



# **Wilderness Stewardship Performance:** Guidance for Developing an Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy

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**Moonset at sunrise over Gila Country**  
Photo Credit – U.S. Forest Service

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## Introduction

The purpose of this document and accompanying example indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy for the Gila and Aldo Leopold Wildernesses of the Gila National Forest is to provide guidance to land managers responsible for administering congressionally designated wilderness in developing their own wilderness-specific strategies. Developing such a strategy is a requirement of the U.S. Forest Service's (USFS) scoring criteria for the optional Fish and Wildlife Element of Wilderness Stewardship Performance (WSP). Stand-alone indigenous fish and wildlife management strategies developed by guidance provided herein are intended to inform decisions in respective wildernesses by focusing on local issues relevant in those specific places. Where it makes sense to do so (i.e., for adjacent or nearly adjacent wildernesses sharing the same fish and wildlife management issues) multiple wildernesses may be covered under a single strategy document. Other fish or wildlife management strategies (e.g., conservation strategies, recovery plans, state fish and wildlife action plans, etc.) may help inform development of an indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy for wilderness, but are usually not geographically specific (to the wilderness) and therefore do not constitute a sufficient wilderness-specific strategy on their own.

The target audience for this guidance document and accompanying example includes USFS staff who have responsibilities for managing fish, wildlife, and wilderness resources on National Forest System lands, and collaborators involved with this work from outside the agency. The suggestions provided here are largely the product of a pilot workshop hosted by the Gila National Forest in September 2016, and were developed by subject matter experts in wildlife and fisheries management, and wilderness stewardship at the district, forest, regional, and national levels of the USFS. This work was further informed by participation from the relevant state fish and wildlife agency for the Gila National Forest (New Mexico Department of Game and Fish) and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Appendix A). Developing this guidance for applicability nationwide and sharing constructive feedback on the pilot workshop (Appendix B) were core objectives from the outset. Workshop participants and contributors sought to provide input they believed would be useful within and beyond the wildernesses of the Gila National Forest.

There are multiple ways to develop an effective strategy to inform fish and wildlife management in congressionally designated wilderness. The guidance and resources here are neither intended to constrain creative thinking nor to be prescriptive in how units administering wilderness go about strategy development. Managers are encouraged to adapt processes, formats, and content to meet local needs. Consider this guidance food for thought to put managers on a productive, but supremely flexible track. Once developed, indigenous fish and wildlife management strategies are expected to be reviewed and updated as needed based on new information, effectiveness monitoring results, or changes in conditions.

## Fish & Wildlife Management from the Perspective of Wilderness Character

Central to the development of a well thought out indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy for use in designated wilderness is recognition that indigenous biota of a given wilderness collectively constitute a fundamental component of that place's wilderness character. For purposes of strategy development under WSP "indigenous species" are those wildlife and fish species that historically occurred within a particular wilderness without human assistance. Of the five qualities of wilderness character (untrammled, natural, undeveloped, outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, and other features of



value), it is most commonly the natural quality of wilderness that is degraded when direct or indirect human pressures cause the decline or loss of indigenous fish or wildlife from any portion of their historic range within wilderness. Put simply, wilderness depends on indigenous fish and wildlife. Given the integrity of key terrestrial and aquatic habitats found within the boundaries of the National Wilderness Preservation System it is not a stretch to consider this a reciprocal relationship. Again, put simply, many indigenous fish and wildlife depend on wilderness. Furthermore, for a large segment of the public, these values of wild species and wild places are inextricably intertwined.

Acknowledging this interdependence of indigenous fish and wildlife, and wilderness, it is essential to also understand that any action taken to address fish or wildlife management objectives in wilderness comes at a cost to wilderness character. By intervening in wilderness, even to a small degree and with the best and most justifiable of intentions, managers detract, at a minimum, from the untrammelled quality of wilderness. Depending on the specific management action, other qualities of wilderness character may also be degraded as a result of fish and wildlife management. To be clear: that does not mean that a completely hands-off approach is always the right answer. In fact and to the contrary, sometimes management actions are appropriate in wilderness to restore or ensure persistence of indigenous fish or wildlife populations faced with direct or indirect human pressures.

Sound decision-making in this arena depends on the ability of managers to weigh the trade-offs associated with intervening in the interest of species conservation, while also balancing the mandates of other pertinent legislation (e.g., Endangered Species Act). In some cases this can be quite complex subject matter. The first steps towards success are opening clear lines of communication and improving understanding across disciplines within the USFS, with integral partner agencies (e.g., state fish and wildlife agencies, tribal governments, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, etc.), and other interested stakeholders.

**The goals of developing an indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy are to:**

- Improve communication and understanding among program areas about important considerations for managing fish and wildlife in wilderness.
- Identify priority species and document management objectives, specific to a given wilderness / wildernesses.
- Better inform future decisions by daylighting and discussing trade-offs of various management actions as viewed from all perspectives.
- Provide a forum for partners to share their perspectives and contribute to informing and supporting future fish and wildlife management decisions and actions.

### **Components of an Effective Priority Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy**

Think of the strategy primarily as a tool to memorialize discussions that occur during interdisciplinary team meeting(s) focused on this subject, informed by stakeholder input and interests. A stellar note-taker will be valuable to be sure important points are captured well.



Key components include:

- A list of priority indigenous fish / wildlife species (i.e., those seen as top priorities for local management / monitoring in the near term; see WSP Guidebook for more information) and explanation of why each was selected as such. **Note:** This list can be modified at local discretion any time as priorities or conditions change.
- A brief discussion of current and historical status, to the extent possible (distribution, conservation status, historical and trend information, etc.), for each priority species in and around the wilderness(es) covered by the strategy document.
- Near-term survey, assessment, and monitoring needs, and management goals / objectives pertaining to each priority species.
- A description of other supporting documents and resources available to inform management of each species (e.g., species recovery plans, conservation agreements, state wildlife action plans, relevant datasets, etc. – highlight important information only and incorporate by reference but do not include vast amounts of text from those documents).
- Identification and description of possible future management actions (e.g., specifics of each activity should include what, where, when, who, how often, sequence with other activities, etc.), informed by interdisciplinary team input and stakeholder involvement. **Note:** If discussions about a particular management action are sufficiently advanced, this may include detailed descriptions of actions that the interdisciplinary team is recommending for implementation / further analysis as appropriate (minimum requirement analysis / NEPA analysis) in a specific timeframe.
- Discussion of the tradeoffs and important considerations of possible future actions from both a fish and wildlife management perspective and a wilderness stewardship perspective.
- Description of how the effectiveness of future management actions is to be evaluated and used to guide subsequent work.

Suggestions for keeping the strategy document concise, effective, and appropriate:

- Bear in mind that the strategy is not intended to be a decision document. Lay out management options, pros and cons, and the team's reasoning for considering any interventions in wilderness, but avoid content that might be interpreted as pre-decisional.
- Depending on the specifics of future management actions, NEPA decisions and / or Minimum Requirements Decision Guides may be needed. Given the difference in intent, your strategy document should not read like either of these other resources.
- Avoid exhaustive discussions of the ecology of each priority indigenous species.
- Avoid discussing species beyond your list of select priority indigenous species without a logical reason for doing so (e.g., a direct link to one of your selected species or possible management actions).
- Avoid repeating content readily available elsewhere. Instead, include by reference in a concise format (e.g., a list of relevant sources).

## Revisiting an Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Strategy – A Living Document

Strategies should be reviewed and revised over time to reflect up-to-date information on fish and wildlife management priorities, partnership opportunities, newly identified threats and



stressors to indigenous species, emerging information needs, and other substantial changes related to fish and wildlife management in the focal wilderness(es). This is important to ensure that content reflects current priorities, changes in available data, and captures any desired modifications of the priority indigenous species list. Using the Gila as an example, there was a commitment by relevant staff and partners to gather annually as an interdisciplinary team to review the strategy and revise as appropriate. If major revisions are to be pursued in a given year then the process of updating the strategy document should include assembling a balanced interdisciplinary team (solid representation from a fisheries / wildlife perspective, and from a wilderness perspective), stakeholder and partner engagement, a review of status shifts for priority species, documentation of key findings from review, and documentation of the review itself in the updated version of the strategy.

## Creating a Sound Strategy

### **Step 1: The Right People**

An effective indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy should be developed in an interdisciplinary fashion with participation from key partner agencies and organizations. Recognizing the integral roles and responsibilities of other agencies in managing fish and wildlife (e.g., state fish and wildlife agencies, tribal governments, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Marine Fisheries Service, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, etc.), their participation and input are essential to a sound process.

The following are recommended as participants in developing indigenous fish and wildlife management strategies, based on experience gained during the Gila workshop:

- Representative(s) from relevant state fish and wildlife agency / agencies
- Representative(s) from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and / or National Marine Fisheries Service, as appropriate based on indigenous species within the focus wilderness(es)
- Representative(s) from relevant tribal governments
- USFS district and forest staff responsible for wilderness stewardship / recreation
- USFS district and forest staff responsible for fish and wildlife management
- Other USFS district and forest staff as necessary depending on indigenous fish and wildlife management issues and potential management actions (e.g., hydrologist, botanist, fire management officer / fire ecologist, silviculturist, soil scientist, engineer, etc.)
- USFS district rangers with wilderness responsibilities
- USFS forest supervisor
- Interested partner groups (non-governmental organizations interested in fish / wildlife / wilderness, tribes, universities, researchers, etc., as appropriate locally)
- Etc.

Note: consider the above list as a starting point, and adjust as needed to address local management objectives. There may be interest and subject matter expertise available through other channels. Be sure to list those who participated in development of the strategy and their affiliation and/or area(s) of expertise.

A complete list of Gila workshop participants is included as Appendix A.





## **Step 2: Adequate Time**

The pilot workshop conducted on the Gila National Forest was completed in slightly less than a single working day. A dedicated half-day is suggested as an absolute minimum if there is already a high level of comfort and familiarity with the subject matter among staff and partners. It is likely that some units will require multiple days to complete this work, especially where management issues are complex, socially / politically sensitive, and / or there is a need or desire to review fundamental wilderness management principles in greater depth with staff and partners (a review of this information was seen as especially valuable for some participants in the Gila pilot workshop). Use sound judgement and be realistic when developing an agenda (draft agenda from Gila workshop is included as Appendix C). Important workshop pre-work might include gathering and reviewing relevant documents (e.g., recovery plans, conservation agreements, state wildlife action plans, etc.) and data resources pertaining to indigenous species in the wilderness(es) of interest, ensuring availability and participation of key interdisciplinary team members, preparing updates on any recent or ongoing management work that may relate to the strategy document, and preparing briefings for the interdisciplinary team about emerging management needs or issues.

## **Step 3: Selecting Priority Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Species**

The bulk of content in the strategy should focus narrowly on the set of priority species selected by your team. The goal of the Fish and Wildlife Element of WSP is not to prescribe any particular process for managers to use in selecting priority indigenous species. The Guidebook only states that, “actions must address one terrestrial and one aquatic priority indigenous species, though only if both are present.”

USFS units may choose to select virtually any species that meets the definition of “indigenous species” provided in the Guidebook (“Those wildlife and fish species that historically occurred within a wilderness area without human assistance”) as a priority indigenous species. It is a matter of local preference and should be driven by local USFS and partner priorities. The omission of any particular species should not be interpreted as indicating that species is not important. Rather, the omission of a species simply means that actively monitoring, surveying, or managing that species in a particular wilderness is not a near-term priority at this point in time.

Managers may wish to include the following as priority indigenous species in their strategy:

- Indigenous species listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act
- Indigenous species being considered for listing under the Endangered Species Act
- Indigenous species identified by the state as conservation or management priorities
- Indigenous species considered culturally important by a tribal government
- Indigenous species identified as at-risk by the USFS (Species of Conservation Concern, Regional Forester’s Sensitive Species, etc.)

Factors that should influence the selection process include:

- Consider species currently / foreseeably being actively managed (not including routine harvest as managed by state fish and wildlife agencies) in wilderness
- Consider species that are especially reliant upon habitat within the wilderness(es) of interest for their restoration / recovery / or persistence (e.g., core historical / current habitat inherently tied to designated wilderness).



- Consider species for which near-term management objectives (not including routine harvest as managed by state fish and wildlife agencies) have been identified by USFS staff and partners (government and / or non-government)
- Consider species that may serve as a surrogate for other indigenous species and/or for which management actions would have similar benefits to other indigenous species
- Consider species for which partner (agency / NGO) resources are available to support species-specific objectives compatible with wilderness stewardship

#### A note about considering species listed under the Endangered Species Act

Although managers are not directed to select priority species based on criteria other than their status as indigenous to a given wilderness, it is worth noting that species listed under the Endangered Species Act as threatened or endangered often convey a heightened sense of urgency and therefore sometimes warrant more active management in designated wilderness than those not listed. This is due to federal managers' responsibility to concurrently balance the mandates of the Endangered Species Act with those of the Wilderness Act. In short, more can be done to actively manage listed species in wilderness due to their special status under the ESA. This point may, in some cases, make federally listed species appealing priority indigenous species in wilderness.

Note: See Gila Strategy for a description of how the interdisciplinary team selected their list of priority indigenous species, including consideration of status under the ESA.

#### **Step 4: Determining Proper Scope for Strategy – Single versus Multiple Wildernesses**

The Fish and Wildlife Element of Wilderness Stewardship Performance states that the indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy “should be wilderness-specific and consistent with wilderness management policy, but may include other adjacent wilderness areas and be at a larger landscape-scale.” There may be considerable gains in efficiency by addressing multiple wildernesses with a single strategy. The decision of whether to include more than one wilderness should be made based on the spatial proximity and ecological similarities of the wildernesses in question, and the degree of consistency in their management needs. The Gila Strategy provides a good example in this regard by including two adjacent wildernesses (Gila Wilderness and Aldo Leopold Wilderness) which are bisected only by a gravel road. Most of the priority species selected for the Gila strategy span the two wildernesses, and the landscapes are ecologically similar. In contrast, the third wilderness managed by the Gila National Forest (Blue Range Wilderness) is considerably drier and distant from the other two, making it a relatively poor fit for inclusion in the example strategy provided.

#### **Step 5: Assessing Status of Priority Indigenous Species in Wilderness**

Once the interdisciplinary team has settled on a list of priority indigenous species, the status (historical, current, and trend, when possible) of each species should be described as part of the strategy. When possible this description should include the importance of habitat within the wilderness to the species' conservation from a range-wide perspective. A basic question for each species is that of conservation status. Is the species formally listed or otherwise recognized as being in need of conservation attention for some reason? If so provide details. For some species there may be a complete, or near complete lack of historical and current information. Pointing to these data gaps and needs in wilderness will be sufficient in those instances. In other cases there may be recent or historical data that provide valuable details about the status of a particular species (e.g., current and / or historical distribution, population structure, known





threats, past management actions, genetic status, relevant disturbance events, etc.) that should be discussed in this section. In the interest of keeping the strategy document focused and concise, keep these discussions targeted on the status of priority species within and adjacent to the wilderness(es) of interest. Status of priority species in faraway locales may not relate to local management, and in such cases would be beyond the scope of a to-the-point strategy document.

## **Step 6: Priority Indigenous Species Management Goals and Wilderness**

### **Considerations**

For each of the priority indigenous species included in a strategy the authors and interdisciplinary team should be able to answer the following question:

“What do you want to achieve in this wilderness with respect to that particular species?”

Species-specific answers to that question go in this section. Focus the thinking around what a desirable outcome (e.g., species distribution, abundance, growth, genetic diversity, etc.) would look like on the ground, not on trying to choose exactly how those goals will be achieved. Keep options on the table and avoid being pre-decisional with your writing. For example, in the Gila strategy, a goal was to have each unique lineage of Gila trout replicated in different stream segments so if one population is eliminated from a stochastic event (e.g., high-severity wildfire) the unique genetics of that lineage will have a higher likelihood of being retained. The team acknowledged that there are different ways to achieve that outcome, with varying degrees of impact to wilderness character. The various management options were discussed in terms of pros and cons from a fisheries management standpoint and from the perspective of wilderness character. Line officers weighing Gila trout management decisions in the future will be more informed and prepared based on these documented interdisciplinary discussions.

### **Other relevant content and considerations for this section**

- This section would be a good place to include a list of resources available to guide species management in wilderness (e.g., recovery plans for ESA-listed species, conservation agreements, relevant language from current forest plan, memoranda of understanding pertaining to a particular wilderness, etc.).
- Management goals outlined in the strategy should complement other relevant plans - don't develop management objectives that are inconsistent with the resources listed in the bullet point above.
- The most pressing management need for some species might simply be more information. Filling such data gaps may constitute an important management objective and should be documented as such.

## **Step 7: Management Actions for Priority Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Species**

Identify and describe specific indigenous fish and wildlife management actions that are viewed favorably by the interdisciplinary team and stakeholders. Specifics of each activity should include what, where, when, who, how often, sequence with other activities, etc. This should be done in a manner that explores all viable options without being pre-decisional by capturing a discussion of the full range of actions identified, describing how they would benefit (or impact) other indigenous species, and the tradeoffs involved with wilderness stewardship.

## **Step 8: Effectiveness Monitoring**

For each of the species-specific management recommendations identified under Step 7, the authors and interdisciplinary team should develop monitoring questions that can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of any actions that are ultimately taken. Think of effectiveness both in



terms of achieving fish and wildlife management outcomes, and in terms of safeguarding wilderness character.

Here are some generic examples (specific, real-world examples are presented in the accompanying Gila Strategy):

- What proportion of currently suitable historic habitat for indigenous species X is now occupied by indigenous species X? (Upward trend positive from fisheries / wildlife management perspective and positive from wilderness character perspective.)
- What proportion of currently suitable habitat for indigenous fish species X is currently occupied by invasive fish species? (Downward trend positive from fisheries management perspective and positive from wilderness character perspective.)
- What are the annual trends in trammeling actions taken to support fisheries / wildlife management (Downward trend positive from wilderness character perspective, changes in trammeling are neutral from fisheries / wildlife management perspective.)
- How much sampling effort was invested to evaluate current distribution of indigenous species X? (Robust surveys positive from fisheries / wildlife management perspective, neutral from wilderness character perspective.)

#### Relating Monitoring to Adaptive Management

The effectiveness monitoring section of a priority indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy is an ideal place to consider how the results of monitoring might inform subsequent management decisions. If a particular action is found to not be achieving the desired result then what options should managers consider? Given the importance of minimizing trammeling actions in wilderness there will ideally be meaningful gains in conserving or recovering indigenous species for each management action taken. If this is shown not to be the case then how should managers respond? These are important concepts worthy of some thought and discussion that fit well in this section.

An example from the Gila Strategy: If attempts using electrofishing fail to remove non-native fishes from a stream reach that is otherwise suitable for Gila trout restoration then it may be warranted for managers to either: 1) cease attempting to remove non-native fishes, or 2) consider treating the stream reach chemically before reintroducing Gila trout.

#### **Conclusion**

Despite the common misconception that wilderness is essentially off-limits when it comes to fish and wildlife management, there are many opportunities for indigenous fish and wildlife, and wilderness character to collectively benefit from mindful management actions or other interventions. The act of bringing together specialists from within and outside the USFS to discuss and document the topics presented here is an essential step in understanding where there is room to operate effectively and justifiably. The process of developing an indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy for wilderness is designed to do just that. Through these discussions specialists from a variety of disciplines will be thinking about and documenting how to get the right fish and wildlife work accomplished in wilderness in the right ways – ideally with a shared appreciation for the values of indigenous fish and wildlife, and of wilderness character, recognizing them as one and the same.



## Appendix A – Example Gila Workshop Participants / Interdisciplinary Team

Name	Agency	Title / Subject Matter	USFS Agency Level	Wilderness / Fish and Wildlife	Email Address
Jill Wick	NMDGF*	Gila Trout Biologist	-	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:jill.wick@state.nm.us">jill.wick@state.nm.us</a>
Michelle Christman	USFWS	Fish and Wildlife Biologist / Amphibians and Reptiles	-	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:michelle_christman@fws.gov">michelle_christman@fws.gov</a>
Andrew Dean	USFWS	Fish Biologist - Gila Region	-	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:andy_dean@fws.gov">andy_dean@fws.gov</a>
Diane Taliaferro	USFS	District Ranger (Gila NF, Silver City RD)	District Level	Both	<a href="mailto:dtaliaferro@fs.fed.us">dtaliaferro@fs.fed.us</a>
Anne Casey	USFS	District Ranger (Gila NF, Glenwood RD)	District Level	Both	<a href="mailto:acasey@fs.fed.us">acasey@fs.fed.us</a>
Rachelle Huddleston-Lorton	USFS	District Ranger (Gila NF, Wilderness RD)	District Level	Both	<a href="mailto:rhuddlestonlorton@fs.fed.us">rhuddlestonlorton@fs.fed.us</a>
Silas Davidson	USFS	North Zone Recreation Program (Gila NF)	District Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:sdavidson@fs.fed.us">sdavidson@fs.fed.us</a>
Amy Hartell	USFS	South Zone Recreation Program (Gila NF)	District Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:ahartell@fs.fed.us">ahartell@fs.fed.us</a>
Annette Smits	USFS	North Zone Trails Manager / Wilderness Advisory Group	District Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:asmits@fs.fed.us">asmits@fs.fed.us</a>
Christa Osborn	USFS	Recreation Program Manager (Gila NF)	Forest Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:cmosborn@fs.fed.us">cmosborn@fs.fed.us</a>
Art Telles	USFS	Natural Resources Staff Officer (Gila NF)	Forest Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:atelles@fs.fed.us">atelles@fs.fed.us</a>
Jerry Monzingo	USFS	Wildlife, Fish, Rare Plants Program Manager	Forest Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:jmonzingo@fs.fed.us">jmonzingo@fs.fed.us</a>
Dustin Myers	USFS	Fish Biologist	Forest Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:dustinmyers@fs.fed.us">dustinmyers@fs.fed.us</a>
Eric Flood	USFS	Outdoor Recreation Planner - Gila	Forest Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:eflood@fs.fed.us">eflood@fs.fed.us</a>
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Yvette Paroz	USFS	Regional Fish Program Leader	Regional Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:ymparoz@fs.fed.us">ymparoz@fs.fed.us</a>
Brian Dykstra	USFS	Regional Wildlife Program Leader	Regional Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:bdykstra@fs.fed.us">bdykstra@fs.fed.us</a>
Karl Malcolm	USFS	Regional Wildlife Ecologist	Regional Level	Fish and Wildlife	<a href="mailto:kdmalcolm@fs.fed.us">kdmalcolm@fs.fed.us</a>
Sandy Skrien	USFS	National Wilderness Program Manager	National Level	Wilderness	<a href="mailto:sskrien@fs.fed.us">sskrien@fs.fed.us</a>
Katey Driscoll	USFS	Ecologist / Rocky Mountain Research Station	Research Branch	Both	<a href="mailto:katelyndriscoll@fs.fed.us">katelyndriscoll@fs.fed.us</a>

\*NMDGF = New Mexico Department of Game and Fish



## Appendix B – Feedback from Gila Workshop Participants

At the close of the pilot workshop on the Gila National Forest, anonymous feedback was solicited from workshop participants to inform these efforts elsewhere. Fourteen participants responded, and their feedback is provided below.

- 1. Compared to other planning processes you have experienced, please rank today’s workshop based on how effectively you feel the group’s time was spent and our stated goals were met (circle one):**

Poor	0
Below Average	0
Average	0
Above Average	11
Outstanding	3

- 2. Please rank the degree to which you expect today’s workshop will set the stage for more informed and timely fish /wildlife / wilderness management decisions to be made in the future (circle one):**

Poor	0
Below Average	0
Average	4
Above Average	5
Outstanding	5

- 3. One goal of today’s workshop is to support development of resources that will inform similar efforts for other wildernesses managed by the USFS elsewhere. Specific deliverables include, 1) suggestions on recruiting a strong interdisciplinary team to achieve this work, 2) documentation describing how you selected priority indigenous species, 3) documentation describing how you generated content for a concise but effective indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy, and 4) an example indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy for one or more wildernesses. What other resources (if any) do you think might help others succeed in this work?**

Responses:

- Leadership Prioritization
- Having non-government participants in the meeting
- Provide summarized feedback from multiple forests beyond just the Gila
- More state input, we only had fisheries input
- Documentation and explanation of why / why not to prioritize species
- Including important partner organizations beyond state and federal agencies. TNC in this case?
- Including a crosswalk of how these types of actions intersect and affect wilderness character
- Consider how other WSP elements and research may play into fish and wildlife mgmt. that is unique to that wilderness

- 4. Overall, what worked well today?**



#### Responses:

- Good objectives. Very strong facilitation. Everyone participated.
- Having a diverse group provide input. Adhering to a timeline – good moderation. Establishing a baseline for what the objectives were based on wilderness definitions.
- Good communication between multiple parties with differing priorities.
- The potential of integrated thoughts. Working on multiple wilderness values at once. Recognizing importance of traditional methods.
- Great meeting for it being the first of its kind.
- Got key players’ participation. Not too rigid an agenda. On the right track.
- The format and organization was well thought out. Jerry Monzingo did a great job of being prepared. It was really great to have so many folks from the RO participate.
- Respectful dialogue. Appreciation for both resources. Met goals laid out at start of day.
- Seemed like a thorough conversation and everyone generally agreed with how to approach fish and wildlife management in wilderness.
- Good to see so many folks take part from different agencies – overall a good step.
- Well facilitated and kept on track / task. Peoples’ thoughts and opinions were requested and heard.
- Good mix of folks at all levels of agency and appreciated other agency involvement

#### **5. If we had it all to do over again, what should we try differently?**

#### Responses:

- Maybe consider wilderness specific group(s)? Perhaps like New Mexico Wilderness Alliance since some of the potential treatments include trammeling which is an issue that has seemed to come up recently. Not sure if this is the correct way to include them or not. While this group needed to be heavy on biologists it seemed as though it was lighter on those with wilderness specific knowledge. A couple times it seemed as though we were almost getting into pre-decisional / action oriented. Could be wrong in my perspective on this – just ideas. All of this is from a non-wildlife person – so take with a bottle of salt.
- I would have liked to see more specific management objectives identified and / or specific actions required to complete those actions.
- It was great to have multiple programs represented, though I felt that the wilderness folks had less opportunity for input than the biologists. Maybe this was a result of the subject matter, or the nature of ongoing actions on the Gila, but to make content more equal across programs would be nice if possible. I will also be curious to see how the strategy emphasizes the “minimum tool” since that was touched on but didn’t constitute a large portion of the workshop.
- Before we broke for lunch it seemed like the moderator was pushing for certain species to be included and others not. Being aware of perceptions helps us manage them. Overall a great job.
- Probably need more than one day for workshop.
- As an outsider to the Forest Service, additional background on wilderness actions and processes may have been helpful to speed up the process.
- No suggestions for improving the workshop. In the future I hope forests will be able to take this template and develop strategies without as much regional office involvement.





- Plan meeting for greater representation from state fish and wildlife agency.



## **Appendix C – Agenda from Example Workshop on Gila National Forest Gila National Forest Wilderness Stewardship Performance: Indigenous Fish and Wildlife Management Workshop**

Thursday September 29th, 2016

8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. Mountain Daylight Time

### **Agenda Topics**

- **Overview of workshop goals and brief introduction to Wilderness Stewardship Performance (WSP, Fredrickson and Malcolm)**
- **Background and review of Fish and Wildlife Element in WSP Guidebook, and description of deliverables we seek to develop today (Dykstra, Fredrickson, Malcolm, Paroz)**
  - Deliverable 1: Process for selecting priority indigenous species
  - Deliverable 2: Process for developing indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy
  - Deliverable 3: Example indigenous fish and wildlife management strategy
  - Discuss relationship between these resources and Minimum Requirements Analysis
- **Group Discussion Topic #1: characteristics of an effective process and of useful deliverables (All)**
  - Notes taken during this session will be included in overall guidance to be shared nationally and will shape the remainder of today's work.
  - USFS and other agency staff at all administrative levels brainstorm how to be efficient and effective in getting this work done well without undue expenditure of time.
  - Emphasis on hearing from field (district and forest) practitioners but all voices should weigh in.
  - What do field practitioners hope to get out of this investment of their time?
  - Document staff areas contributing to today's interdisciplinary team and capture suggestions of additions for future workshops elsewhere (complete sign-in sheet).
- **BREAK (15 minutes)**
- **Group Discussion Topic #2: identification and justification of priority indigenous fish and wildlife species (All)**
  - Scope of today's work (Gila Wilderness only or multiple wildernesses?)
  - Minimum of 1 terrestrial and 1 aquatic species.
  - List of species can be as large as desired above this minimum.
  - Selection process should include participation and input from partner agencies.
- **Group Discussion Topic #3: status of selected priority indigenous wildlife species (All)**
  - What data exist? What data gaps should be filled?
- **LUNCH – One hour**



- **Group Discussion Topic #4: short- and long-term management objectives for each priority indigenous species (All)**
  - What resources are available to inform management, and include in strategy document by reference (e.g., ESA recovery plans, conservation agreements, survey data, etc.)?
  - What are the specific conservation goals for selected species?
  - How can these goals be realized in concert with meeting wilderness stewardship objectives and responsibilities?
  - Discuss minimum tools (potentially involving prohibited uses) that may be needed for specific future fish / wildlife management actions in wilderness.
  - Discuss possible need for future emergency responses.
  - Discuss whether or not there is an “exit strategy” or discreet threshold when future management actions for a particular species in wilderness should no longer be necessary, including if / when management actions can be transitioned to occur solely outside of wilderness.
  - Filling data gaps may constitute an important management objective.
  
- **BREAK (15 minutes)**
  
- **Group Discussion Topic #5: effectiveness monitoring to evaluate foreseeable future management actions (All)**
  - How will the effectiveness of proposed actions be evaluated, documented, and reported?
  - How might interim findings inform adaptive management?
  - Draft proposed effectiveness evaluation questions pertaining to each specific management action to be included in strategy document.
  
- **Open discussion – lingering issues (All)**
  
- **Next Steps (Malcolm)**
  - Assignment of tasks and establishment of timelines
  - Subsequent review process
  
- **Written workshop evaluations (All)**
  - Please complete questionnaires (anonymously if you desire) to share constructive criticism on today’s process and pave the way for similar future efforts on other units.
  
- **ADJOURN – Huge thanks!**