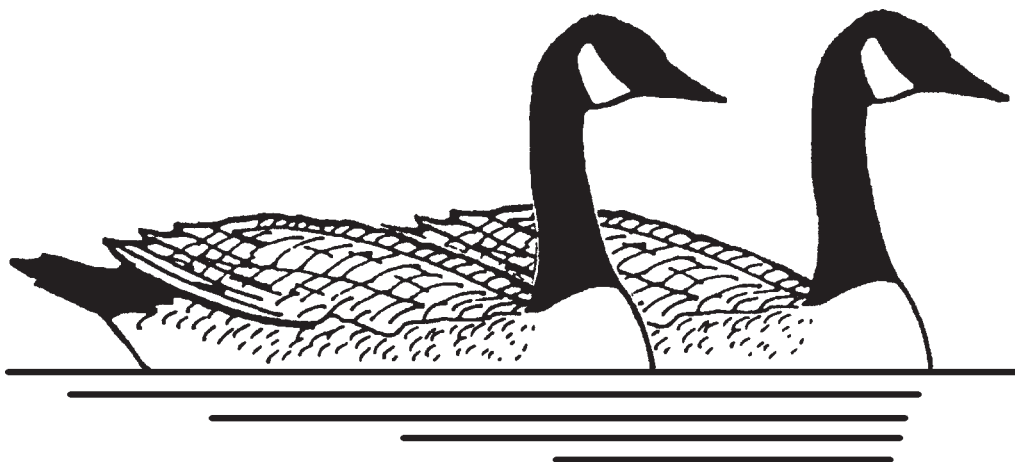


# WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

*"Wilderness is vast panoramas,  
full of height and depth and glowing color,  
on a scale so overwhelming as to wipe out  
the ordinary meaning of dimensions.  
It is the song of the hermit thrush at twilight  
and the lapping of waves against the shoreline  
and the melody of wind in the trees.  
It is the unique odor of balsams  
and of freshly turned humus  
and of mist rising from mountain meadows.  
It is the feel of spruce needles underfoot  
and sunshine on your face  
and wind blowing through your hair."*

***Bob Marshall***



# PHILOSOPHY

## Wilderness Management Philosophy

### Purpose

The purpose of this unit is to present an overview of the philosophy which guides Wilderness planning and management (based on the Wilderness Act). This sets the stage for the assumptions, values and decisions on which management direction is based. A list of topics which should be considered in developing Plan direction is provided along with references for legislative/policy sideboards. A series of questions are provided so you can determine if your Wilderness management direction meets the intent of the Wilderness Act.

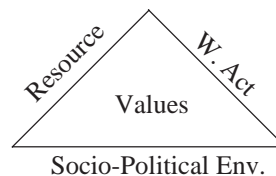
This unit presents an overview of the Wilderness Act and Wilderness management principles that must guide development of management direction. More detailed information and activities to increase understanding of the Wilderness resource can be found in the Wilderness Awareness Training Module (USDA 1993).

### Objectives

1. Participants understand that what is different about Wilderness planning is the content of the direction, not the planning process.
2. Participants can identify the three characteristics that define the Wilderness resource and guide development of management direction.
3. Participants can identify six purposes of Wilderness and describe the values associated with each purpose.
4. Participants can identify seven principles which guide Wilderness management activities.
5. Participants can list at least four sideboards that constrain the Wilderness management “decision space.”
6. Participants can list five planning questions they will address in their Wilderness planning process.

### Key points

- Planning task for Wilderness is to translate Wilderness Act legislation into direction for a specific area.
- Definition of Wilderness—the three characteristics that define resource setting.
- Decision space.



- Success—moving overall conditions up the scale toward less human interference.

## Wilderness Management Philosophy

### Overview

The planning task for Wilderness management is to translate the Wilderness Act, enabling legislation, and agency national Wilderness policy into direction for a specific Wilderness. There has been a tendency to think that because management of the Wilderness resource is different than management of non-Wilderness lands, the planning process is somehow different. This is not true. The process to develop management direction is the same as for other resources. What is different is the content or substance of the direction that is developed. You are encouraged to put your energy and creativity into developing the content of the direction rather than trying to reinvent the process used to develop this direction.

Any good planning effort requires the involvement of an interdisciplinary team of specialists. Wilderness is no different. It is essential to have at least one member of the team who is very knowledgeable about the Wilderness Act and Wilderness management principles to ensure that management direction meets the spirit and intent of the Act. This specialist can help all members of the team define the planning questions to be addressed. Experience has shown that simply reading the words of the Wilderness Act and enabling legislation is not enough. One must also understand the intent of the words. This can be done by researching the history that led to establishment of the National Wilderness Preservation System as well as why an individual Wilderness was designated. Wilderness legislation is typically characterized by years of debate, thus an area must be supported by the public to ensure designation. By understanding the values people attributed to a particular place, you will be able to develop management direction that better meets the intent of the legislation. It is often possible and very enlightening to invite key people who were involved in the designation of a particular Wilderness to describe this history at an initial public meeting. Historical agency files and newspaper articles can also provide a wealth of information. And of course, there is no substitute for getting out into the Wilderness to experience its values firsthand.

### Sideboards

While there is room for interpretation within the Wilderness Act and national policy, it is very important to recognize up front what the “sideboards” are so that time is not wasted on items that are not open for discussion. Sideboards are the parameters under which both the public and the agency must work. They help define the “decision-space.” Sideboards come from legislation, the code of federal regulations, and national or regional policy. They also include the “sacred cows” that the decision-maker does not want to address at this time. General sideboards that typically are identified for Wilderness management planning include (but are not limited to):

- The Wilderness boundary cannot be changed.
- Motorized or mechanized use is not allowed except where specifically provided for in enabling legislation.
- No caches are allowed.
- Where threatened or endangered species are present, direction must meet the requirements of the Endangered Species Act and also must protect listed sensitive species and their habitats.
- Livestock grazing cannot be curtailed simply due to Wilderness designation.

- Cultural resource values must be protected (although, not necessarily the physical site).
- Special provisions must be managed as intended in the enabling legislation (e.g. airstrips, mining, access to inholdings).

To date, Wilderness management has been very focused on managing recreational use. However, there is growing emphasis on the scientific, educational, conservation, historical, and scenic purposes of Wilderness designation. There is also increasing recognition that the less visible, more extensive impacts to Wilderness may have greater long-term consequences than the more visible, localized impacts to trails and campsites. For these reasons, Wilderness management direction needs to address all resource components in an integrated fashion (physical and biological conditions, ecological processes, and types of experiences desired). Notable examples of strides towards addressing non-recreation issues include efforts to develop management direction for prescribed natural fire, air quality, fish stocking, and noxious weeds.

## Wilderness defined

Definitions are a function of cultures, and cultures are constantly changing. The definition for Wilderness has and will continue to evolve. During the course of U.S. history, wilderness has been viewed as a barrier to civilization of the frontier; a romantic and ethereal inspiration to art, literature, and philosophy; a diminishing resource in need of legal protection; and more currently, a relatively undisturbed landscape that can provide a multitude of biological and social benefits.

The fact that it took eight years of negotiations, 65 different versions of the bill, and 18 congressional hearings before the Wilderness Act passed is testimony to the difficulty of legally defining Wilderness. But in the end, we did something no other country had done—established a National Wilderness Preservation System to “assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition” (Wilderness Act of 1964, PL 88-577).

The Wilderness Act has remained virtually unamended since 1964, demonstrating the staying power of its authors’ vision. Congress’s stated purpose was to “secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness.” While the term “wilderness” continues to be widely interpreted, Congressionally designated Wilderness is defined by the Act as an area, “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain, in contrast with those areas where man and his own works dominate the landscape.” A key word is “untrammelled” which means unconfined, unhindered, or uncontrolled.

Wilderness contains many basic resources—air, water, wildlife, fish, cultural sites, soil, and vegetation—but what makes Wilderness unique is the setting which ties these basic resources together. The Wilderness Act defined the setting as:

1. A place not controlled by humans, where the land’s primeval character and influence are retained and natural processes operate freely.
2. A place not occupied or modified by humans, where humans are visitors and the imprint of their work is substantially unnoticeable.

# 1 Wilderness Management Philosophy

## Picture the following scenario:

Many things have changed since the days of your grandparents who lived in the late 20th century. For instance, communication with anyone in the universe is virtually instantaneous and in three-dimensional living color. Modern transportation allows you to be in your Denver office for lunch on Tuesday and at the headwaters of the Congo River for supper on the same day. There is no environment so harsh, so remote, or so forbidding that it cannot be made comfortably habitable with the aid of contemporary technology. The earth's population has risen to about 21 billion, or 42 billion pairs of feet walking over the spinning orb we call home.

You can reflect, with great comfort, on the fact that your great, great grandfather and his professional and Congressional colleagues were successful in passing the Wilderness Act 130 years ago in 1964. But now, imagine that your grandmother, your great uncle, and their professional land manager colleagues were unsuccessful at preventing detrimental acid depositions in wilderness lakes, or in controlling outbreaks of exotic weeds, or in managing the clamoring hordes of people who are competing with each other for a chance to camp near a wilderness river.

Now imagine that after a hard week at the office (where you work as a virtual imagery engineer, designing imaginary landscapes and outdoor experiences for people), you decide that you must somehow escape from your steel and glass workplace, from your SmartHome, and from your 2 million other fellow bio-city inhabitants to experience firsthand the solitude and "naturalness" of a real mountain landscape.

But where are you going to go?

There is no place—not even the depths of the oceans or the remote corners of the polar regions—that has not been explored, modified, and somehow "improved" for human use. Your chances of being the only person at your chosen destination are slim to none. And your chances of finding a place that has not somehow been influenced by humans are even less.

Outlandish? Maybe. But if you had described to the North American pioneers of the 18th century what might be seen if they could have been magically transported 300 years into the future, "outlandish" would hardly have been a strong enough word to describe their reaction.

3. A place with outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

## Benefits

The Wilderness resource produces many benefits for individuals and society. These benefits can be categorized under the six purposes of Wilderness identified in the Act.

**Recreation** Wilderness is a place of freedom from the crowds and motorized and mechanized intrusions of modern life, where shared experiences can strengthen bonds between family or friends, and where we can feel a sense of humility, inspiration and spiritual connection to the land and other living beings. It is a place where we can challenge ourselves to develop our skills thereby enhancing self-reliance and esteem. It is peace and quiet where we can renew our mind, body, and spirit.

**Scenic** Wilderness is a place of natural beauty which offers an uplifting view, even for those who may never enter. This beauty has inspired art, music and literature.

**Scientific** Wilderness is increasingly being viewed as a place where we can study how ecosystems function. It is a living laboratory for all types of research such as medical, social, biological, and genetic. It can provide a baseline for global monitoring and an ecological benchmark to assess the impact of human activities in more developed settings. As David Brower said, “Wilderness holds the answers to questions we do not yet know how to ask.” As we strive to restore diversity, resilience, productivity, beauty, and compatible human uses, ecosystem management will require an understanding of natural variability, large scale landscape processes, and species evolution. Wilderness is a “natural” candidate to help fill the gaps in our knowledge base. Currently, 157 of the nation’s 261 ecotypes are represented in Wilderness (Davis 1989).

**Educational** Wilderness is an outdoor classroom where we can learn firsthand about nature and people’s relationship to the land.

**Conservation** Wilderness is a storehouse for gene pools—plants, animals and other forms of life that are being displaced by human occupation elsewhere. We are just beginning to recognize the value of some species, including plants with medicinal value. As Aldo Leopold noted, “the first law of intelligent tinkering is to save all the parts.” Wilderness also provides clean air and water that greatly reduces costs for air or water treatment in nearby communities. Wilderness is also seen as a bequest of wild places that we pass on to future generations.

**Historical** Wilderness is a link to our heritage—a reminder of what America was like in earlier times (both in terms of conditions and processes). It is a place where we can protect the traditional, primitive skills that might otherwise be lost (e.g. canoeing, horsepacking, crosscut saws). It is also a place where evidence of past human history can reveal valuable stories about survival in harsh environments.

## Management Principles

Since the Wilderness Act passed, most efforts have focused on deciding which lands should be designated Wilderness. Increasingly, people are recognizing that Wilderness is not protected simply by drawing a line around it. The time has come to turn our attention toward taking care of what we’ve got.

The Wilderness Act says that Wilderness “shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness.” Wilderness management is not management in the sense of manipulating, improving, or molding nature to suit people or maximize a particular human benefit. Rather, it is the control of human activities so that interference with nature is minimized. It is important to recognize that the authors of the Wilderness Act legitimized numerous human uses, thus Wilderness was not envisioned to be a place with no impacts. The goal of management is to continuously strive to minimize the impacts associated with all human activities so that the wild character of the area is maintained or restored over time.

The following principles, based on the Wilderness Act, guide Wilderness management.

1. Strive for less human interference by minimizing the effects of human activities so that activities do not dominate natural conditions and processes. This means that rather than trying to change the land to suit people, we limit the effects of our activities so that conditions develop in response to natural disturbances and processes. In wilderness, wildlife population fluctuations, native insect and disease infestations, fire,

# 1 Wilderness Management Philosophy

and windthrow that result from natural processes are neither good nor bad; they are natural.

2. Provide a spectrum of high quality wilderness experiences that retain elements of solitude, spirituality, surprise and discovery. Provide opportunities for travel using “primitive” means in an unconfined environment where one can experience challenge and risk.
3. Manage Wilderness as one resource with inseparable parts, each of which supports the three-part definition of the Wilderness resource. Provide opportunities to fulfill all the purposes of Wilderness—recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical.
4. Use the minimum tool concept which means that every action should be evaluated to determine if it is needed to protect the land or the experience. If the action is needed, then it should be done in a way that has the least impact on the Wilderness resource and visitor experience (with the use of primitive skills emphasized over mechanical or motorized). Decisions should not be made based on what is fastest, easiest or least expensive. The minimum tool concept is especially useful for evaluating trail projects, structures, fire suppression activities, visitor regulations, and requests for scientific use.
5. Manage the special provisions in the Act (section 4d) with the minimum impact on the resource and experience. The Wilderness Act would not have become law if compromises were not made. Key provisions are:

A. Livestock grazing (cattle and sheep) is permitted where it was established prior to the Act. In 1980, Congress further clarified how they wanted grazing to be managed in Wilderness.

- a. There shall be no curtailment of grazing in wilderness simply because an area is designated wilderness, nor should wilderness designation be used as an excuse to slowly phase out grazing.
- b. Supporting facilities, existing in an area prior to classification as wilderness (including fences, line cabins, water wells and stock tanks) can be maintained in wilderness.
- c. Deteriorated facilities or improvements do not have to be replaced using natural materials, unless the material and costs are such that the use of natural materials would not impose unreasonable additional costs on permittees.
- d. New improvements may be constructed or deteriorated facilities replaced if they are in accordance with these guidelines and management plans for the area.
- e. Motorized equipment can be used for emergency purposes such as rescuing sick animals or placing feed in emergency situations.

It is important to note that cattle and sheep grazing must still be managed to protect basic resources under the same direction as BLM or National Forest land outside Wilderness.

B. Commercial enterprises are generally prohibited except “commercial services may be performed to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the area.” Outfitting and guiding is the

most common activity which meets this provision.

C. The State retains authority over management of fish and wildlife populations, thus hunting and fishing are allowed on federal lands that are open to hunting as long as State regulations are followed.

D. Management activities are permitted “as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of the Act.” This includes measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of people in the area. Wheelchairs are also permitted for people whose mobility requires their use.

E. Mining is permitted on valid claims existing prior to Dec. 31, 1983.

F. Measures may be taken as necessary to control fire, insects and diseases subject to conditions deemed desirable.

G. Where State or private land is completely surrounded by Wilderness, the owner must be given reasonable access to the land.

6. Harmonize wilderness and adjacent land management activities. Wilderness does not exist in a vacuum and must be managed within the context of the larger landscape. For example, constructing a large campground next to a Wilderness trailhead could create unacceptable levels of encounters within the Wilderness. Conversely, a fire or insect and disease infestation within Wilderness could escape and damage valuable resources outside of Wilderness. Similarly, some of the recreation use occurring in Wilderness may be better served in backcountry, roadless areas.

7. Ensure an inheritance of Wilderness for future generations to enjoy. Every action should help maintain or improve wilderness character so that over the long term people will continue to reap the benefits of an enduring Wilderness resource.

## Success defined

Once you have developed management direction for your Wilderness, you can test how well the direction meets the intent of the Wilderness Act by asking the following questions. Refer to Unit #2 to test whether your direction meets the characteristics of effective plans.

- Does your direction ensure that natural processes operate freely so that the land’s primeval character and influence are retained?
- Does your direction ensure that Wilderness is not occupied or modified so that natural conditions are dominant and the imprint of humans is substantially unnoticeable?
- Does your direction ensure that there are opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?
- Does your direction retain spirituality and the elements of surprise, discovery, and self-reliance?
- Is your direction integrated so that it supports the Wilderness resource in its entirety?
- Does your direction recognize the unique characteristics of the particular Wilderness?
- Is your direction consistent with Congressional intent for managing the special

# 1 Wilderness Management Philosophy

provisions within Wilderness?

- Does your direction ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness?

## **Suggested Activities**

Wilderness Jeopardy game with wilderness-oriented prizes for winners.

Wilderness management principles: Break participants into eight small groups. Give each group one of the seven management principles (divide principle #5 in half). Each small group discusses the principle and identifies examples of how it would be applied as management direction is developed. Each group reports findings to large group.

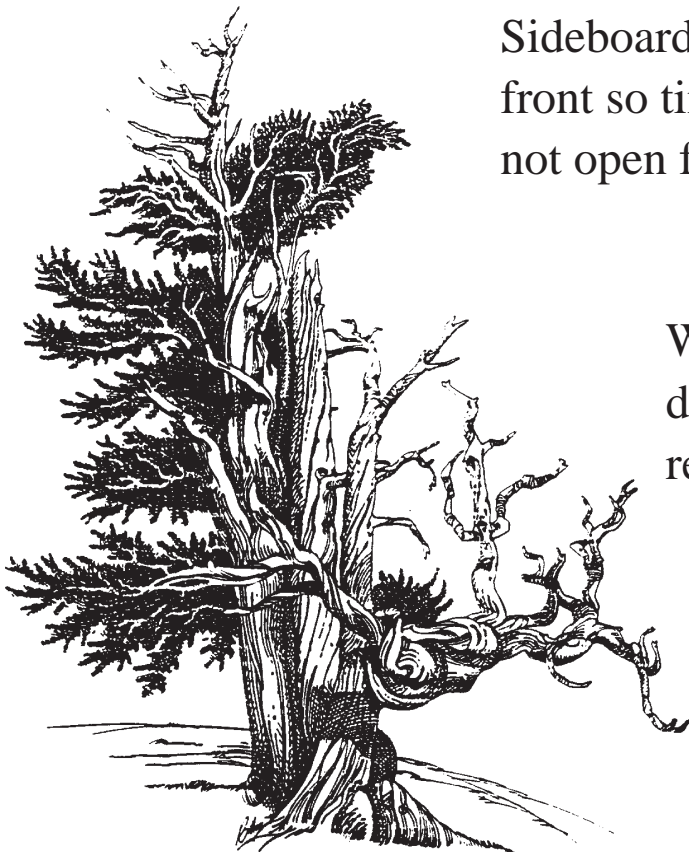
# WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLANNING

The Planning task is to translate the Wilderness Act into direction for a specific area.

The Planning process for Wilderness is no different than for other resources.

The philosophy that guides development of management direction is different

Sideboards need to be defined up front so time isn't wasted on items not open for discussion.



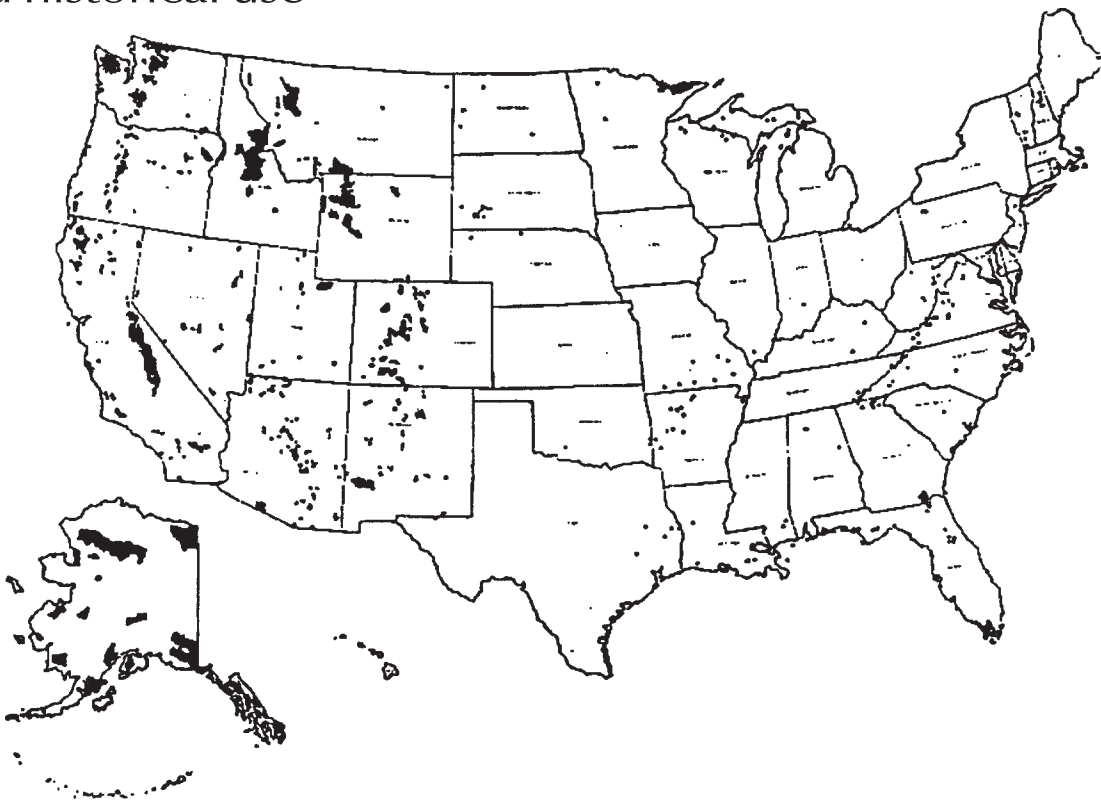
Wilderness management direction needs to address all resource components.

# NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

## PURPOSE

"To assure that an increasing population, accompanied by expanding settlement and growing mechanization, does not occupy and modify all areas within the United States, leaving no lands designated for preservation and protection in their natural condition."

Wilderness "shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use"



THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

1990



# The Wilderness Resource... ...Producing Social, Cultural and Natural Resource Benefits for Humans



- Soil
- Air
- Water
- Vegetation
- Wildlife
- Fish
- Cultural Sites
- Fire
- Scenery
- Minerals

- Improved Performance
- Physical & Mental Health
- Self-Esteem
- Self-Sufficiency
- Spiritual Values
- Outdoor Skills
- Ecosystem Preservation
- Benchmarks
- Species Diversity
- Gene Pools
- Clean Air & Water
- Water Supply
- Tie With Our History
- National Character
- Bequest to Future
- Research
- Education
- Economic Values

(Source: USDA, Forest Service)

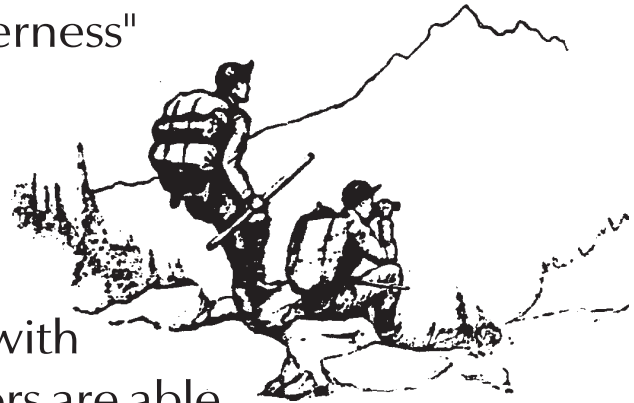
# WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT

Wilderness "shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness, and so as to provide for the...

- \*protection of these areas
- \*preservation of their wilderness character
- \*gathering and disseminating information regarding their use and enjoyment and wilderness"

## Definition

The control of human activities so that interference with nature is minimized and visitors are able to experience solitude of primitive, unconfined recreation.



It is NOT management in the sense of manipulation or improving the resource to maximize a particular human benefit.

## Activities:

Recreation use  
Outfitting  
Livestock grazing  
Fire suppression  
Trail construction

Introduction of exotics  
Human-caused air pollution  
Special uses such as mining  
Adjacent land uses

## Screens To Determine Success

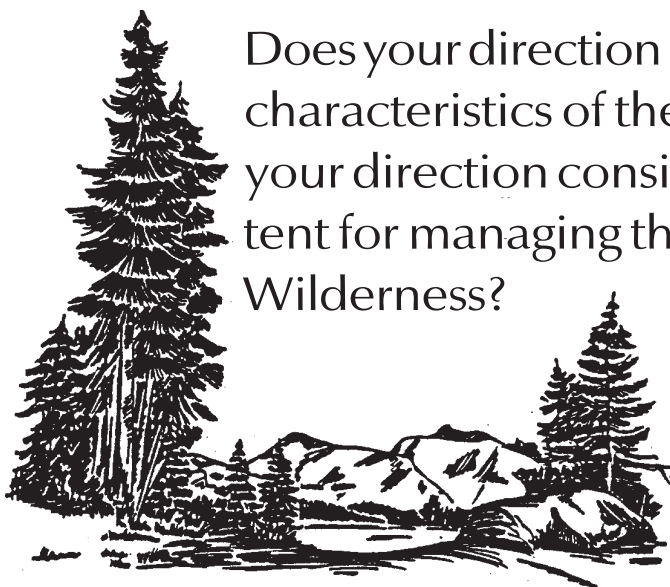
### Does your management direction meet the intent of the Wilderness Act?

Does your direction ensure that natural process operate freely so that the land's primeval character and influence are retained?

Does your direction ensure that Wilderness is not occupied or modified so that natural conditions are dominant and the imprint of humans is substantially unnoticeable?

Does your direction ensure that there are opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation?

Does your direction retain spirituality and the elements of surprise, discovery, and self-reliance? Is your direction integrated to support the Wilderness resource in its entirety?



Does your direction recognize the unique characteristics of the particular Wilderness? Is your direction consistent with Congressional intent for managing the special provisions within Wilderness?

Does your direction ensure that future generations will be able to enjoy the benefits of an enduring resource of Wilderness?