-trace skills, and backcountry etiquette.

3. My unit has an Outfitter/Guide needs assessment and NEPA decision to allocate commercial service days that is many years old. Can we still claim credit for these documents/decisions?

In general, NEPA documents remain valid as long as the assumptions/facts upon which the decisions were made remain valid. However, the FSH directs deciding officials to “be alert for new information and changed circumstances that might affect decisions for actions that are awaiting implementation and for ongoing programs or projects to determine if the environmental analysis and documentation needs to be corrected, supplemented, or revised...” (FSH 1909.15_10 section 18). Documentation of this review is sometimes referred to as a supplemental information report (SIR) that includes resource specialist’s input and is signed by the responsible official. A SIR essentially documents “whether or not a correction, supplement, or revision is needed, and if not, the reasons why.” (FSH 1909.15_10 section 18.1). Note that a SIR is not a NEPA document. Whether the units NEPA decision is still valid, despite its age, will be a local determination.

Some considerations for making this determination may include:

- Needs assessment: Have you received outfitter/guide permit requests for new activities that are not currently included in your needs assessment?
- Capacity analysis: Is there an increase in visitor capacity due to changes in the resource or setting capability? For example, a new trail was constructed where one previously did not exist providing access to new parts of the wilderness area.
- NEPA decision: If changed circumstances result in additional need for outfitter/guide services, and/or more visitor capacity is available, a new NEPA decision may be warranted to determine if additional outfitter/guide use may be allocated.

4. Is form FS-2700-1 required for documenting inspections in order to count for points in this element? Or would other regional/forest/district inspection forms be considered valid documentation?

Maybe. Use of the FS-2700-1 is not required to claim points for this element, unless the determination is made locally to require documentation be submitted on this form. Work with wilderness and special uses staffs to coordinate form requirements.

5. The 4-point level contains three distinct parts so how do I score this if I’m doing one or two of these but not all three?

You must complete all three parts to claim 4 points.

6. I work hard to steer commercial O&G activities away from Wilderness when it is determined that the activity can be accomplished outside of Wilderness or is inappropriate in Wilderness. Can points be obtained under this element for this work?

No. While considering wilderness dependency is an important component of responsible management, the tasks selected for this element only pertain to outfitter and guide operations inside wilderness areas. Your hard work could be recognized by other means though, and ensures that you are adhering to your needs assessment determination, so keep up the good work.

7. I did not select this element because I have no O&G in Wilderness. What if later there are several O&G operating in the Wilderness? Can I select this element later?

Yes, but in starting in FY 2017, changes to element selections, for example when a new issue emerges, will become more involved and will require coordination with your Regional Wilderness Program Manager. See Element Selection Process FAQs, #6.

8. I manage a small Wilderness and there is no commercial needs assessment, I guess I cannot fully reach 10 points?

That's correct. Even small wildernesses should have needs assessments in order to determine public and agency need for outfitting and guiding (FSH 2709.14 53.1f). It may be possible to combine several relatively contiguous, similar wildernesses in one needs assessment. A needs assessment does not have to be a lengthy document and should instead be done at a scale that is appropriate for your wilderness issues, objectives, level of current visitor use, and other local and regional factors. Complete the assessment and you're all set.

Element: Other Special Provisions

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: This wilderness contains special provisions other than commercial grazing and outfitter and guide use that have a significant effect on the wilderness character of the area. This may include: developed mines, dams, landing airstrips, shelters, wildlife management activities, private inholding access, and all other provisions described in the enabling legislation for a specific wilderness.

Outcome: Management of “other special provisions” is consistent with statutory direction and wilderness values.

Type: Special Provisions – Optional Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Special Provisions: Provisions described in the enabling legislation for each wilderness area and/or that are statutorily provided in the Wilderness Act.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Special provisions have been inventoried to gather information about their condition and uses. Special provisions are under current special use permits, as applicable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed special provision inventory, noting condition, use, and any applicable special use permits 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date inventory of special provisions was completed (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	A management plan (which includes monitoring) has been developed for special provisions determined to be priority management issues for this wilderness. This plan addresses the management of special provisions and protection of wilderness values.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed special provision plan, covering both management and monitoring 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Title and date (MM/YYYY) of special provision management plan
6 points³	Monitoring of these special provisions has been conducted according to the requirements of the monitoring plan and/or permit, in terms of both the frequency and intensity of monitoring.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Summary of the special provision monitoring that has been conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date monitoring of special provisions was completed (MM/YYYY)
8 points⁴	If monitoring indicates this resource is not in conformance with the plan, corrective actions have been taken to address non-conformance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrative describing whether monitoring indicates that resource conditions associated with special provisions are in conformance with the special provision plan, and, if not, what corrective actions have been taken 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief summary of the results of monitoring Describe corrective actions taken (brief), including dates (MM/YYYY), if necessary

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox⁵	Interaction and collaborative efforts have been conducted and documented this fiscal year with special provision holders /owners / users for all special provisions determined to be a priority management issue.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of the interaction and collaborative efforts conducting with special provisions holder/owners/users this fiscal year for all special provisions determined to be priority management issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date most recent collaborative evaluation was conducted (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

General: Before selecting this element, wilderness managers should become familiar with the special provisions applicable to this wilderness (either provided under the Wilderness Act or the enabling legislation).

- 1 - Ideally those provisions with actual footprints will be mapped into GIS.
- 2 - The special provision plan should reference each applicable special provision provided for under this wilderness's enabling legislation or the 1964 Wilderness Act. This plan should be commensurate with the amount and type of special provisions.
- 3 - Except for those provisions under lands permits, there are no national standards for monitoring. Therefore, the nature and frequency of this monitoring will be a local decision based on effect and type of the special provisions.
- 4 - Lands permits have their own inspection/compliance guidelines and process for non-compliance. For all others, we recommend a simple inspection form be developed along with a process for non-compliance. Score 8-points if current conditions are within Direction provided by a Forest Plan, Wilderness Management Plan, or other locally-developed advisory document.
- 5 - The level and frequency of the "Interaction and collaborative efforts" is determined by amount, intensity and spatial effect of the special provisions on the wilderness. Examples can include yearly site visits, yearly meetings with owner/operators and agencies, or annual field trips with interested parties including stakeholders, original framers of the enabling legislation, and agencies with joint management

responsibilities. Any “priority management issues” should be identified as such in the special provision plan and are specific to each wilderness.

Supporting Resources:

Wilderness.net, [What is the Special Provisions Database?](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What specific information should be gathered regarding condition and use? Is there a template or form?

The specific information gathered regarding condition and use will be determined locally based on management needs and interests of the local unit. There is no national template or form to gather this information, though local units could elect to develop a form for consistency. Permits, water rights, and other applicable documentation should be collected for the inventory as well.

2. Is it possible to have a Wilderness with Special Provisions that are not specifically mentioned in legislation?

No. A Special Provision for a wilderness must be identified in the Wilderness Act of 1964 and/or clearly identified in the enabling legislation. Congressional hearing notes, House Reports, meeting notes, or other historical documentation may provide “intentions” associated with non-compliance with the Wilderness Act. However, only law can allow for a Special Provision. Intent does not equate to law.

3. What are the components of a special provisions management plan?

A special provisions management plan should include an inventory and description of all special provisions; identification of those special provisions that have been deemed a priority management issue for the wilderness; a plan for managing the special provisions and protecting wilderness values referencing all applicable law, policy and regulation associated with the special provision; photos; GPS location description; and a monitoring plan.

For those special provisions that are authorized under a lands permit, the special provisions management plan should include any permitted provisions of that lands permit in the inventory list and description, and it should refer to the permit's stipulations for management of those provisions. However, a special use permit does not take the place of the special provisions management plan.

4. What are some examples of "proactive management" to address impacts of special provisions on wilderness values?

Proactive management of a special provision involves minimizing their impacts on wilderness to the best of your ability under the Law. Some examples of proactively managing a special provision include:

- Dams - your wilderness area has a dam in need of maintenance and the law allows motorized access to do so. The Forest could be proactive by creating an MRA for that activity even though it's legal, and strive for the use of non-motorized or mechanized equipment.
- Recreational use of motorboats on designated motorized lakes – for administrative work, consider combining work tasks for an area in a multi-day trip and paddling a canoe to your destinations to prevent extra motorboat noise/view that would come from motorized day trips.
- Fish stocking - collaborate with the State or other agencies on fisheries management options. Consider carrying fish for stocking on a mule, horseback or in a canoe instead of by aircraft.
- Airstrips – promote best management practices or leave-no-trace skills to backcountry pilot associations to keep the airstrips as primitive as possible.

5. What criteria should we use to determine “priority” special provisions for the purposes of developing a monitoring plan?

Wilderness staff should prioritize those special provisions that pose the greatest threat to wilderness values. The criteria to determine which special provisions pose the greatest threat to wilderness values may include location, frequency of use, or impacts to specific resources (i.e., wildlife or botanical resources).

6. How can the management of other special provisions be consistent with wilderness values, especially when the special provision degrades wilderness character?

Special provisions are specific guidelines for allocation and management based upon unique circumstances of local or regional concern.

When included in legislation, special provisions are legal requirements for designating and managing a wilderness. While special provisions may degrade some aspects of wilderness character, proactive management of these legal exceptions can minimize the impact to wilderness values.

Element: Workforce Capacity

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: This element measures the agency's capacity to adequately manage wilderness as a function of the workforce numbers, training, and skills of personnel, partners, and volunteers involved in stewardship activities.

Outcome: This wilderness has the workforce capacity needed to support sound stewardship.

Type: Administration – Mandatory Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Partner: Individuals or groups of individuals that perform wilderness stewardship activities that are usually documented through a formal agreement

Personnel: Permanent and temporary Forest Service employees that have wilderness stewardship duties comprising $\geq 10\%$ of their assigned work.

Traditional skills: The proficient use of non-motorized tools and non-mechanized forms of transport (e.g., axe, crosscut saw, hand drill, rigging, and packing with stock).

Volunteer: A person who (or an organization whose members) donate time and talent to advance the mission of the Forest Service and who receives no salary or wages from the Forest Service for the voluntary service (FSM 1830.5). This does not exclude people who receive reimbursements from the Forest Service to cover incidental expenses.

Wilderness Awareness Training: Training conducted by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, or by the Region or unit, that sufficiently addresses the primary tenets of the Wilderness Act of 1964, minimum requirements analysis, and the four cornerstones of wilderness stewardship.

Wilderness Line Officer Training: National Wilderness Leadership Training or Regional Wilderness Stewardship Training conducted by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.

Workforce: All the individuals involved with wilderness stewardship, including agency employees, partners and volunteers.

Scoring and Deliverables:**Workforce Numbers**

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
Personnel¹ 2 point checkbox	An adequate number of personnel are in place to effectively manage and provide a field presence in this wilderness. This is a local determination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An explanatory justification to support the determination that either there are or are not an adequate number of personnel in place to effectively manage and provide a field presence in this wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief summary of evaluation and date last conducted (MM/YYYY)
Partners and Volunteers² 2 point checkbox	Partners and volunteers are effectively incorporated in stewardship activities to accomplish significant work. This is a local determination.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A narrative describing how partners and volunteers are incorporated into stewardship activities and an explanatory justification to support the determination that this incorporation is effective and accomplishes significant work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief narrative describing work completed this fiscal year and how this work was significant.

Training and Skills

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
Line Officer Training³ 2 point checkbox	Each line officer at the district and forest level with management responsibilities for this wilderness has completed Wilderness Line Officer Training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An update date record identifying the training status of all applicable line officers for this wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Listing of line officers and training completion date (MM/YYYY)
Traditional Skills 2 point checkbox	Units have inventoried their workforce's existing traditional skills in this fiscal year, identified needs based on an expected program of work, and ensured that their workforce is certified or otherwise appropriately trained in the requisite skills.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A document that includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Completed current inventory of a unit's existing traditional skills qualifications The unit's identified traditional skills needs; and An explanation of how the unit has ensured that its workforce is certified or otherwise appropriately trained in the requisite traditional skills for stewardship of this wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date of document describing a units traditional skills qualifications and needs (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
Wilderness Awareness⁴ 2 point checkbox	Permanent agency personnel involved in stewardship activities in this wilderness have completed wilderness awareness training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of the wilderness awareness trainings offered over the past five years and who attended the trainings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> List of wilderness awareness trainings provided within the last five years and who attended (MM/YYYY).

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - This determination is a subjective local judgment, but should be made after consulting with local wilderness managers, other specialists, staff, and line officers.

- 2 - A score of 2-points should be based on a “more than incidental” commitment of partner and volunteer labor resources to supplement personnel to effectively manage this wilderness. This determination is a subjective, local judgment, but should be made after consulting with local wilderness managers, other specialists, staff, and line officers.
- 3 - Counting instructions: When a new line officer begins work on the unit, this score will remain stable for three years (at the point level reported for this wilderness in the year prior to the new line officer arriving on the unit). At the 3-year anniversary of the line officer’s arrival, the score for the wilderness will drop to 0 if they have not attended training. The score will increase to 2-points at any time all line officers have attended training.

Line officer participation in Carhart training from a previous assignment will count in this scoring assessment. Refer to the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center’s listing of agency staff who have completed either national or regional line officer training [Current FS Carhart Training List 8223.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

- 4 - Agency personnel for whom a significant portion of their work is in or affects wilderness should receive wilderness awareness training at least every 5 years. At a minimum, this should include: forest and district staff responsible for affected programs, forest and district resource specialist in affected programs, and line officers who have wilderness on their units. Attendance of a national or regional Wilderness Stewardship Training within the past 5 years also qualifies as wilderness awareness training.

Supporting Resources:

Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, [Classroom Courses](#): Lists webinars, classroom courses and other trainings

Wilderness.net, [Volunteers & Partners](#) Provides resources on working with partners

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What constitutes “wilderness stewardship duties”?

This includes those tasks that are being conducted to assure the long-term preservation of the wilderness resource. This includes, but is not limited to, campsite and solitude monitoring, trail maintenance activities, scientific research, as well as monitoring wilderness air quality values or conducting non-native, invasive plant surveys. Wilderness stewardship employs management strategies from the social and natural sciences to preserve the qualities for which wilderness was established.

2. How do you determine if partners or volunteers are “effectively incorporated in wilderness stewardship activities”?

This determination is a local judgment and should be made after consulting with local wilderness managers, other specialists, staff, and line officers. Partners or volunteers should be contributing to the overall wilderness program goals and objectives to be considered “effectively incorporated.” For example, a partner organization may have specific objectives to meet their organization’s mission (e.g., conduct a citizen science trip in wilderness to monitor species X); the partner activity may be appropriate in wilderness, but it may not be contributing to the wilderness program’s goals and objectives (e.g., species X is not a species of concern in that wilderness). The partner organization would be more effectively incorporated into wilderness stewardship activities if the focus of the citizen science trip was targeted to a species of concern identified for that wilderness area.

3. I manage more than one wilderness and my staff is shared across wilderness boundaries. Does it matter that the “≥ 10%” of personnel duties occurs across multiple wildernesses?

No. The key point for Forest Service personnel is that there is an adequate number in place to effectively manage the wilderness. This is a local determination.

4. How do I know if my Line Officers have completed the Arthur Carhart Wilderness Line Officer Training?

A report of all attendees is within the Workforce Capacity WSP Support Resources and is titled [Current FS Carhart Training List_8223.xlsx \(sharepoint.com\)](#).

5. The Traditional Skills checkbox references a “completed current inventory of existing traditional skills qualifications.” Is there a template or an example we can use to document the results of our inventory?

Currently, there is no template or example available, but one may be developed and made available in the future. In the interim, forests may utilize any inventory format to document and satisfy this checkbox.

6. Why do we no longer have any directions or instructions to help us measure our workforce capacity like we had during the 10YWSC?

The baseline workforce targets used under the 10YWSC were based on an informal survey conducted by WAG back in 2002. Not only are those targets obviously dated, but the methodology used to generate those numbers was called into question. There is no specific staffing level number that could be produced with any confidence, due to a wide variety of factors such as overall workload, incorporation of volunteers and partners, degree of involvement of other staff disciplines, seasonality of work, to name but a few. Instead of creating a specific number target, we decided it was preferable to leave the assessment of the adequacy of agency staff to manage a particular wilderness as a subjective determination by local staff, who can consider a wide variety of factors in making this assessment.

7. We would like to host a Wilderness Awareness training, what standards must be met and are there any resources available?

At a minimum, the following topics should be considered essential to the agenda, regardless of where the course is conducted or by whom: 1) Wilderness Act of 1964, 2) Minimum Requirements Analysis, and 3) Four Cornerstones of Wilderness Stewardship. E-courses are available for each of these, but they are not sufficient to qualify for unit wilderness awareness training – classroom training should be required. A unit wilderness awareness course that sufficiently covers the essentials should take about 6 hours, at a minimum, however 12-14 hours is recommended so that specific challenges applicable to the unit can be addressed and some more engaging instructional methods (that take longer) may be employed. The Arthur Carhart Center is in the process of building a toolbox of resources to help units develop their own training.

8. A large number of staff on my unit are involved in wilderness stewardship. What happens if we host a wilderness awareness training and not all of them are able to attend?

Nearby units may offer additional opportunities for wilderness awareness training for staff that are unable to attend. While 100% attendance should be the goal, we recognize that may not be attainable, and credit can still be claimed as long as a minimum of 80% attendance is attained.

9. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Understanding the perspective and wisdom Indigenous People have as it relates to the deliverables in this element gives us an opportunity to leverage our nation-to-nation and personal relationships into more effective and long-term management and stewardship of our wilderness stewardship efforts.

Element: Education

Version 2023.1 (05/26/2023)

Description: Specific and targeted educational activities have been undertaken by Forest Service personnel, partners, and/or volunteers to improve understanding and awareness of wilderness values by the public.

Outcome: The forest(s) responsible for this wilderness has actively engaged the public to inform and educate them about wilderness values.

Type: Administration – Mandatory Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Wilderness Education Plan: A planning document developed to improve wilderness education efforts, including the definition of key messages, the identification of target audience and mediums, review and evaluation, and a schedule/action plan and budget for implementation, which includes a prioritization of activities. Typically these plans address the information and education needs of both internal and external audiences.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points¹	Wilderness education activities have been conducted in this fiscal year without the benefit of a wilderness education plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A summary of the wilderness education activities conducted 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of wilderness education activities (brief) with dates (MM/YYYY)
4 points²	A wilderness education plan has been developed for this wilderness, signed by the forest supervisor, reviewed in this fiscal year, and modified as necessary.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The signed wilderness education plan Narrative describing the review conducted this fiscal year and any modifications made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date (MM/YYYY) of education plan Date wilderness education plan was last reviewed (MM/YYYY) Upload to WSP Pinyon folder
6 points	Priority activities identified in the wilderness education plan have been implemented, according to the schedule and frequency prescribed in the plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> An inventory of the priority education activities implemented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of priority wilderness education activities (brief) with implementation dates (MM/YYYY)
8 points⁴	All activities identified in the education plan have been implemented, according to the schedule and frequency prescribed in the plan. Activities have been evaluated for effectiveness and changes made to the educational plan, as appropriate.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A table comparing all of the activities identified in the education plan and all of the activities implemented Narrative describing the effectiveness evaluation and any appropriate changes made to the education plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of additional wilderness education activities (brief) with implementation dates (MM/YYYY) Date educational activities were last evaluated (MM/YYYY)

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 point checkbox⁴	Specific and targeted actions have been identified and implemented in this fiscal year to reach underserved communities and to engage youth.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Narrative describing the specific and targeted actions that have been implemented to reach underserved communities and to engage youth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Description of specific actions targeted for underserved communities and to engage youth (brief) and implementation dates (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - The education plan should be tailored to the area and its issues. Activities should focus on management concerns and speak to changing behavior as well as changes to biophysical or social conditions.
- 2 - Review can be as simple as a memo to the file; the important thing is that the plan is updated as conditions change (demographics, financial and staff capacity, wilderness threats).
- 3 - “Effectiveness” is defined at the local level, but should address how well activities have met the goals and objectives specified in the education plan (e.g., increased audience participation levels, decrease in unwanted behavior attributable to education efforts, positive comments received after program implementation).
- 4 - “Underserved Communities” refers to populations sharing a particular characteristic, as well as geographic communities, that have been systematically denied a full opportunity to participate in aspects of economic, social, and civic life.

Supporting Resources:

Wilderness.net, [Interpretation & Education Toolbox](#) Examples of education plans

Frequently Asked Questions:**1. What is the timeframe and scope of the education plan?**

A plan may be prepared for a multi-year period, but it should be evaluated for effectiveness annually and updated as needed to reflect changes in threats, audiences, and opportunities. Some plans are forest-wide conservation education plans with a specific wilderness component; others are wilderness specific or may incorporate multiple wildernesses. It depends on the individual needs of the forest and wilderness.

2. How do I monitor implementation of my education plan?

There are two types of education plan monitoring; implementation and effectiveness:

- Implementation monitoring is basically tracking the actual delivery of the tasks identified in the plan. It can include recording the number of education programs and people participating, visitor contacts, web site visits, or other measures.
- Effectiveness evaluation is measuring whether the education program is having the desired effect such as reducing impacts. This evaluation can include follow up surveys with program participants, on the ground evaluation of impact reduction, or other locally developed evaluation protocols.

The goal is to understand the effectiveness of your plan and make adjustments as necessary. See the toolboxes on Wilderness.net for examples.

3. I have a plan but few resources for implementation. How can I achieve the minimum stewardship level?

The 6-point level for this element requires that only the priorities identified in a wilderness education plan are implemented. There is no set number of priorities and this must be determined for each wilderness. Ideally the plan reflects a realistic approach that links threats and issues with the actions needed and the existing and potential resources for delivery. To identify annual priorities for implementation, first identify the most significant threats and the education program action items that will directly address those threats. Then select those actions that can feasibly be accomplished, given the resources available. To enhance program accomplishment, identify what resources are available or could be obtained through integration with other resource education programs, use of partnerships and volunteers, etc. and then prepare an annual action plan or program of work to identify the reasonable and feasible priorities that can be accomplished each year.

4. I manage several small wildernesses on my forest. Do I need to do a separate education plan for each wilderness?

No, one consolidated wilderness education plan can be developed for all wildernesses on your forest, although the plan should address the specific public information needs and management issues associated with individual areas.

5. I have a Wilderness Education Plan that is part of a larger Forest-wide Education Plan – is this permissible?

Yes, as long as the Wilderness Education Plan within the larger Forest-wide Education Plan is tailored to improve wilderness education efforts, including key messages, identification of the target audience, review and evaluation procedures, and an action plan for implementation with a prioritization of activities.

6. I already have a wilderness education plan but it wasn't signed by my forest supervisor. Can I still score 4-points?

No. The scoring for this element requires a signed education plan by the forest supervisor. This is an opportunity for the forest supervisor to become familiar with the education needs of the wilderness area and provide oversight of the priorities identified for improving understanding and awareness of wilderness values by the public.

7. What does “specific” and “targeted” mean in the element description and in the 2-point checkbox?

The actions in the plan are clearly described (i.e., who, what, when, where, why). What is the activity? When and where will the activity occur? What management issue(s)/threat(s) will the activity address? Who will be implementing the activity?

8. Can you provide a few examples of potential “specific and targeted actions to reach underserved communities and to engage youth”?

Example 1: Wilderness manager coordinates with a local school teacher to engage high school students in wilderness monitoring activities. Students and teacher join the wilderness manager for a multi-day field trip to inventory, monitor, and naturalize campsites in a priority area

during the summer season. Example 2: District botanist partners with local tribal organization to teach tribal youth about the impacts of invasive plant species; a wilderness monitoring hike in a priority survey area during prime flowering season is included as part of the program.

9. The 2-point check box used to focus on non-traditional audiences, not underserved communities. Why did this change?

On January 20, 2021, President Joe Biden signed an Executive Order on Advancing Racial Equity and Support for Underserved Communities Through the Federal Government.” We felt the emphasis the Executive Order placed on Federal Agencies to identify and remove barriers for underserved communities to participate in Federal programs warranted a change in terminology for this 2-point check box. This change should not affect how units scored this element in the past.

10. Is there a template I can use to develop a wilderness education plan?

Yes, the Wilderness Information Management Steering Team updated an education plan template in 2023 to incorporate outreach and inclusion of groups/individuals that are new to wilderness or may not consider visiting wilderness. The goal of the new education plan template is to incorporate language around DEI and underserved communities.

11. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation’s Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

Understanding the perspective and wisdom Indigenous People have as it relates to the deliverables in this element gives us an opportunity to leverage our nation-to-nation and personal relationships into more effective and long-term management and stewardship of our wilderness stewardship efforts.

Element: Wilderness Character Baseline

Version 2017.2 (06/01/2017)

Description: A wilderness character baseline has been established for the wilderness. This element includes the intermediate steps required to determine a baseline and provide the foundation for evaluating trends in wilderness character. These trends indicate the outcome of our stewardship actions and our success at “preserving wilderness character,” as directed by the Wilderness Act.

Outcome: A wilderness character baseline has been established and trends evaluated.

Type: Administration – Mandatory Selection

Key Terms and Definitions:

Indicator: A general concept that is a distinct and important element of one of the qualities of wilderness character, and whose condition is assessed indirectly through one or more measures.

Measure: A specific aspect of wilderness on which data are collected to assess the condition and trend of an indicator.

Significant change: A threshold that is established for each measure identifying when a change in the condition for that measure is deemed significant for determining trends.

Trends in wilderness character: A comparison of subsequent application(s) of the WCM protocol to the baseline condition to determine if wilderness character is improving, stable or degrading.

Wilderness character baseline: The initial application of the WCM protocol in a particular wilderness, resulting in baseline values for each of the measures.

Wilderness character narrative: A wilderness character narrative describes what is unique and special about a specific wilderness, organized by each of the qualities of wilderness character. The narrative provides a means for identifying particular measures for monitoring as identified in the Forest Service protocol.

Wilderness baseline assessment report: A summary of the baseline condition of the five qualities of wilderness character as determined by initial monitoring. The report should include information necessary to ensure repeatability and for future managers to understand how the baseline was established.

Scoring and Deliverables¹:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
2 points	Legislative and administrative documentation associated with this wilderness has been compiled.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compilation of legislative and administrative documentation – stored in a centralized repository 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of centralized repository (file pathname) • Date when documentation was compiled (MM/YYYY)
4 points	Written wilderness narrative that captures the overall “character” of the wilderness, including what is unique and special. Each quality of wilderness character should receive a section describing the key resources and conditions for that quality, as well as major threats.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed wilderness character narrative – stored in a centralized repository 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Location of centralized repository (file pathname) • Date wilderness character narrative was completed (MM/YYYY)
6 points	Measures for each of the indicators have been selected and a decision has been made on whether or not to monitor the “Other Features of Value Quality.” The local data sources to support these measures have been evaluated to assess data adequacy (quantity and quality).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification of all measures to be monitored • Completed evaluation of the adequacy of local data sources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date measures were selected (MM/YYYY) • Rational for selection/non-selection of “Other Features of Value Quality” (brief)
8 points	A wilderness character baseline has been established, including data compilation, analysis, entry into the appropriate database and development of a baseline assessment report.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed wilderness character baseline • All data entered into WCM Database • Completed baseline assessment report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date wilderness character baseline assessment was completed (MM/YYYY)
10 points	Trends in wilderness character have been assessed. This trend cannot be determined until at least 5 years since the baseline was determined.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trend in wilderness character assessed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Date wilderness character trend assessment was completed (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - Progress on this element will require use of the Forest Service's national protocol for monitoring wilderness character. As of 1/1/18 the following actions/products are underway:
- * WCM Technical Guide – draft is posted on WCM Pinyon site and WCM SharePoint site. Final document is in the publication process.
 - * WCM application in Natural Resource Manager (NRM) is available for use.
 - * WCM interagency database is available for use. The Wilderness Character Monitoring Central Team will assist users with data entry. Contact Julie King, Wilderness Character Monitoring Program Manager, for more information (Julie.King@usda.gov).

Supporting Resources:

WSP SharePoint, [Scoring Guidelines for WSP-WC Baseline Element](#)

Wilderness.net, [Wilderness Character Toolbox](#)

WCM Pinyon site, [WCM Pinyon](#)

Frequently Asked Questions:**1. Is the Forest Service protocol for monitoring wilderness character available for me to use now?**

The Forest Service Wilderness Character Monitoring Technical Guide is in the final stages of publication. The final draft is available in WCM SharePoint and [WCM Pinyon](#). This Technical Guide will provide the overall strategy for WCM in the Forest Service and the detailed, step-by-step protocols for gathering, storing, reporting, and interpreting the data. Several national actions to prepare for implementing WCM in the Forest Service will occur in FY 2018, such as establishing a monitoring schedule, developing the WCM module in NRM, and conducting training. Implementation is expected to begin in FY 2018, most likely in a phased approach, spanning several years before the baseline is established in all wildernesses.

2. Since I’m not able to begin WCM now, are there parts of this element I can be working on in advance of having an implementation-ready version protocol?

Yes. Guidance has recently been made available on the [Wilderness Stewardship Performance SharePoint site](#) and in the below Q&A to aid those units interested in making progress on the 2- and 4-point levels of this element. The Technical Guide is complete and available on the [WCM Pinyon Site](#).

3. In the 2-point score, what does “legislative and administrative documentation associated with this wilderness” refer to, and where can I find this information?

This documentation may provide important insights about why the wilderness was designated, in turn providing management a sense of priorities in making decisions that affect how the wilderness is managed. This documentation includes the public law as well as various committee reports and expert testimony that was provided as the bill was crafted. This legislative information can be found in [Legislative History Database](#) searchable database. Additionally, Districts, Forests, and Regional offices may have administrative information that can provide past management history and records of prior efforts to change the area’s management or have the area designated. Administrative information can generally be found in documents used in creating the Forest Plan or is stored in the corporate database, filing cabinets, or map cabinets at unit offices.

4. What is the “wilderness character narrative”, who develops it and are there examples that we can see?

A wilderness character narrative is a written description of the wilderness area that describes what is unique and special about that wilderness. The narrative weaves the components of wilderness character and various other pieces together into a collective whole to create a full and rich picture of each wilderness. The narrative is intended to help units determine specific resources to evaluate in WCM.

Forest/District wilderness staff will need to develop this narrative in conjunction with an interdisciplinary team. Alternatively, a Wilderness Fellow can be used to draft the narrative based on legislative and administrative documentation, interviews with resource specialists and line officers, visits to the wilderness unit, and/or opportunities to meet and interview other wilderness users. A detailed explanation of what a wilderness character narrative is, how it may be used, how to develop it, and examples can be found in [WCM Pinyon](#).

5. What is a “baseline assessment report”, who develops it and are there examples that we can see?

A wilderness character baseline assessment report summarizes the initial conditions of each quality of wilderness character for a particular wilderness. The report should include any information that would be necessary for future managers to repeat the monitoring and to understand how the baseline was originally established. There are numerous instances in the Forest Service WCM Technical Guide protocols that may call for professional judgement or require the use of datasets with limitations that may be improved in the future.

The report is developed by the local unit or by a Wilderness Fellow. In either case, local resource specialists, wilderness rangers, wilderness data stewards, and line officers should be involved in the process of selecting measures and/or reviewing data. The report should be approved by the Forest Supervisor and the Regional Wilderness Program Manager. Examples of reports recently completed by Wilderness Fellows are available on the WCM Pinyon site. These examples are lengthy and may be pared down if the local unit has limited resources to complete the report. The WIMST is currently developing a streamlined report template that will also be available on WCM Pinyon.

6. Indigenous Nations have a deep connection to their ancestral homelands and as we seek to understand that profound connection to learn about the cultural and spiritual significance of federally managed lands and waters and the wildlife and resources those areas contribute to the Indigenous way of life. How should I incorporate co-stewardship, respectful application of Indigenous Knowledge, and protection of sacred sites in my wilderness as it relates to this element?

In February 2023 the Forest Service released *STRENGTHENING TRIBAL CONSULTATIONS AND NATION-TO-NATION RELATIONSHIPS A USDA Forest Service Action Plan*. This Action Plan is divided into four focus areas and is designed to address nation-to-nation relationship barriers and action items for more effective engagement. The four focus areas are: Strengthen Relationships Between Indian Tribes and the USDA Forest Service; Fulfill Trust and Treaty Obligations; Enhance Co-Stewardship of the Nation's Forests and Grasslands and: Advance Tribal Relations Within the USDA Forest Service.

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Reporting Checkboxes: Additional Requirements

Wilderness Boundaries and Upward Reporting

Version 2020.1 (04/01/2020)

Description: Two additional requirements important to wilderness stewardship are included as 2-point checkboxes: Wilderness Boundaries and Upward Reporting.

Outcome: A perimeter boundary description and final map have been developed and transmitted to Congress and all upward reporting requirements have been completed by the reporting deadline.

Type: Mandatory

Key Terms and Definitions:

Perimeter boundary description: A legal description that describes a particular parcel of land such that it uniquely describes that parcel and no other. It may be a simple reference to a lot as shown on a subdivision plat, or be described by metes and bounds. To be adequate, it should be sufficient to locate the property without oral testimony. The description is usually approved by the Regional Land Surveyor and/or Regional Forester

Final Map: A map prepared to accompany the legal description depicting the defined area. The map is usually approved by the Regional Land Surveyor and is submitted to Congress along with the legal description of an area.

Scoring and Deliverables:

Score	Description	Deliverables / Outcomes	Recommended NRM Documentation
Wilderness Boundaries 2 point checkbox	Legal descriptions of the wilderness boundary and final maps have been prepared for this wilderness (and all subsequent additions), and have been transmitted to Congress.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Legal boundary description and final map have been completed and signed by the regional surveyor and/or regional forester Completed boundary package has been sent to the WO, and the WO has transmitted that package to the appropriate committees in Congress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date legal boundary description and final map were approved by the regional surveyor (MM/YYYY) Dates legal boundary description and final map were transmitted from the RO to the WO and from the WO to Congress (MM/YYYY)
Upward Reporting 2 point checkbox	All annual upward reporting requirements have been completed accurately and completely by the reporting deadline. ¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All required reporting (performance reporting, Wilderness.net update, etc.) have been entered, summarized and approved by the reporting deadline. After WCM baseline year, WCM tasks are completed in NRM-WCM and provided to the Central Team to update the interagency database for measures requiring annual updates, roll-over measures, and to fix any discrepancies between NRM-WCM and the WCM Baseline Assessment Report. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Date upward reporting requirements were completed (MM/YYYY)

Explanatory Notes:

- 1 - The specific annual report requirements are outlined in a letter from the WWSR Director, typically in the spring. At the present time, they include: Regulations (Agency Use), Management Record, Wilderness.net review of narrative and regulations, Performance Reporting,

Motorized Equipment/Mechanical Transport Use Authorizations, and Stewardship Groups. After a wilderness has completed its WCM baseline, WCM annual tasks must also be completed to count toward on time reporting. A list of annual tasks may be found in the [NRM-WCM Annual Reporting Guidelines](#) document. The FY22 data entry deadline is Friday October 25, 2024.

Supporting Resources:

USDA Forest Service: [Lead Data Stewards](#): Various information for use by those assigned lead wilderness data steward responsibilities.

Frequently Asked Questions:

1. What’s the reason for having these “additional requirements” outside of the element framework?

These “additional requirements” cover important aspects of wilderness stewardship that did not fit neatly under the existing framework structure. It was felt that tracking accomplishment on these items each year would increase the likelihood of their completion and thereby improve overall stewardship.

2. Are these “bonus points”?

No, these should not be viewed as “bonus points”. These are a core part of the wilderness program that simply do not fit within the element framework.

3. How soon after a wilderness is designated does the legal boundary description need to be developed?

Some of the earlier wilderness bills included specific dates for the completion of the wilderness boundary package (in the case of the Wilderness Act of 1964, maps were to be developed and transmitted to Congress in one-year). However, most recent bills (but not all) instruct the federal agencies to develop and transmit these maps with the more nebulous phrase “as soon as practicable.” It is important to be familiar with the enabling legislation specific to your wilderness area. Though not policy, general agency guidance instructs the regions to develop and transmit these maps within 5-years after the area’s designation.

4. How can I find out if my boundary description has been developed and/or transmitted to Congress?

An inventory of all wilderness boundary legal descriptions is maintained by the Wilderness/Wild and Scenic Rivers Information Manager and Regional Program Managers. However, the easiest way to check the status of your boundary information is to look for your wilderness area on the [FSGeodata Clearinghouse site](#), which is the Forest Service official public record for Wilderness boundary packages, including final map and legal description, which have been transmitted to Congress. If your wilderness area is in bold lettering and zip files are attached for

the year of designation (and subsequent wilderness additions), then you have a completed boundary package. Oppositely, if your wilderness is not in bold lettering and no files are attached, you do not have a boundary package which has been transmitted to Congress.

5. Who is responsible for doing the upward reporting?

Though a number of people may be involved in the upward reporting process, it is the responsibility of the “Lead Wilderness Data Steward” to ensure the data are entered accurately and completely by the reporting due date. [Lead Data Stewards](#)



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