



CHARTER FOR THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS LEADERSHIP COUNCIL OF THE NATIONAL PARK SERVICE



I. Purpose: The purpose of the National Wilderness Leadership Council (WLC) of the National Park Service (NPS) is to:

- Serve as an advisory body to the Directorate on all matters pertaining to wilderness in the National Park System, and enhance the ability of the agency to address critical wilderness stewardship issues.
- Facilitate the preservation and protection of wilderness resources and character of National Park System wilderness in keeping with guidance established by management policies, director's orders and reference manuals, and the letter and spirit of the 1964 Wilderness Act and subsequent legislation pertaining to wilderness, including all areas identified as designated, potential, recommended, proposed, study, and eligible wilderness.
- Assist the Directorate and parks in developing and implementing programs and projects that improve the accountability, consistency, and continuity of National Park Service wilderness stewardship.
- Facilitate the understanding of wilderness stewardship as a core mission of the National Park Service in which virtually all disciplines in the National Park Service workforce have important roles and responsibilities including visitor and resource protection, natural and cultural resources management, science and research, interpretation and education, facility and trail maintenance, planning, and training.
- Facilitate the National Park Service to be a leading partner in wilderness stewardship efforts within the framework of the National Wilderness Preservation System.

II. Primary WLC Functions: The WLC integrates disciplines across the organizational structure of the National Park Service to accomplish, the following:

- Develop/Review Changes to NPS Management Policies and other documents on Wilderness Preservation and Management: The WLC develops and/or reviews any needed additions, updates, or modifications to Chapter 6 Management Policies (Wilderness Preservation and Management), Director's Order #41, Reference Manual #41, WLC Guidance White Papers and Decision Guides.

- Monitor Wilderness Program Progress: The WLC periodically reviews program monitoring of field response to approved policies, director's orders, and/or directives and serve as a repository for information needed by the Directorate to assess the status of the Service's wilderness program. This program information provides the Directorate with impartial assessments of the Service's wilderness management efforts, including identification of problems and issues, recommendation of management responses to these issues, and development of the specific programs and products needed to implement recommended solutions.
- Review and Provide Input to the NPS Wilderness Program Information System: The WLC reviews and advises the program on its NPS wilderness program information system and databases that are under development or being made available to park managers. This includes the development and maintenance of internet and intranet websites, and archiving related information. Information from these databases is the basis of NPS Wilderness Reports and the information for addressing Congressional inquiries and internal reviews and public interest. WLC members and liaisons with specific wilderness expertise are expected to ensure that their expertise (e.g. natural resources, cultural resources, trail maintenance, resource protection, and training) is incorporated into the websites and databases, or that links are made to other sources of information.
- Provide a Forum for Assisting Parks with Wilderness Issues: As requested, the WLC serves as a forum for park managers to use in assessing and formulating recommendations and solutions to specific management issues, such as planning, wilderness resource and character monitoring, interpretation and education, emerging technology, and minimum requirements decisions.
- Facilitate Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan Implementation: The WLC oversees the on-going effort to develop and implement the National Park Service Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan. An educational subcommittee works with the Program to help develop, refine, and implement the Plan. The full WLC reviews these efforts and helps facilitate/promote the integration of elements of the Wilderness Education and Partnership Plan into other appropriate agency programs.
- Provide In-Service Liaison: The WLC addresses issues that the Program or WLC members identify as detrimental to the NPS wilderness resources. The WLC provides a forum for integration of the Service's wilderness initiatives into other NPS management programs and operations as appropriate. The WLC facilitates and encourages program efforts to inform and coordinate its own projects and programs with other NPS offices to insure adequate and timely cooperation.


- Review the NPS Wilderness Training Program: The WLC reviews the NPS wilderness training program and its implementation as developed by the interagency Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.
- Review Needs for and Facilitating Access to Wilderness-related Research: The WLC aids the assessment of Park Service wilderness-related research needs (natural, cultural, social) and facilitates liaison with the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and other providers of the information needed to inform wilderness stewardship decisions.
- Facilitate Interagency Liaisons and Consistency: The WLC facilitates interagency liaison and consistency among the four Federal wilderness management agencies and other offices groups and organizations having an interest in wilderness preservation and management.

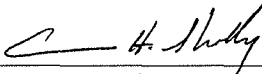
III. WLC Membership: The WLC is comprised of individuals in Wilderness decision-making positions and/or individuals supportive of the concept of wilderness, desirous of contributing to improving wilderness stewardship in the National Park System, and motivated to actively support the purpose of the WLC and contribute to WLC programs and projects. The duties of members include attendance at and participation in WLC functions, completion of WLC assignments, participation in subcommittees, and facilitation of communications with parks, regions and programmatic contacts. From time to time, members may also be requested to assist associated program implementation efforts.

- Reporting: The WLC reports to the Associate Director for Visitor and Resource Protection (AD-VRP) who will attend meetings as necessary per request of the WLC Chair and/or the Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief. The Associate Directors for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science; Cultural Resource Management, Partnerships and Science; Interpretation and Education; and Park Planning, Facilities and Lands; function in an advisory role, will attend meetings as necessary, provide liaisons to the WLC and communicate and collaborate directly with the AD-VRP and WLC Chair on all issues related to NPS wilderness stewardship.
- General Membership: The WLC is a 11-13 member council that in general is comprised of at least 3 superintendents, to include one Alaska Superintendent; 1 park- or field-level wilderness manager; 1 natural resources/science representative; 1 cultural resources representative; 1 facilities management/trails representative; 1 interpretation/education representative; 1 Alaska Region/park representative; 1 visitor and resource protection/law enforcement representative; 1 Regional Wilderness Coordinator and, if needed, up to 2 members at large. The at-large members are appointed as needed by the AD-VRP; and are invited to serve on the WLC for specific purposes and limited time periods. The membership goal is to have a diverse functional area and regional, representation on the WLC.

- C. WLC Liaisons and Guests: The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute occupy permanent liaison positions while other NPS program representatives, upon invitation by the WLC Chairperson or Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief, may occupy temporary liaison positions for the purpose of facilitating communications between these programs and the WLC. The WLC Chairperson and the Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief may invite regional directors, regional wilderness coordinators, superintendents, and other visitors as appropriate and necessary.
- D. Term: Members serve 3 year terms. Membership terms are staggered so that no more than 3-4 members are replaced in any given year. Membership is generally for one term; members seeking a second term will only be considered through a new application to a vacant position.
- E. Selection Process: WLC vacancies are advertised broadly in each region and program area with a self-nomination form (with supervisor approval) used to generate a list of candidates. Field members require approval by supervisor, superintendent, and/or regional director; staff members require approval by their supervisors and the appropriate associate director. Selections will be recommended by the WLC, subject to approval by the AD-VRP who retains the right to accept, refuse or modify these recommendations.
- F. Chairperson/Vice Chairperson: Two members are selected by the full membership to function as the WLC Chairperson and Vice Chairperson for a minimum of 1.5 year terms. These selections are subject to approval by the AD-VRP. The Vice Chairperson assists and backs up the Chair. The duties of the Chairperson include:
- Facilitation of WLC meetings and functions.
 - Oversight of WLC operations, including approval of meeting agenda items, schedules, meeting locations, subcommittee operations and other activities affecting WLC purpose and functions.
 - Coordination, with the assistance of the Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief and program staff, of the assignment of WLC members to various projects and duties and oversees the completion of these projects.
- G. Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief: The Wilderness Stewardship Division Chief functions on the WLC as the principal representative of the AD-VRP as well as representing the NPS Wilderness Program.

- H. Program Staff: The Wilderness Training Manager (NPS representative at the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center) functions in a support role to the WLC.
- I. Training: Before or early during their terms, all members will be required to complete the National Wilderness Stewardship Training course sponsored by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center.
- J. Voting: When necessary, decisions or recommendations for consideration by any level of the Directorate will be voted on by the General Membership. Nothing in this paragraph precludes soliciting advice of counsel from other program staff, liaisons or guests.

Recommended:  Date: May 21, 2014
Sarah Creachbaum
Chairman NPS Wilderness Leadership Council

Approved:  Date: May 21, 2014
Cameron Sholly
Associate Director, Visitor and Resource Protection