

Wilderness Fish and Wildlife Management

Minimum Requirements

The language in Section 4c of The Wilderness Act of 1964 identifies prohibited uses in wilderness except as necessary to meet minimum requirements necessary for the administration of the area as wilderness. Management of fish and wildlife in wilderness is part of administration of the wilderness and some activities may require authorization for use of a prohibited use. The prohibited uses that apply to fish and wildlife management activities typically include landing of aircraft, use of motor vehicles (e.g. snowmobiles or motor boats), use of motorized equipment (e.g. chainsaws) or installations (e.g. fish barriers, monitoring equipment or wildlife radio collars).

Authority to approve an exception for any of the prohibited uses lies with the federal land management agency; Bureau of Land Management, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, U. S. Forest Service or National Park Service). Exceptions to a prohibited use are typically authorized on a case by case basis and only after a minimum requirements analysis determining the necessity for administrative action in wilderness and, if so, identifying the activity (method or tool) that will have the least impact to wilderness character.

The Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) was developed by the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center to assist wilderness managers with the analysis. It can be found at: <http://www.wilderness.net/MRA>. The MRDG is not federal agency policy, unless specifically identified by the agency, but does provide a useful process for making and documenting minimum requirements decisions.