

Capacity Determination for Visitor Use in Wilderness

Relationship to Agency Planning

National Forest Planning -

Under the 1982 Planning Rule forest plans may contain standards and guidelines which could contain a determination of capacity and/or allocation of commercial use. Alternatively, both capacity and allocation could also be addressed in a wilderness plan later included as an amendment to the forest plan.

Forest Plan revisions under the 2005 Planning Rule include a Vision (Desired Condition) and non-specific Guidelines as part of the Design Criteria. Specific guidelines, adaptive management actions, and monitoring requirements may be developed separately. The NEPA decision and management direction from pre-existing wilderness plans (including a capacity determination) may be retained unchanged in the plan set of documents.

Where there is no pre-existing direction that includes a capacity determination, a subsequent decision-making process, supplemental to the forest plan, would be necessary to determine a more specific numerical capacity. Examples of conditions that could trigger such additional decision-making could include deteriorating conditions, a level of crowding that detracts from the wilderness experience, physical limits (i.e. parking lot size), or as part of a needs assessment and allocation of use for commercial services.