

Research and Scientific Activities Toolbox  
Federal Agency Policy

U.S. Forest Service

FSM 2320.2 – Objectives

5. Gather information and carry out research in a manner compatible with preserving the wilderness environment to increase understanding of wilderness ecology, wilderness uses, management opportunities, and visitor behavior.

FSM 2320.3 – Policy

8. Gather necessary information and carry out research programs in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment.

FSM 2323.37 – Wildlife and Fish Research

Wildlife and fish research is an appropriate activity in wilderness. In all cases, research shall be conducted in such a way as to minimize any adverse impacts on the wilderness resource or its users. See FSH 2309.19 for specific direction and guidelines for approving these activities.

1. Research methods that temporarily infringe on the wilderness character may be used; provided the information sought is essential for wilderness management and alternative methods or locations are not available.
2. Scientific sampling of wildlife and fish populations is essential to the management of natural populations in wilderness.
3. Capturing and inconspicuous marking of animals, including radio telemetry, is permitted.
4. Installations, such as temporary shelters for cameras and scientific apparatus, and enclosures or exclosures, essential for wildlife research and management studies may be approved on a case-by-case basis.

FSM 2324.4 – Research in Wilderness

2324.41—Objective. To provide appropriate opportunity for scientific studies that are dependent on a wilderness environment.

2324.42—Policy

1. Encourage research in wilderness that preserves the wilderness character of the area (FSM 2320.3).
2. Identify wilderness management or national issues that may require research in forest plans.
3. Review proposals to conduct research in wilderness to ensure that research areas outside wilderness could not provide similar research opportunities. Direct projects that would jeopardize wilderness values to areas outside wilderness.
4. Review research proposals to conduct research in wilderness to ensure that research methods are compatible with wilderness values. Do not allow the use of motorized equipment or mechanical transport unless the research is essential to meet minimum requirements for administration of the area

as wilderness and cannot be done another way (Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act). Include specific stipulations in the approval document.

5. Except for studies that clearly require contact within wilderness, allow interviews or direct contact with visitors only outside wilderness.

6. Permit scientific study of cultural resource sites/areas consistent with the direction in FSM 2323.8.