

Capacity Determination for Visitor Use in Wilderness

Basis in Agency Policy

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Forest Service Policy -

In wilderness, determining the capacity for recreation visitor use includes determining the capabilities of the social, biological, and physical components of the wilderness resource to accommodate use without impairment of the wilderness character. Currently, Forest Service Wilderness Management Regulations and Policy do not define what is meant by visitor use capacity or prescribe a specific method for determining or allocating capacity.

FSM 2320.3 for policy:

- Where there are alternatives among management decisions, wilderness values shall dominate over all other considerations except where limited by the Wilderness Act, subsequent legislation, or regulations.
- Manage the use of other resources in wilderness in a manner compatible with wilderness resource management objectives

FSM 2323.11 for Management of Recreation Use in Wilderness:

- Provide, consistent with management of the area as wilderness, opportunities for public use, enjoyment, and understanding of the wilderness, through experiences that depend upon a wilderness setting.
- Provide outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

FSM 2323.14 for Visitor Management:

- Plan and manage public use of wilderness in such a manner that preserves the wilderness character of the area.
- Provide for the limiting and distribution of visitor use according to periodic estimates of capacity in the forest plan.

FSM 2323.13g for Outfitter and Guide Operations:

- Address the need for and role of outfitters in the forest plan.
- The plan must address the type, number, and amount of recreation use that is to be allocated to outfitters.
- Ensure that outfitters provide their service to the public in a manner that is compatible with use by other wilderness visitors and that maintains the wilderness resource.