

**FOREST SERVICE MANUAL
NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS (WO)
WASHINGTON, DC**

**FSM 2300 - RECREATION, WILDERNESS, AND RELATED
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT
CHAPTER 2320 - WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT**

Effective Date: January 22, 2007

(KEY EXCERPTS FOR READ TRAINING)

2320.1 - Authority

The principal laws affecting the administration of National Forest wilderness areas are:

1. The Wilderness Act of 1964, as enacted September 3, 1964, and amended October 21, 1978 (16 U.S.C. 1131-1136), specifies congressional policy to secure for the American people an enduring resource of wilderness for the enjoyment of present and future generations. It defines wildernesses as areas untrammeled by people that offer outstanding opportunities for solitude and directs agencies to manage wilderness to preserve natural ecological conditions (section 2320.6). With certain exceptions, the Act prohibits motorized equipment, structures, installations, roads, commercial enterprises, aircraft landings, and mechanical transport. The Act permits mining on valid claims, access to private lands, fire control, insect and disease control, grazing, water resource structures (upon the approval of the President), and visitor use.

2320.2 - Objectives

1. Maintain and perpetuate the enduring resource of wilderness as one of the multiple uses of National Forest System land.

2. Maintain wilderness in such a manner that ecosystems are unaffected by human manipulation and influences so that plants and animals develop and respond to natural forces.

3. Minimize the impact of those kinds of uses and activities generally prohibited by the Wilderness Act, but specifically excepted by the Act or subsequent legislation.

4. Protect and perpetuate wilderness character and public values including, but not limited to, opportunities for scientific study, education, solitude, physical and mental challenge and stimulation, inspiration, and primitive recreation experiences.

2320.3 - Policy

1. Where there are alternatives among management decisions, wilderness values shall dominate over all other considerations except where limited by the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation, or regulations.
2. Manage the use of other resources in wilderness in a manner compatible with wilderness resource management objectives.
3. In wildernesses where the establishing legislation permits resource uses and activities that are nonconforming exceptions to the definition of wilderness as described in the Wilderness Act, manage these nonconforming uses and activities in such a manner as to minimize their effect on the wilderness resource.
4. Cease uses and activities and remove existing structures not essential to the administration, protection, or management of wilderness for wilderness purposes or not provided for in the establishing legislation.
5. Because wilderness does not exist in a vacuum, consider activities on both sides of wilderness boundaries during planning and articulate management goals and the blending of diverse resources in forest plans. Do not maintain buffer strips of undeveloped wildland to provide an informal extension of wilderness. Do not maintain internal buffer zones that degrade wilderness values. Use the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (FSM 2310) as a tool to plan adjacent land management.
6. Manage each wilderness as a total unit and coordinate management direction when they cross other administrative boundaries.
7. Use interdisciplinary skills in planning for wilderness use and administration.
8. Gather necessary information and carry out research programs in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment.
9. Whenever and wherever possible, acquire non-Federal lands located within wildernesses, as well as non-Federal lands within those areas recommended for inclusion in the system.
10. Inform wilderness visitors that they face inherent risks of adverse weather conditions, isolation, physical hazards, and lack of rapid communications, and that search and rescue may not be as rapid as expected in an urban setting in all publications and personal contacts.
11. Manage primitive areas as wilderness areas consistent with 36 CFR 293.17 until their designation as wilderness or to other use is determined by Congress.

2323.43b - Emergency Burned Area Rehabilitation

Permit emergency burned area rehabilitation only if necessary to prevent an unnatural loss of the wilderness resource or to protect life, property, and other resource values outside of wilderness. Normally use hand tools and equipment to install selected land and channel treatments.

2324.2 - Management of Fire

2324.21 - Objectives

The objectives of fire management in wilderness are to:

1. Permit lightning caused fires to play, as nearly as possible, their natural ecological role within wilderness.
2. Reduce, to an acceptable level, the risks and consequences of wildfire within wilderness or escaping from wilderness.

2324.22 - Policy

1. Two types of prescribed fires may be approved for use within wilderness: those ignited by lightning and allowed to burn under prescribed conditions and those ignited by qualified Forest Service officers.
2. No fire may be ignited or allowed to burn without documented, preplanned, specified conditions.
3. Document specific objectives, standards, and guidelines for the control of wildfire and the use of prescribed fire within each wilderness (FSM 5100, 5150, and 5190) in a forest plan or, where the forest planning process has not been completed, in either an interim wilderness management or fire management area plan. Document specific direction for fire program implementation in the forest fire management action plan (FSH 5109.19).
4. Suppress all wildfires within wilderness in accordance with the direction FSM 5130.
5. Fire ignited by lightning may be permitted to burn if prescribed in an approved plan (FSM 2324 and 5150).
6. Forest Service managers may ignite a prescribed fire in wilderness to reduce unnatural buildups of fuels only if necessary to meet at least one of the wilderness fire management objectives set forth in FSM 2324.21 and if all of the following conditions are met:
 - a. The use of prescribed fire or other fuel treatment measures outside of wilderness is not sufficient to achieve fire management objectives within wilderness.

- b. An interdisciplinary team of resource specialists has evaluated and recommended the proposed use of prescribed fire.
 - c. The interested public has been involved appropriately in the decision.
 - d. Lightning-caused fires cannot be allowed to burn because they will pose serious threats to life and/or property within wilderness or to life, property, or natural resources outside of wilderness.
7. Do not use prescribed fire in wilderness to benefit wildlife, maintain vegetative types, improve forage production, or enhance other resource values. Although these additional effects may result from a decision to use prescribed fire, use fire in wilderness only to meet wilderness fire management objectives.
8. Do not use management ignited fire to achieve wilderness fire management objectives where lightning-caused fires can achieve them.

2324.23 - Fire Management Activities

Conduct all fire management activities within wilderness in a manner compatible with overall wilderness management objectives. Give preference to using methods and equipment that cause the least:

1. Alteration of the wilderness landscape.
2. Disturbance of the land surface.
3. Disturbance to visitor solitude.
4. Reduction of visibility during periods of visitor use.
5. Adverse effect on other air quality related values.

Locate fire camps, helispots, and other temporary facilities or improvements outside of the wilderness boundary whenever feasible. Rehabilitate disturbed areas within wilderness to as natural an appearance as possible.

2326 - USE OF MOTORIZED EQUIPMENT OR MECHANICAL TRANSPORT IN WILDERNESS

2326.02 - Objectives

1. Accomplish management activities with nonmotorized equipment and nonmechanical transport of supplies and personnel.

2. Exclude the sight, sound, and other tangible evidence of motorized equipment or mechanical transport within wilderness except where they are needed and justified.

2326.04b - Regional Forester

The Regional Forester is responsible for approving:

1. Transport and supply by aircraft, air drop, motor boat, or mechanical transport for situations that meet the conditions under items 2, 4, or 5, in FSM 2326.1.

2. Hand-portable motorized equipment for needs that meet conditions listed under item 5 of FSM 2326.1.

3. Motorized ground equipment not designed for personnel transport and of a type or size that is controlled from a position afoot.

4. Use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment, and mechanical transport for situations involving established livestock grazing operations (FSM 2204 and 2323.2), and transport of wildlife or fish when nonmotorized means are not feasible (FSM 2323.3).

5. Use of motorized equipment specifically allowed by individual wilderness acts subsequent to the Wilderness Act.

2326.04c - Forest Supervisor

The Forest Supervisor approves the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport under conditions described in section 2326.1, item 1 or 3. However, the Regional Forester shall approve the use of tractors for fire suppression.

2326.1 - Conditions Under Which Use May Be Approved

Allow the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport only for:

1. Emergencies where the situation involves an inescapable urgency and temporary need for speed beyond that available by primitive means. Categories include fire suppression, health and safety, law enforcement involving serious crime or fugitive pursuit, removal of deceased persons, and aircraft accident investigations.

2. Aircraft or motorboat use established before the area was designated as wilderness by the Act of 1964 or subsequent wilderness legislation.

3. Exploration and development of valid existing mineral rights (FSM 2323.7).

4. Access to surrounded State and private lands and valid occupancies (FSM 2326.13).

5. To meet minimum needs for protection and administration of the area as wilderness, only as follows:

- a. A delivery or application problem necessary to meet wilderness objectives cannot be resolved within reason through the use of nonmotorized methods.
- b. An essential activity is impossible to accomplish by nonmotorized means because of such factors as time or season limitations, safety, or other material restrictions.
- c. A necessary and continuing program was established around the use of motorized equipment before the unit became a part of the National Wilderness Preservation System, and the continued use of motorized equipment is essential to continuation of the program.
- d. Removal of aircraft wreckage when nonmotorized methods are unsuitable.

Specify, for each wilderness, the places and circumstances in which motorized equipment, mechanical transport, or aircraft are necessary for protection and administration of the wilderness and its resources in the forest plan.

The Line Officer approving the use of motorized equipment, aircraft, or mechanical transport shall specify what uses of that equipment are suitable and will have the least lasting impact to the wilderness resource. Schedule use of this equipment to minimize impact on wilderness visitors.