



## Wilderness Planning

### Forest Service Policy and Guidelines

*Note – The information provided here is relevant for designated wilderness areas. Guidance for identification and evaluation of potential wilderness is found in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70.*

#### Regulations

Wilderness planning is a part of forest planning and subject to regulations found in Title 36, Part 219 of the Code of Federal Regulations.

An existing wilderness plan may be included in a Plan Set of Documents when a forest plan is revised. A new or revised wilderness plan may be amended to a forest plan following standard, NEPA compliant procedures.

#### Policy

FSM 1920, Land Management Planning contains overall direction for national forest planning.

FSM 2320 contains direction for management of wilderness. See 2320.2 Objectives, 2320.3 Policy, and 2320.6 The Wilderness Management Model for general direction.

2322 - WILDERNESS PLANNING. Wilderness management direction is prepared as a part of the forest planning process as required by 36 CFR Part 219 and FSM 1922. Planning is also done in compliance with the National Environmental Policy Act (FSM 1950 and FSH 1909.15). Implementation of the forest plan is accomplished through development of implementation schedules that include projects and activities designed to achieve and comply with the management standards and guidelines established for the designated wilderness.

2322.01 - Authority. Authority to conduct wilderness management planning is found in the National Forest Management Act (16 U.S.C. 1600) and 36 CFR 219.

#### 2322.02 - Objectives

1. Ensure that wilderness resource is fully integrated into the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.
2. Ensure that other resources and activities within each wilderness are coordinated and in harmony with the wilderness resource.

### 2322.03 - Policy

1. Management direction for each wilderness must be stated in the forest plan as management area prescriptions with associated standards and guidelines. Each wilderness is unique as established by law; therefore, each will be identified as a separate management area.
2. The wilderness component of the forest plan shall include, as a minimum, the following:
  - a. Management direction in accordance with 36 CFR 219 and 36 CFR 293.
  - b. Display of the relationships and coordination between the wilderness resource and other resources and activities present in the wilderness, as well as activities outside of wilderness that affect the management of the wilderness. Resources and other elements to be addressed include: recreation (including visitor education), forest cover, forage, fish and wildlife, federally listed threatened or endangered flora or fauna, domestic livestock, soil and water (including weather modification), minerals, historical and cultural resources, fire, land ownership, insect and diseases, air quality, other agency use, the trail system (including trailheads), signing, communication, and research.
  - c. Monitoring requirements for determining whether prescriptions, standards, and guidelines are met.
3. Individual wilderness management plans completed prior to the writing of the forest plan may be incorporated as an entity into the forest plan if they:
  - a. Have been prepared in accordance with the NEPA process (FSM 1950).
  - b. Are considered current and valid.
  - c. Are appropriately referenced to and discussed in the forest plan.
  - d. Provide at least the same level of direction and guidance as would be found in the completed forest plan.
4. Management direction shall be consistent for each wilderness that occurs in more than one State, Region, or National Forest.
5. In some instances, the law designating a specific wilderness requires preparation of a wilderness management plan. These specified plans are integrated into the forest plan when completed before the forest planning process. If a wilderness plan is required subsequent to adoption of the forest

plan, the required plan should not duplicate information contained in the forest plan. It should tier from and ultimately be appended to the Forest Land and Resource Management Plan.

#### 2322.04 - Responsibilities

2322.04a - Chief. The Chief designates a lead Region when a wilderness involves more than one Region.

2322.04b - Regional Forester. The Regional Forester designates a lead Forest when a wilderness involves more than one Forest and approves wilderness management direction by approving the forest plan.

2322.04c - Forest Supervisor. The Forest Supervisor ensures that management of the wilderness resource is a part of the forest plan.

2322.1 - Wilderness Implementation Schedules. Implementation schedules should be prepared to ensure that direction and objectives established in the forest plan are met (FSM 1922.5). They include coordination of the work done on all resources and activities within each wilderness and are normally revised annually. Implementation schedules contain:

1. Specific action needed to follow forest plan direction and accomplish forest plan objectives.
2. General prioritization of action items.
3. Unit or individual responsibilities.
4. Target dates for completion of the actions.

2322.2 - Revision of Management Direction. If wilderness management direction in the forest plan is found to be inadequate, the plan should be amended following the procedure outlined in 36 CFR 219.10(f) and FSM 1950. If lack of direction is identified, but change is not warranted during the planning period, the concern should be noted and dealt with in the next revision of the plan. Establishment of new wilderness management direction requires appropriate public involvement and conformance with both the National Forest Management Act and National Environmental Policy Act processes.