

THE PLANNING PROCESS

*"The richest values of the wilderness
lie not in the days of Daniel
Boone, nor even in the present,
but rather in the future."*

Aldo Leopold



The Planning Process

The purpose of this unit is to identify what effective planning means (i.e. characteristics/qualities of effective plans) and discuss how Wilderness management direction fits into each agency's overall planning framework (including NEPA requirements). A major goal of this section is to sort out the relationship between planning documents used in each agency, describe NEPA requirements, and discuss how Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) and Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) concepts can be used to develop management direction.

Contents

Introduction to Planning
 Evolution in Planning Concepts
 Bureau of Land Management Planning Framework
 Fish and Wildlife Service Planning Framework
 Forest Service Planning Framework
 National Park Service Planning Framework

Objectives

1. Participants can identify at least six characteristics of effective plan direction.
2. Participants can define commonly used terms (e.g. desired conditions, standards, monitoring indicators, programmatic)
3. Participants can identify shortcomings of the carrying capacity approach and can describe how the limits of acceptable change/visitor experience and resource protection concepts differ.
4. Participants can diagram the general planning framework used to develop programmatic direction within their agency.
5. Participants can identify the types of decisions made in programmatic plans (e.g. Resource Management Plan, Comprehensive Management Plan, Forest Plan, General Management Plan).
6. Participants can describe how limits of acceptable change/visitor experience and resource protection concepts can be used to develop programmatic wilderness management direction.

Key points

- Characteristics of effective design.
- Evolution in planning.
- Two-stage decisions.

Teaching

1. Evolution.
2. Why plans fail—effectiveness test.
3. Framework
4. Interagency process—decisions made.

2 The Planning Process

Activity

Have people share stories of why planning is important.

Have interagency group identify types of decision made in program level plans.

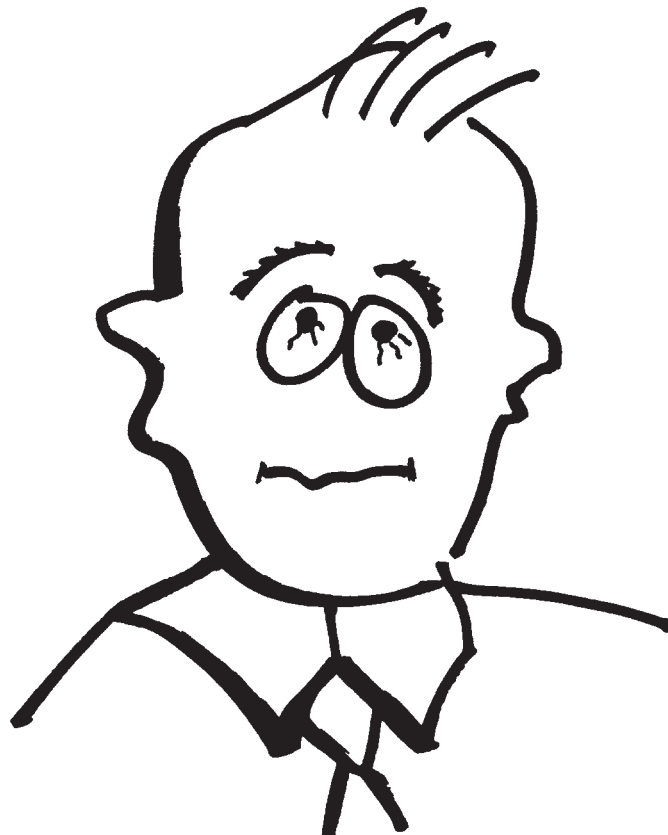
EVOLUTION IN WILDERNESS PLANNING

Allocation → Stewardship

Functionalism → Integration → Across Boundaries

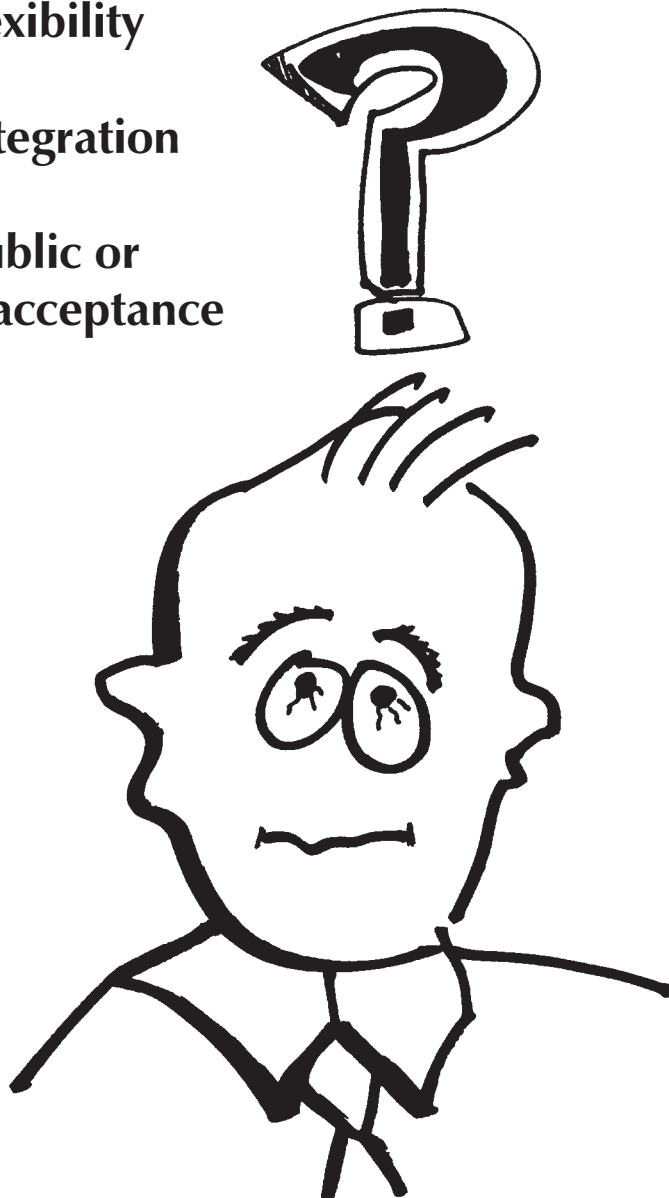
Outputs → Outcomes
(rvds, PAOTs)(resource + experience conditions)

Rational/Objective → Value-based



WHY DO PLANS FAIL?

- * Lack of specificity
- * Unresolved issues
- * Unrealistic
- * Lack of flexibility
- * Lack of integration
- * Lack of public or agency acceptance



EFFECTIVE PLAN DIRECTION

Screening Questions

- * Is it clear what is to be achieved?
- * Do you know how you will measure success?
- * Is it meaningful for your area?
- * Is it understandable?
- * Can it be implemented?
- * Will implementation improve on-the-ground conditions?



GENERAL PLANNING FRAMEWORK (Two Staged Decisions)

Wilderness Act/ Enabling Legislation
National Policy

Program Level
(Strategic direction for specific area)

What do we want to achieve?
How do we know when we get there?

NEPA



Project Level

What needs to be done to get there? (Integrated Analysis)

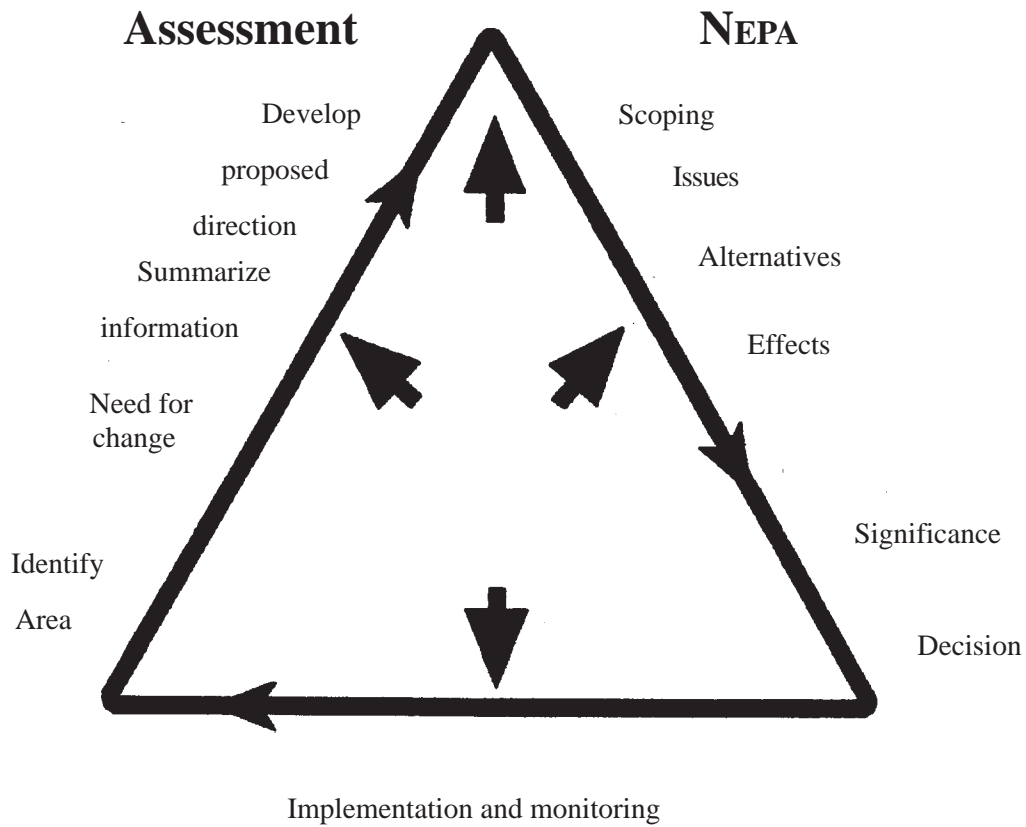
How are we going to do it?

NEPA



Monitoring—Evaluation
Feedback

DEVELOPING PROGRAM LEVEL WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT DIRECTION



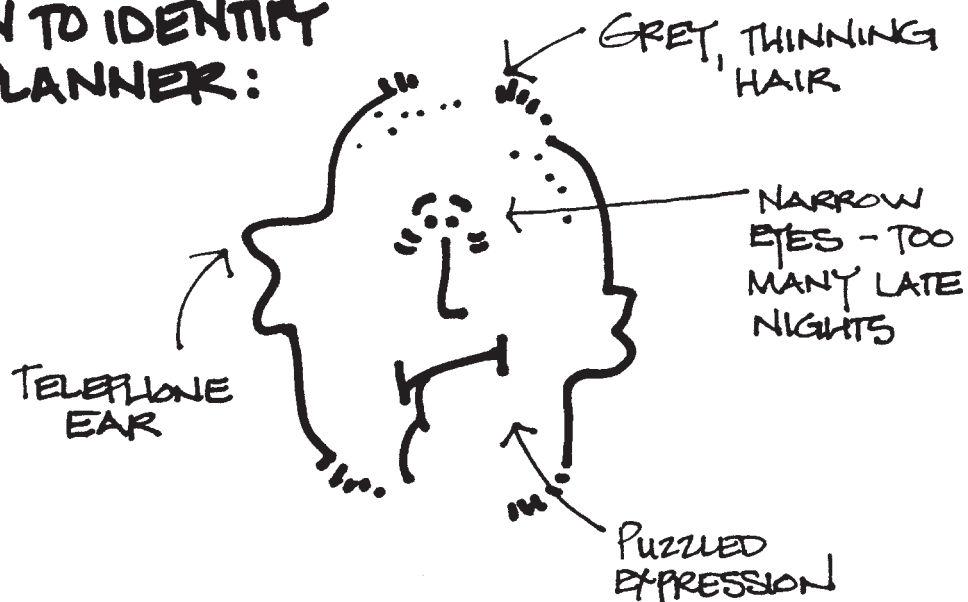
FEEDBACK

Proposed management direction =
Proposed goals, desired conditions,
zones, objectives, standards +
monitoring indicators

PLANNING PROCESS SUMMARY

- Know what your end product is
- Focus your effort
(Need for Change & Issues)
- Involve the public
- Use an interdisciplinary approach
- Work within the overall planning process

HOW TO IDENTIFY A PLANNER:



Bureau of Land Management Planning Documents

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT PLAN
Contains general guidance for Wilderness

Requires NEPA analysis



WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN
(part of the Ecological Land Unit Plan)

Requires NEPA analysis

There are also habitat management plans, fire plans, cultural resource plans, etc. Contains goals, objectives, policies and specific actions for management of resource including monitoring procedures. Identifies general sequence of implementing management actions.



Annual Work Plans Program packages to request funding

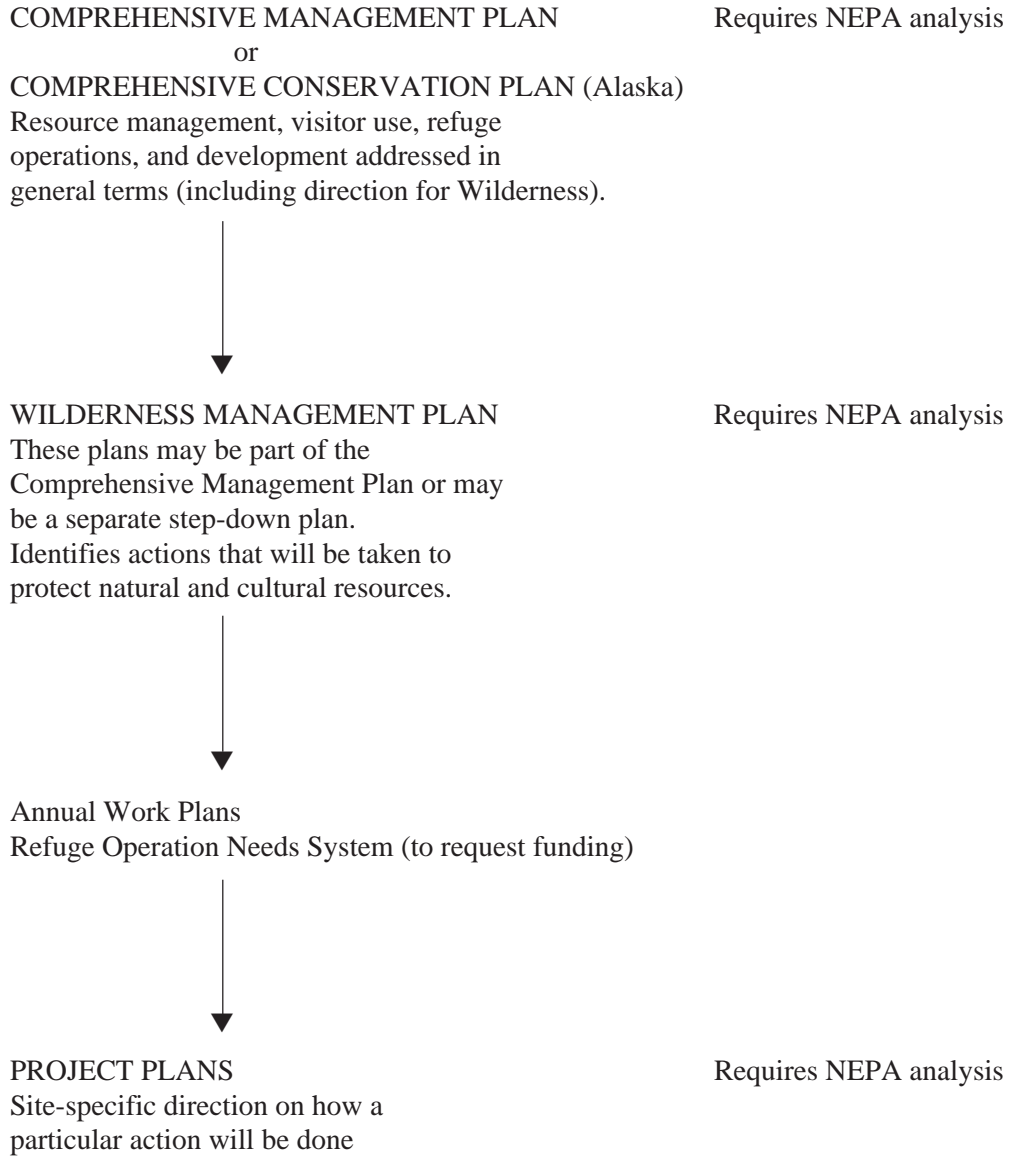


PROJECT PLANS
Site-specific direction on how a particular action will be done

Requires NEPA analysis

NOTE: The BLM planning process currently is undergoing significant changes in order to incorporate an ecosystem approach to management of all resources. One possibility being considered is to have small Resource Management Plans with very general guidance. Ecological land units would then be identified for each Resource Area. Specific direction on desired conditions, standards, and monitoring indicators would be developed in a management plan for each ecological land unit. Under this system, an Ecological Land Unit Plan might contain management direction for one or more Wildernesses. However, Wilderness management plans will likely exist for the foreseeable future.

Fish and Wildlife Service Planning Documents



NOTE: Planning guidance for the Fish and Wildlife Service is under revision and will eventually be published in a new Service Manual.

Forest Service Planning Documents

FOREST LAND AND RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT PLAN
(FOREST PLAN)

Requires NEPA analysis

Contains management area direction and monitoring/evaluation requirements. Each Wilderness is a separate management area. Management area direction includes goals, objectives, and standards/guidelines. Each management area (e.g. Wilderness) can have one or more “prescriptions” (zones with different management emphasis).



OPERATIONAL PLAN AND IMPLEMENTATION SCHEDULE

These documents contain possible actions needed to meet desired conditions, priorities, costs, and responsibilities. They are not NEPA documents since they are just documenting the results of an analysis process and scheduling POSSIBLE actions.



Annual Work Plans Out Year Budgeting (to request funding)



PROJECT PLANS

Requires NEPA analysis

Site-specific direction on how a particular action will be done

NOTE: Planning within the Forest Service is also evolving due to the emphasis on incorporating an ecosystem approach to management of all resources and the development of new planning regulations. Rather than goals and objectives for management areas, managers now refer to “desired conditions.” Managers are encouraged to use limits of acceptable change concepts to develop Wilderness management direction within a Forest Plan.

National Park Service Planning Documents

GENERAL MANAGEMENT PLAN Requires NEPA analysis
Contains measures for the preservation of resources, indications of the types and general intensities of development, and identification of visitor carrying capacities.



WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLAN Requires NEPA analysis
Contains more detailed direction for Wilderness including management strategies to be implemented.



Wilderness Action Plan -
contains annual goals, actions, priorities, responsibilities and costs



PROJECT PLANS Requires NEPA analysis
Site-specific direction on how a particular action will be done

NOTE: The National Park Service is re-examining their entire planning process. The Visitor Experience and Resource Protection process is being developed as a method to prepare visitor management direction contained within the General Management Plan. Thus, in the future, Wilderness direction that describes a spectrum of desired resource and social conditions, monitoring indicators, and standards for each management zone would be found in the General Management Plan. Separate Wilderness Management Plans are likely to exist for the foreseeable future.

Introduction to Planning

Introduction To Planning

Why plan?

Wilderness planning is not the solution for poor management, but planning is an essential part of the Wilderness management program and is becoming more and more important. WHY?

Consider the following scenario (adapted from true story): Ranger Pulaski had been the caretaker of the No-see-um Wilderness for more than 25 years. He could tell you precisely where the campsites were, what condition the trails were in, what plants and animals were present, and patterns and levels of visitor use. Not that many people visited the No-see-um Wilderness and Ranger Pulaski had talked with most of them. There was no management direction, but Ranger Pulaski had consistently observed changes over the years, knew visitors' desires, and knew just what needed to be done.

Then one day the inevitable came and Ranger Pulaski retired. He was replaced by Ranger Mattock, a conscientious manager with a particular interest in improving trail conditions. Ranger Mattock felt that relocating trails was desirable because the new trails would require less maintenance in the long run. For four years, he instructed the trail crew to systematically reconstruct every trail in the No-see-um Wilderness. Ranger Mattock wanted to have a new network of better, low-maintenance trails completed in six years. Some visitors complained because the new trails reduced the primitive feel of the area and in some cases, eliminated areas that previously had been essentially trailless. Ranger Mattock felt they were probably just a radical minority and went on with his plan. However, after four years, Ranger Mattock transferred. He was replaced by Ranger Adze, who also had a strong interest in trails.

Unlike Ranger Mattock, Ranger Adze believed that restoring the original trail was preferable to relocating trails because there would not be a new scar created and the original trail would not continue to erode. Thus, Ranger Adze instructed the trail crew to begin restoration of all the trails in the No-see-um Wilderness. The new, uncompleted sections of trails built under Ranger Mattock's direction were abandoned. The result was visitors who were still upset about the loss of primitive areas, confused visitors who accidentally followed sections of trail that led nowhere, scars on the land, and a frustrated trail crew who was angry at abandoning years of hard work.

The lesson here is obvious: Without an overall plan to guide how human activities (including management activities) will be managed, management is very dependent on the philosophy of the person who currently is responsible. This may include taking no action due to disagreement about whether or not there is a problem. The result is haphazard management (i.e. management by crisis) which slowly erodes Wilderness values.

Planning benefits

- Prevent a series of minor decisions from producing undesirable results.
- Eliminate uncoordinated, haphazard management.
- Provide long-term direction, which provides continuity and stability over the course of changing managers.
- Provide clear, measurable standards so there is agreement regarding when management action is needed and trends in conditions can be tracked.

2 The Planning Process

- Resolve issues up front so that the needs of a diverse and interested citizenry are met.
- Develop integrated solutions to problems and identify priorities for management.
- Provide the basis to identify budget and personnel needs.
- Increase ownership and acceptance of management direction by interested citizens and within the agency so that the plan actually gets implemented.

Why plans fail

By now, you are probably convinced that effective Wilderness management direction is needed. However, many managers have found that their programmatic plan (e.g. Resource Management Plan) provides only minimal, general direction that does not provide guidance for on-the-ground management. Before we go further, it may be useful to examine why many plans fail.

Lack of specificity This is probably the most common flaw. Vague, general direction may never be achieved because it is unclear what is to be achieved. If there are no measurable results, it is difficult to know if management actions have been successful or even if trends in conditions are getting better or worse. The direction may also be subject to multiple interpretations, which can lead to management that produces undesired results.

Unresolved issues If major issues (including differing citizen desires) are not resolved up front, the consequence is that tough decisions are pushed down to the project level and nothing may get done due to the high level of conflict. A typical example of this flaw is the failure to provide direction regarding desired levels and types of outfitter services.

Unrealistic Sometimes standards specifying acceptable conditions are set so high, achievement of the standard in one area may result in just moving the problem to another part of the Wilderness. Setting standards too high may also necessitate very restrictive or costly management that is acceptable to no one (however, this argument should not be used as an excuse to establish standards that mimic current conditions where there is a recognized problem).

Lack of flexibility If a plan is written very rigidly, it may not offer the flexibility needed to deal with new or unforeseen situations. This results in decisions that are made outside of the plan direction. Over time, this results in the return of haphazard, piecemeal management.

Lack of integration A plan that treats each resource or human use separately, may look good on paper, but as it is implemented, the lack of integration will become obvious. Management actions that are not directed to a common set of desired conditions, will not be effective and will inadvertently compromise resource values.

Lack of acceptance This is the classic plan that sits on the shelf gathering dust or being used as a paperweight and never gets implemented. There are endless examples of mega bucks spent on developing plans with lots of technical analysis, only to have these plans never see the light of day or never get the funding needed for implementation. In other cases, managers may try to implement the plan but meet resistance at every step. The simple reason; lack of public and/or management support, understanding, and ownership.

Effective plan direction

1. **Describes desired conditions (what you are trying to achieve).** Desired conditions must describe resource conditions, processes, and experiences to be achieved (i.e. the effect of human activities), rather than focus on human or management activities themselves. Writing desired conditions requires identifying conflicts between individual public desires and resolving the differences up front (i.e. “optimization” process that produces negotiated outcome). In doing this, it is essential

that conflicts between various values/expectations are negotiated within the bounds of land capability, stewardship requirements, and legislative mandates.

2. **Provides a diversity of resource conditions and experiences.** Management direction needs to recognize the importance of providing a spectrum of desired conditions within Wilderness. Providing a spectrum of opportunities allows people with different personal definitions of a wilderness experience to pick the area that will best meet their desires. Providing a spectrum of settings also recognizes that there are different land capabilities with some sensitive areas needing more stringent standards than other areas.
3. **Establishes measurable, attainable standards for conditions.** The plan must establish measurable and attainable standards that describe what the land and the experience is minimally expected to be like (i.e. what is acceptable). These standards are used as triggers to signal when a change in management is needed and are the “yardsticks” used to measure progress.
4. **Identifies valid monitoring indicators.** The plan must clearly identify what variables will be used to track trends in conditions so that management effectiveness can be determined.
5. **Specific to particular area.** Desired conditions, standards, and monitoring indicators need to be meaningful for a particular area. The focus of planning is to translate legislative mandates into direction for a specific area. Broad direction that is open to wide interpretation and could apply to any piece of land is meaningless.
6. **Adaptable.** Plan direction needs to be adaptable so that it can accommodate new knowledge or unforeseen situations. Managers should not complete plan direction and lock it in concrete. However, where conditions on-the-ground do not meet standards, managers should not change the standard because they don’t want to change their management.
7. **Clear and understandable.** If only planners and specialists can understand the plan direction, it will not be effectively implemented. Jargon that must be used needs to be defined in a way that is understandable.
8. **Streamlined.** Plans should not repeat direction that is found elsewhere (e.g. policy manuals). If only one course of action is possible due to legislative and policy mandates, then no decision needs to be made. Focus on developing well-written, concise, meaningful desired condition descriptions, standards, and monitoring indicators that present a clear picture of what is to be achieved and how progress will be measured for a particular Wilderness and eliminate the “fluff.”
9. **Coordinated.** Plan direction needs to be coordinated across administrative boundaries so that visitors do not encounter different conditions or experiences when they cross between units. Develop plan direction for geographic areas that make ecological sense. Define the geographic area the plan will cover up front.
10. **Integrated.** Development of plan direction needs to be integrated among resource specialists so that incompatible desired conditions are not developed.
11. **Developed with public input.** Direction for desired conditions, standards and monitoring indicators must be developed by blending science, manager experience, and public values. Managers need to recognize that their decisions are inherently value-based and subjective.

2 The Planning Process

12. **Improves on-the-ground management.** Plan direction must lead to better management on-the-ground by providing the means to make explicit, trackable, defensible decisions that resolve conflicting public desires regarding goals (what should be achieved) up front. Trackable and defensible means that managers are able to provide the rationale for how specific direction was developed.

Evolution in Planning Concepts

Recreation carrying capacity**Evolution In Planning Concepts**

As early as the 1940s, managers began voicing concern about the “recreation saturation point of wilderness” (Stankey and McCool 1984). In response to increasing pressure on National Parks and Wildernesses, the carrying capacity concept was applied to managing recreation use. Carrying capacity has its foundation in the range and wildlife sciences. As defined in the range sciences, carrying capacity means “the maximum number of animals that can be grazed on a land unit for a specific period of time without inducing damage to vegetation or related resources.”

Recreation carrying capacity was modified to include the visitor experience as well as the physical-biological resource but it was still used to determine the maximum number of people an area could accommodate without being damaged or detracting from people’s experience. The underlying assumption was that there was a linear relationship between the amount of use and the amount of impact.

The recreation carrying capacity concept was affirmed by legislation both within the Forest Service and National Park Service. Within the Forest Service, the 1976 National Forest Management Act directed the agency to “limit and distribute visitor use in accordance with periodic estimates of the maximum levels of use that allow natural processes to operate freely and do not impair the values for which wildernesses were created.” Similarly, the National Park Service was directed by the 1978 General Authorities Act to include in each Park’s General Management Plan, the “identification of and implementation commitments for visitor carrying capacities for all areas of the unit.”

The carrying capacity concept spawned many years of research regarding the nature of human impact in wildlands. The recurring finding of over 2000 studies was that no linear relationship existed between the amount of use and the resultant amount of impact (Krumpe and Stokes 1993). We now know that, for many types of impacts, most of the impact occurs with only low levels of use. Additional use does not cause the amount of impact to increase (i.e. amount of impact eventually levels off with additional use). This research revealed that visitor behavior, site resistance/resiliency, type of use, and timing of use are more important in determining the amount of impact than the amount of use, although amount of use is still a factor (Hammit and Cole 1987).

The shortcomings of the carrying capacity approach became apparent. Foremost was a recognition that searching for a single number was an elusive and probably impossible task. Second, by focusing on determining how many visitors an area could accommodate, managers lost sight of what they were trying to achieve (goals and objectives). Third, if you assume that there is a linear relationship between use and impact, your only management option is to reduce use when there is a problem.

The carrying capacity approach is still a useful tool if managers recognize the potential shortcomings and address them. Given the sheer number of people in some Wildernesses, there is still a role for applying use limits. McCool (1989) identifies seven criteria needed to effectively apply use limits:

1. There must be agreement on resource and experience conditions to be achieved.
2. There must be agreement on acceptable levels of impact.
3. There must be a clear relationship between use levels and resource or experience condition.

2 The Planning Process

4. Use levels must be a more important factor in causing the particular impact than visitor behavior or site location.
5. There must be agreement on what will be achieved by rationing use.
6. The agency must have the resources to administer use limits.
7. There must be agreement that the established use limit represents either the maximum or the optimum number of people.

Suggested activity:

Demonstrate the shortcomings with a carrying capacity approach via a participatory “game.” The Utopia Peaks Wilderness is defined by a rope circle. Participants are day hikers, horsepackers, backpackers, low-impact campers, maximum impact campers. Demonstrate that it is impossible to determine one single carrying capacity—it is dependent on many variables (e.g. type of use, behavior).

Limits of acceptable change (LAC)

The shortcomings of the carrying capacity approach resulted in a recognition that “How many are too many?” focused on the wrong question. The relevant question is “How much change is acceptable?”

The Limits of Acceptable Change process was pioneered by the Forest Service to address the shortcomings of the carrying capacity approach for managing recreation use. Key LAC concepts are:

1. Some change in conditions is inevitable. Wilderness resources are not static but are constantly evolving. Natural events occur over time and space causing conditions to change. Wilderness conditions also change due to human influence. Indeed, there is no place on earth which has not been influenced in some way. Because human use is a legitimate part of Wilderness, the goal is not to eliminate all human effects but rather to determine how much change is acceptable within the intent of the Wilderness Act.
2. The focus is on human-induced change. A major goal in Wilderness management is to minimize human interference so that nature can do the “managing,” thus the focus is on setting limits of change that result from human activities rather than changes that occur due to natural events (e.g. wildlife population fluctuations, fire, windthrow, avalanches). Examples of human activities are camping, trail maintenance, fire suppression, introduction of exotic species, livestock grazing, and human-induced air pollution.
3. The effects of human activities are what is important. LAC is basically a management-by-objectives approach. A fundamental concept is that management needs to focus on the desired conditions to be achieved, rather than the activities themselves. Use levels (numbers of people) can still play a role, however use levels must be tied to the conditions managers are trying to achieve.
4. A diversity of settings is important to maintain. Diversity normally occurs within Wilderness due to differences in ease of access, topography, water sources, and proximity to towns. This results in differing levels and patterns of human use. Similarly, there are differences in the quality of habitat for various wildlife species, thus some areas are more crucial than others. Rather than disperse human use evenly throughout the Wilderness, it is better to identify different levels of acceptable human impact. Typically, management direction is established so that some zones have very little human influence, while other zones allow for more change in conditions. This

creates a spectrum of opportunities so that visitors can choose the type of wilderness experience they want and more resource protection is offered in especially sensitive areas.

5. Determining what is acceptable is value-based. LAC was intended to be an optimization process to find the best balance between conflicting desires. Standards that define acceptable conditions need to incorporate scientific knowledge regarding how human activities affect resource and experience conditions, however what is acceptable is still based on society's values and beliefs (O'Brien 1994). One assumption inherent in determining how much change is acceptable is that you can define the conditions that would exist without any human influence (i.e. you can define your zero point so you can decide how much change is acceptable).

References include: Stankey et.al. 1985, Stokes 1990, Stankey, McCool and Stokes 1984, Krumpke and Stokes 1993, Stokes 1991.

Visitor experience and resource protection (VERP)

While the Limits of Acceptable Change process was being developed and tested, the National Park Service was also exploring ways to respond to shortcomings in the carrying capacity approach. An early effort developed by the National Parks and Conservation Association was called the Visitor Impact Management system. This system was similar to the LAC system in that it focused on setting objectives, selecting key impact indicators, establishing measurable standards, comparing existing conditions with standards, developing management strategies to reduce impacts, and monitoring. It differed by placing greater emphasis on identifying the causes underlying visitor impacts (Graefe, et.al. 1986).

More recently, the National Park Service has been developing and pilot-testing a framework called the Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (VERP) system (USDI 1993). This system was developed by incorporating concepts from Limits of Acceptable Change, Visitor Impact Management, and Recreation Opportunity Spectrum. It is intended to be used to manage visitor impacts in all areas of a Park—not just Wilderness. Major components of the VERP system are:

- A. Develop clear statements of park purposes, significance, and primary interpretive themes.
- B. Identify potential management zones that cover a range of desired resource and social conditions.
- C. Select quality indicators and specify measurable standards.
- D. Compare existing conditions with desired conditions.
- E. Identify the probable cause of discrepancies and develop management strategies to address discrepancies.
- F. Monitor

Conclusion

The response to deficiencies in the carrying capacity approach has been very similar. Key components of all these processes are:

- 1. An emphasis on describing desired resource and experience conditions (goals, objectives) that define what is to be achieved.

2 The Planning Process

2. A recognition that zoning is desirable to maintain diversity across the area.
3. Selecting indicators and defining measurable standards so it is clear when management action is needed.
4. Comparing existing conditions with desired conditions.
5. Developing management strategies to address problems (gaps between existing and desired conditions).
6. Monitoring and evaluating so that trends in conditions can be tracked.

Both LAC and VERP are methodologies that help structure development of management direction. They are NOT public involvement methods. However, due to the emphasis on the inherently subjective nature of developing desired conditions and standards defining limits of acceptable change, it is essential to involve the public as managers work through the planning process (Stokes 1988, Krumpke and Stokes 1993, Stokes 1990).

It is also important to recognize that neither LAC nor VERP are separate planning processes. However, the concepts in these frameworks are useful to develop management direction within each agency's overall planning process. Within the National Park Service, VERP is recognized as a methodology to develop direction contained within the General Management Plan. Within the Forest Service, LAC is recognized as a methodology to develop direction within the Forest Plan.

While each agency differs somewhat in how management direction is packaged, there is general agreement that the first 3 components (desired conditions/zones, objectives, and monitoring indicators) are programmatic in nature. Programmatic direction is usually found in Resource Management Plans, Comprehensive Management Plans, Forest Plans, or General Management Plans, however this type of direction may also be found within separate Wilderness management plans in some agencies. Other components of planning require more frequent review and adjustment, thus are more appropriately packaged in operational-type plans.

LAC/VERP CONCEPTS

- * Change in conditions is inevitable.
- * Focus on human-induced change.
- * The effects of human activities are what is important.
- * A diversity of settings is important to maintain.
- * Determining what is acceptable is value-based.

LAC and VERP are methodologies to develop management direction. They are not separate planning processes, nor are they an approach to public involvement.

Apply these concepts within your overall agency planning framework.



HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

Amount of impact is not solely dependent on numbers

Not one capacity, but many: the “RIGHT” capacity depends on management objectives

How much is too much is wrong question

**EFFECTS of use, not how much use
is the concern**



Fish and Wildlife Service Planning Process

Fish and Wildlife Service Planning Process

Objectives

The objectives of this chapter are: to introduce Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) requirements for preparation of Wilderness Management Plans; to outline the agency's wilderness management objectives which guide planning; to introduce references which describe management activities and resource based uses allowed in Service managed wilderness; and, to briefly describe planning process guidance currently in place.

Overview

Management direction for each designated wilderness on Service land must be stated in a Wilderness Management Plan, which can be either part of an overall management plan or an independent step-down plan. In Alaska, overall management plans are called Comprehensive Conservation Plans and meet specific requirements outlined in the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). Elsewhere overall management plans are called Comprehensive Management Plans.

The Service manages nearly 20.7 million acres of designated wilderness, comprised of 75 wilderness areas on 63 national wildlife refuges and one fish hatchery. About 20 wilderness areas have independent wilderness management plans, most of which were completed from 1978 to 1981. An additional 23 wilderness areas are within refuges that have overall management plans in place. The 21 wilderness areas in Alaska total 18.6 million acres. These areas are addressed in comprehensive conservation plans developed in the 1980s; more detailed management guidance may be included in comprehensive conservation plan revisions or in independent step-down plans.

Planning guidance for the entire agency is under revision and will eventually be published in a new Service Manual. The wilderness planning and management chapters of the Service Manual are found in Part 610, Chapters One through Five; currently in draft form. Wilderness management planning guidance is found in Part 610, Chapter Five; cited 610 FW 5.

The Project Leader for the land system unit which contains designated wilderness is ultimately responsible for preparation of the unit's Wilderness Management Plan.

Description

The Wilderness management plan

The wilderness management plan guides the preservation, management, and use of a particular wilderness. The wilderness management plan describes the relationship between wilderness management objectives and unit purposes, system goals, and unit objectives;

- Establishes indicators, standards, conditions, or thresholds that will trigger management actions to reduce or prevent impacts on the wilderness;
- Contains specific, measurable management objectives that address preservation of wilderness-dependent cultural and natural resource values; and,
- Is developed with public involvement.

Objectives

The Fish and Wildlife Service's management objectives for wilderness are to:

2 The Planning Process

- Fulfill the purposes for which the Service land system and Wilderness System were established;
- Maintain and perpetuate an enduring resource of wilderness for future use and enjoyment as wilderness;
- Maintain wilderness in a condition that appears to have been primarily affected by the forces of nature, with human impact substantially unnoticeable;
- Protect and perpetuate wilderness character and public values including, but not limited to, opportunities for scientific study, education, historical use, solitude, physical and mental challenge and stimulation, inspiration, and primitive recreation; and,
- 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, use patterns and expectations.

Management activities and public uses

Management activities and resource based uses allowed within wilderness are discussed in 610 FW 3; see Appendix C for a DRAFT version of this chapter. Uses allowed within designated wilderness in Alaska, where ANILCA modifies certain provisions of the Wilderness Act, are summarized in Appendix C 92

Plan contents

The minimum contents of a wilderness management plan are summarized in the plan outline presented in Figure 1.

Planning process

Planning process guidance is not provided in the Service Manual chapters on wilderness management. Planning process guidance will appear in the Service Manual chapters on comprehensive management planning (602 FW 2); however these chapters are still in draft form and may be substantially changed when, or if, “organic” legislation currently pending in Congress is passed. Because Alaska refuges have legislated planning requirements, the Alaska Region does have a general planning process in place. Basically, all plans in the Alaska Region follow a standard National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) outline and planning process. Other regions also use this process when unit size, complexity, and controversy warrant. The NEPA process and outline are essentially a national planning standard that provides sound basic planning guidance; see Figure 2. Staff must know the NEPA process anyway, and books explaining the process are readily available; Part 550 of the Service Manual provides additional guidance.

Concepts from the Limits of Acceptable Change planning methodology and the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum are integrated into the planning process as appropriate. Since Service planning activities are not governed by regulation, agency

planners are free to adapt the best ideas from current research.

Refuges furnish most of the planning team for any given project, which fosters “ownership” of the eventual product, and pragmatic solutions to management problems. Regional office planning staff generally function as “process experts,” providing guidance on NEPA, coordination, public involvement, and policy consistency. They sometimes serve as principal authors so refuge staff can attend to operational responsibilities.

The project leader, who is ultimately responsible for plan preparation, is a member of the planning team but does not necessarily manage the planning project. The project manager is selected from either the refuge staff or the planning staff, depending on the needs of the particular situation. In Alaska, several members of the planning staff are stationed at refuges but are supervised from the regional office.

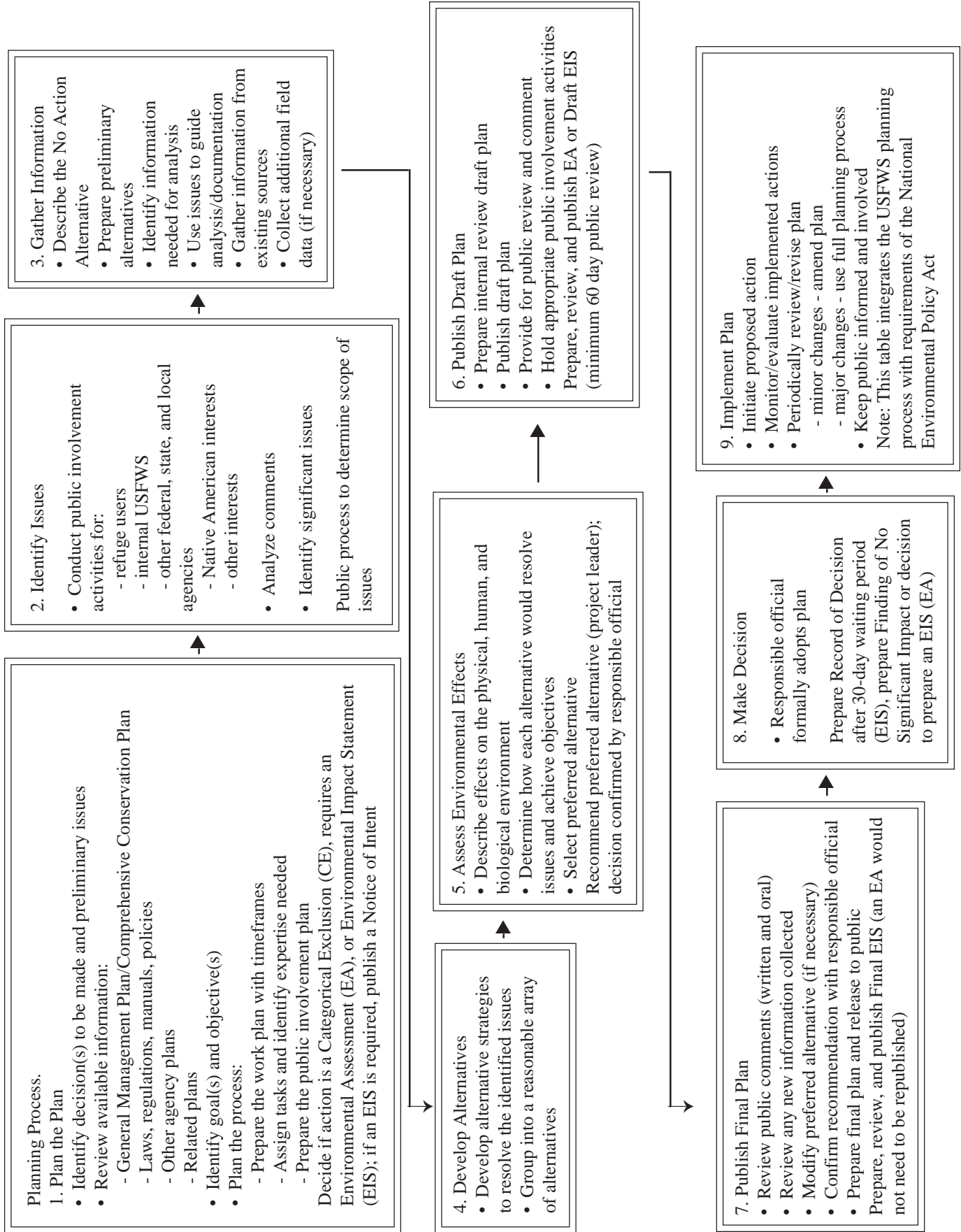
Figure 1. Wilderness Management Plan Outline

- I. Introduction
 - A. Summary of establishing legislation and relevant legislative history.
 - B. Relationship of wilderness to unit purposes, system goals, and unit objectives.
 - C. Wilderness management objectives.
- II. Description Of the Wilderness.
 - A. Legal and narrative description of the area.
 - B. Map displaying Service land unit boundary and wilderness area boundary.
 - C. Discussion of natural resources.
- III. Public Involvement. Describe public involvement activities and provide a summary and analysis of comments received and how the plan responds to them.
- IV. Management. Provide detailed discussions of existing and planned biological, public use, cultural resource, and administrative management activities and permitted uses. If an activity is specifically authorized by legislation, it should be noted. Limits of acceptable change should be identified and discussed.
- V. Research. Describe past and current research; identify research needs.
- VI. Funds and Personnel. Discussion of staff and funding needed to manage the wilderness.
- VII. Monitoring. Identify monitoring requirements and thresholds for action.
- VIII. Implementation Schedule. Prioritization of action items, target dates for completion, staff assignments, and funding requirements.
- IX. Compatibility Determination.
- X. Review and Approval.
- XI. Appendices.
 - A. A copy of the Wilderness Act.
 - B. A copy of establishing legislation.
 - C. Service wilderness regulations (50 CFR 35), except Alaska.
 - D. Wilderness study report for the wilderness.
 - E. NEPA documentation.
 - F. Public hearing record from wilderness study.
 - G. Congressional hearing record.
 - H. Congressional committee report accompanying the authorizing legislation.

Source: Summarized from 610 FW 1, Appendix 3

2 The Planning Process

Figure 2. U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Step-down Management



Forest Service Planning Process

Forest Service Planning Framework

Introduction

Prior to 1976, separate Wilderness management plans were developed, as were many other “functional” plans. However, with passage of the National Forest Management Act (NFMA), every Forest was directed to prepare a comprehensive plan—a Land and Resource Management Plan (commonly referred to as the Forest Plan)—so that direction for all resources would be integrated. Planning regulations were developed to guide development of Forest Plans. Today, most Forests operate under the umbrella of a Forest Plan.

Most of the effort in Wilderness since 1964 has revolved around designation of areas, thus it is not surprising that the first round of Forest Plans dealt primarily with roadless area review and recommending which areas should be designated. Very little attention was placed on developing direction within the Forest Plan for how Wilderness should be managed. However, some Wilderness Management Plans were prepared as unbound appendices and just referenced in the Forest Plan. These early plans often contained information on existing conditions, assumptions, and management objectives.

In 1988, Congress held oversight hearings on Forest Service Wilderness management (GAO 1989). Two principal findings were that monitoring information was lacking and funding/staffing levels necessary to fully manage Wilderness were unknown. The Forest Service responded by directing Forests to complete Wilderness Implementation Schedules (WISs) by the end of 1993. The WIS was supposed to identify the actions needed to implement the Forest Plan and calculate the budget and staff needed to implement the actions. The purpose was to generate a more accurate picture of what was required to manage the entire Wilderness resource.

In a letter providing guidance on preparing Wilderness Implementation Schedules, the Washington Office noted that “the Forest Plan should provide the overall objectives, direction and desired condition for each Wilderness and the WIS should document the actions needed to manage the Wilderness. Some Forest Plans do not have the level of detail necessary to define the standards and guidelines and the desired condition for wilderness. If that is the case, that entire step needs to be completed before going on to the WIS, preferably in an amendment to the Forest Plan” (USDA 1990).

As WISs were developed, many managers found that their Forest Plans did not contain desired conditions and standards for managing Wilderness. At the same time, managers were also being encouraged to use the LAC process to develop Wilderness management direction. Due to the lack of adequate management direction in Forest Plans and resistance to doing Forest Plan amendments, WISs were sometimes mistakenly viewed as substitutes for Forest Plan direction. Other managers followed the LAC process without a clear understanding of whether the product would become part of the Forest Plan or part of a WIS. The result was considerable confusion about the relationships between documents and integration of LAC and NEPA.

As the emphasis on Wilderness management was growing, Forest planning was also evolving. Much has been learned in the process of trying to implement the first Forest Plans. More recently, the emphasis on ecosystem management clearly has implications for how planning is done. In 1993, a national team was chartered to develop a prototype for Forest Plan revisions and amendments. Concepts advanced by

2 The Planning Process

the Prototype effort include:

1. Using a hierarchical, ecological approach to portray direction for a Forest.
2. Developing desired conditions which are outcome-based (i.e. what the land and experience should be like). A summary of reasonably expected outputs, services and associated budget costs are identified in an Appendix.
3. Streamlining the plan by not including information that is found elsewhere and making the plan understandable, adaptable and meaningful.

Three “rules of thumb” were developed to screen Forest Plan contents:

1. Is there really a decision to be made, or realistically is there no option due to existing direction?
2. Does the management direction provide standards for on-the-ground resource management?
3. Is the direction applicable to a particular Forest or area, or does it apply to almost any Forest in the Region?

The Prototype effort did not develop “the answer.” Planning is continuing to evolve and there is still uncertainty over how Forest Planning is best done using an ecosystem approach. Questions exist relative to where direction is best “packaged” (i.e. what direction really belongs in the Forest Plan). We do know that Forest Plan direction consists of desired conditions, standards, and monitoring requirements but the appropriate level of specificity is uncertain. Other questions revolve around spatial scales - how should management areas be defined and how do zones fit in?

Recognizing that planning will continue to evolve, this section will explore how Wilderness management direction is developed within the general framework of Forest Planning based on the current state of knowledge.

Please note that the framework presented here can be used to complete Forest Plan amendments for any resource. Developing management direction for Wilderness is simply used as the example due to the emphasis of this module. The framework used in this module to amend Forest Plan direction follows the same thought process as the Forest Plan Implementation process (refer to 1900-01 course). The difference is that the content prepared for each step is programmatic in nature (i.e. focusing on direction for what is to be achieved), rather than site-specific (i.e. focusing on how to do a particular action).

Forest planning framework

(Refer to Handout — Wilderness Management Planning Framework).

The purpose of planning (relative to Wilderness) is to translate the Wilderness Act, enabling legislation, and national policy into management direction for a specific area so that public expectations, legislative intent, and resource protection are achieved. The key document that contains management direction for a particular Wilderness is the Forest Plan. This document describes what is to be achieved. Project plans describe how a particular action at the site-specific level will be done. To get from the Forest Plan to the Project Plan, analysis must be completed to identify what needs to be done in a comprehensive, integrated manner so that projects can be budgeted and workload can be anticipated. The results of this type of analysis are documented in

operational plans and implementation schedules (refer to WO letter 5/27/92). Operational plans provide a place to re-state desired conditions and standards from the Forest Plan, describe existing conditions, and identify actions that are needed (along with relevant policy guidance for particular actions). This can provide a one-stop place to look for wilderness management direction.

Staged decision-making

The Forest Plan and the Project Plan represent two different decision levels in planning. (Refer to Overhead — Forest Planning: Two Decision Levels) NEPA analysis and documentation is required for both decision levels. As Forest Plans were implemented, it became increasingly clear that Forest Plans did not make site-specific decisions.

Forest Plans contain programmatic decisions. These decisions define what is to be achieved (desired conditions, standards, monitoring requirements). This type of management direction implies what kind of human activities MAY occur. A Forest Plan is analogous to a city zoning ordinance. A zoning ordinance divides an area into various zones and establishes standards for development within each zone. Development MAY be permitted in a certain zone if it conforms with the rules established for that zone. But the zoning ordinance DOES NOT COMPEL development. Similarly, Forest Plans do not require specific projects to occur, but do require that site-specific actions comply with the standards established in the Plan. For example, desired condition descriptions for a portion of the Wilderness may imply that activities like outfitting, trail maintenance, campsite rehabilitation, and livestock grazing will occur but Forest Plan direction does not require that these activities take place. It is only after the project-level NEPA analysis is done that there is a commitment made to carry out or allow a particular activity. However, all project-level activities carried out or permitted must meet standards and help achieve desired conditions in the Forest Plan.

Project plans contain site-specific decisions that define how a particular action will be done. A simple way to determine whether an action is site-specific is to apply the following test: *If you can read the proposed action, the alternatives, or the environmental consequences in a NEPA document and you could apply those descriptions to some other area of land, then it is NOT site-specific.*

At the site-specific (project) level, a commitment of resources occurs.

Forest plan decisions

Refer to Overhead — Forest Plan Decisions)

As Wilderness management direction is developed, it is critical to know what the end product will be (i.e. what decisions will be made and what kind of document will be produced). The Forest Plan makes six types of decisions. If you are intending to amend your Forest Plan to incorporate new Wilderness management direction, you will be focusing on decisions #3 (management area direction) and #5 (monitoring requirements). If you are developing new Wilderness management direction as part of the Forest Plan revision process, you will be primarily focusing on decisions #1 (goals and objectives), #3 (management area direction), #4 (land suitability), and #5 (monitoring requirements).

Suggested activity

Have participants use their own Forest Plan to find each type of Forest Plan decision.

2 The Planning Process

Focus on Wilderness direction within the Plan. Emphasize the positives — don't get caught up dwelling on deficiencies either perceived or real.

Forest-wide goals and objectives (36 CFR 219.11b)

A goal is a concise statement that describes an intended result. It is normally expressed in broad, general terms without a specific timeframe for achievement.

An objective is a concise statement which describes a specific result that will contribute to achieving a goal.

EXAMPLES of Forest-wide Goals and Objectives related to Wilderness management:

- Communities continue to gain prosperity.
 - a. Provide undisturbed areas for use by outfitter and guide clients.
 - b. Help re-establish historic elk migration routes to provide increased viewing and hunting opportunities.
- Sensitive species are prevented from becoming federally listed Threatened species.
 - a. Protect National Forest Intermountain Region sensitive plant and animal species and provide suitable and adequate amounts of habitat to ensure that activities do not cause: (1) long-term or further decline in population numbers of habitats supporting these populations; and (2) trends towards federal listing.
- The wilderness character of Congressionally designated Wilderness is retained or regained.
 - a. Retain and where necessary, restore high quality wilderness environments.
 - b. Prevent human overcrowding in Wilderness that leads to a loss of wilderness values, providing alternate recreation locations when a wilderness setting is not key to a visitor's experience.
- Grazing use of the National Forest sustains or improves overall range, soils, water, wildlife, and recreation values or experiences.
 - a. Retain or enhance riparian vegetation, stream-channel stability, sensitive soils, and water quality where livestock are present.
 - b. Coordinate the management of livestock with recreation use.
 - c. Help control the spread of noxious weeds.
- Cultural resource values are preserved.
 - a. Find and protect cultural resources so that their scientific, historic, and social values are retained.

Forest-wide management requirements (36 CFR 219.2 7)

These are the standards and guidelines which are imposed no matter where you are on the Forest. This avoids endless repetition of the same standards for every management area.

For example, if a Forest has more than one Wilderness, there may be a section on Wilderness management direction. This direction applies to every Wilderness on the Forest. In addition, each Wilderness is its own management area, thus direction which differs by area can be included in the management area section. Again, this prevents repeating direction which does not vary by Wilderness.

Management area direction (36 CFR 29.11c)

Management areas are areas with common management direction (i.e. similar objectives). Each Wilderness must be established as a separate management area (FSM 2322.03). Management area direction consists of desired conditions with associated standards and guidelines. This direction can vary by “zones” established within the management area (e.g. desired conditions and standards for a “transition” zone versus desired conditions and standards for a “very primitive” zone). The descriptions of desired conditions should imply what activities may occur. This is where the bulk of the planning effort is. Units 7 and 9 will discuss development of this direction in more detail and will provide examples.

Suitability of lands for resource use and production (36 CFR 219.14, .16, .20, .21)

The planning regulations call for a number of suitability characterizations relative to timber harvest, range suitability for domestic animals, suitable habitat for indicator species and recreation suitability.

Monitoring and evaluation (36 CFR 219.11d)

The selection of monitoring indicators to track progress toward desired conditions is a Forest Plan decision. The planning regulations specify that Forest Plans need to identify monitoring requirements, set monitoring frequencies, and identify acceptable deviations. Unit 8 will discuss development of monitoring indicators in more detail.

Recommendations for wilderness, wild and scenic rivers (36 CFR 219.17)

Forest Plans identify areas recommended for Wilderness or Wild and Scenic River designation, however only Congress has the authority to designate these areas. The allocation question is now largely resolved on Forest System Lands (exceptions are Idaho and Montana). However, when Forest Plans are revised (every 10-15 years), additional areas can be recommended for Wilderness or Wild and Scenic River designation.

(Refer to Handout — Why programmatic Wilderness direction needs to be in the Forest Plan)

Legal significance

The Forest Plan is a legally binding document that is our contract with the public on what we are trying to achieve. Other separate plans are not legally binding. For this reason, it is important that programmatic wilderness direction be included in Forest Plans.

The difference between existing conditions and desired conditions is what triggers the need for management action. Clear, measurable standards that are not open to wide interpretation will provide the rationale needed to justify management actions. There is strong direction to not violate Forest Plan standards. In a letter to all employees (February 1992), former Chief Dale Robertson stated:

“If there is a conflict between management standards and guidelines and other

2 The Planning Process

objectives, the standards and guidelines must take precedent. If you suspect you will violate environmental laws or Forest Plan standards and guidelines, stop. Amend your Forest Plans. Involve your publics. Base your changes on the best resource data available. We expect every project to be in full compliance with standards and guidelines set forth in Forest Plans.”

Integrating Wilderness

A major goal for the Wilderness program is to make Wilderness a full, legitimate partner within the Forest Service. One way to accomplish this is by working within the existing planning process. This greatly reduces communication barriers and allows everyone to learn from each other. Managers are encouraged to use their innovation and creativity to develop the content of wilderness management direction, rather than trying to create a different planning process.

Program budgets

Programs are developed and budgeted based on direction in the Forest Plan. If adequate Wilderness management direction is not in the Forest Plan, it is unlikely that the Wilderness program will receive the attention it deserves.

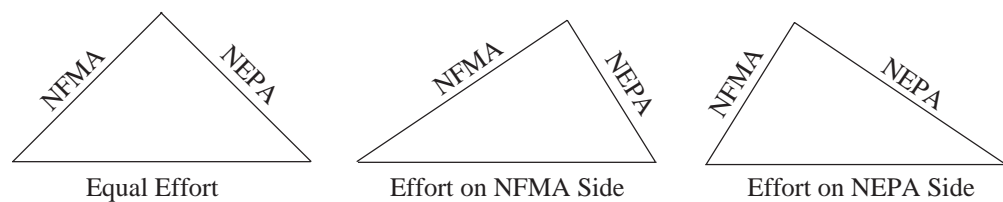
Developing forest plan direction

(Refer to Handout — Development of Plan Direction)

Most people in the Forest Service are familiar with the NFMA-NEPA triangle for Forest Plan Implementation. Amending or revising Forest Plan direction follows a similar triangle with some modifications since you are working at the programmatic level rather than the site-specific level.

Suggested activity

Take a loop of string and ask a volunteer to make the bottom two corners of a triangle. Demonstrate that the length of the triangle sides can vary. If you put a lot of effort involving specialists and interested citizens in the development of proposed management direction (analysis side), the NEPA work will be shorter. It doesn't necessarily change total time, but you can choose which side of the triangle to want to spend time on.



Select location

Analysis side (NFMA) of triangle

Determine the geographic area for which you want to develop management direction. Most efforts to develop Wilderness management direction have focused on geographic areas defined by the Wilderness boundary. However, in the spirit of ecosystem management, we need to strive to make boundaries less visible. Sometimes, the Wilderness you are focusing on is adjacent to another Wilderness and it makes sense to combine the planning effort. Other times, there are adjacent non-Wilderness lands that are ecologically tied to the Wilderness (e.g. foothills of a mountain range where the higher elevation area is Wilderness). In these cases, it is important to be clear up front that, while the analysis to develop proposed direction will cover a larger area than the Wilderness, we must recognize that Wilderness is a distinct component of the

National Forest that requires a different management philosophy than non-wilderness lands. By the same token, we must be clear that we will not expect non-wilderness lands to conform to the provisions of the Wilderness Act (i.e. the goal is to recognize that animals and processes move across boundaries, thus the analysis must look at broader landscapes. It is not to create defacto wilderness or compromise designated Wilderness). There are good examples of this type of planning for adjoining National Recreation Areas and Wilderness.

Identify need for change (including issues)

To be effective, you need to focus on what really needs to be fixed. Start with the Forest Plan direction that applies to your geographic area of interest. Compare this direction with what is considered adequate direction. Identify what needs to be changed. Work with specialists and interested citizens to identify significant issues to further focus your effort. Unit 4 discusses need for change in more detail.

Collect information

This involves gathering the information on current conditions that will be needed to describe desired conditions and establish realistic standards. Focus information collection on the issues that were identified in the need for change. Unit 6 discusses information collection in more detail.

Prepare proposed management direction

This involves developing descriptions of desired conditions, standards, monitoring indicators, and a map showing the proposal for how zones would be allocated on the ground. Units 7, 8, and 9 discuss development of proposed management direction in more detail.

Scope the proposed management direction

During scoping, the public is invited to identify the issues associated with the proposed management direction. In all likelihood, there will be issues that surface during development of the proposed management direction that were not resolved by the proposed direction. These should be identified and refined during the scoping process. Unit 10 discusses scoping the proposed management direction in more detail.

Develop alternatives

Alternatives to the proposed management direction are developed that address the significant issues and still fulfill the purpose and need. Each alternative displays a particular way that zones would be allocated across the Wilderness. Unit 11 discusses developing alternatives in more detail.

Evaluate alternatives (disclose effects)

Each alternative must be described in terms of potential effects on resource conditions, the visitor's experience, and managerial implications. The purpose is to disclose effects so that differences among the alternatives are apparent and an informed decision can be made. Unit 11 discusses evaluating alternatives in more detail.

NEPA side of triangle

Document decision

The decision maker must select one alternative and document the rationale for his/her decision. The type of environmental document used depends on the significance of the proposed change. There are two types of significance determinations. The first relates

2 The Planning Process

to the significance of the proposed management direction in terms of environmental effects. The second type of significance relates to how much the new management direction will change the current Forest Plan goals, objectives and outputs. Unit 12 discusses determining significance and documenting the decision in more detail.

Now you have Forest Plan Wilderness management direction that gives you a clear target to shoot for and provides the rationale for determining when management action is needed. However, the planning job isn't over. You still need to decide what management actions are needed, how they should be carried out, and whether you are making progress on-the-ground. Unit 13 briefly describes the analysis necessary to determine possible management actions (i.e. developing operational plans and implementation schedules) and the NEPA analysis for site-specific projects. Monitoring indicators were identified as part of your Forest Plan direction but monitoring must be carried out so that trends in conditions can be tracked. This provides a feedback loop so you know if Forest Plan direction is being met. You will notice that public participation is continuous. The intent is to move away from the traditional approach of involving the public only during the NEPA phase of planning. We need to work towards a more collaborative approach where we continuously exchange ideas, build relationships, and develop solutions.

Applications of LAC

In the section on the evolution from carrying capacity to LAC, we discussed that the intent of LAC is to shift the focus of planning from trying to determine how many is too many to a focus on desired conditions and determining how much change in conditions is acceptable. We also discussed that a diversity of settings is important to maintain, thus zoning is appropriate within Wilderness and determining what is acceptable is value-based, thus standards must be established by blending scientific information with public desires and managerial expertise. We also know that LAC is a methodology for developing wilderness management direction, not a separate planning process. LAC concepts are not obsolete. However, following the nine-step process has not been effective because it leaves out important steps (e.g. identifying the need for current Forest Plan direction to change, specifically identifying the proposed action, scoping, determining significance, and documentation) and it does not distinguish between programmatic and site-specific decisions.

It should be apparent that the LAC concepts are very relevant to developing desired conditions, zones, standards, and monitoring indicators. These are the type of decisions that are made in Forest Plans at the programmatic level. Thus, using LAC concepts is encouraged to develop the proposed management direction.

Summary

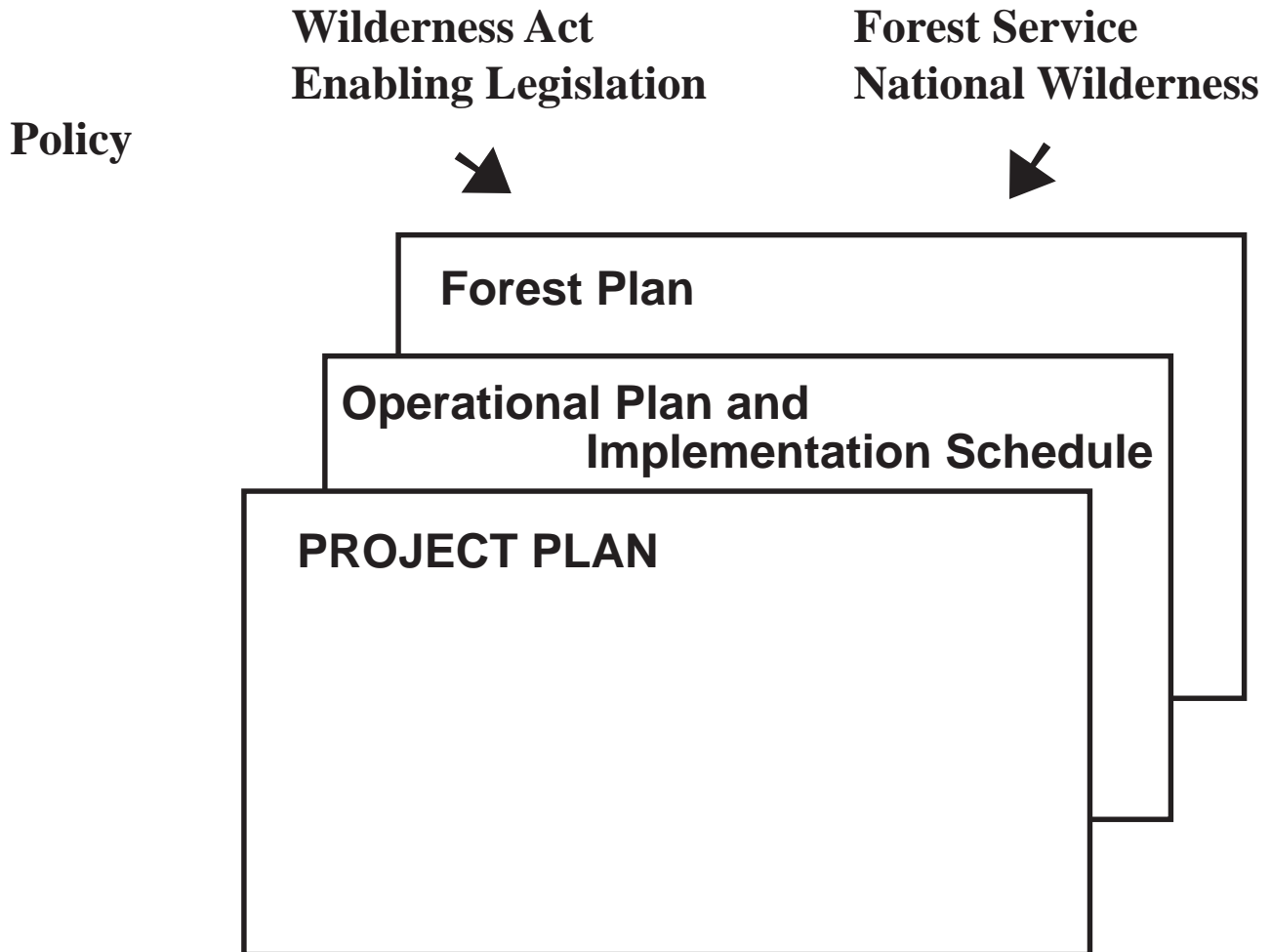
- Know what your end product is. Be clear right from the beginning about whether or not you are making a decision and if so, what type of decisions you are making (programmatic or site-specific) and what type of document will be produced (Forest Plan amendment or Project Plan). If you are just doing the analysis to determine what needs to be done to implement Forest Plan direction, be clear that the document is not a decision document.
- Focus your effort. Try to build on existing direction. Focus your effort on what needs to be changed and major issues that need to be resolved.
- Involve the public. Work on creating an environment for continuous public involvement.

- Use an interdisciplinary approach. Management direction needs to be integrated and support the Wilderness resource in its entirety.
- Work within the overall planning framework. Apply LAC concepts within the overall framework of Forest Service planning to develop proposed management direction.

Suggested activity

Ask each group of folks representing each Wilderness to briefly describe what they have done already, relative to developing Wilderness management direction, then have them (with help from rest of group if needed), identify where they are now on the triangle. Place a colored, round label (with Wilderness name written on) on one of the poster-sized planning triangles. The end result should be a clear picture where each Wilderness planning effort is. Suggest that people pay particularly close attention to the instruction unit which represents their next step in the process.

WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT PLANNING FRAMEWORK

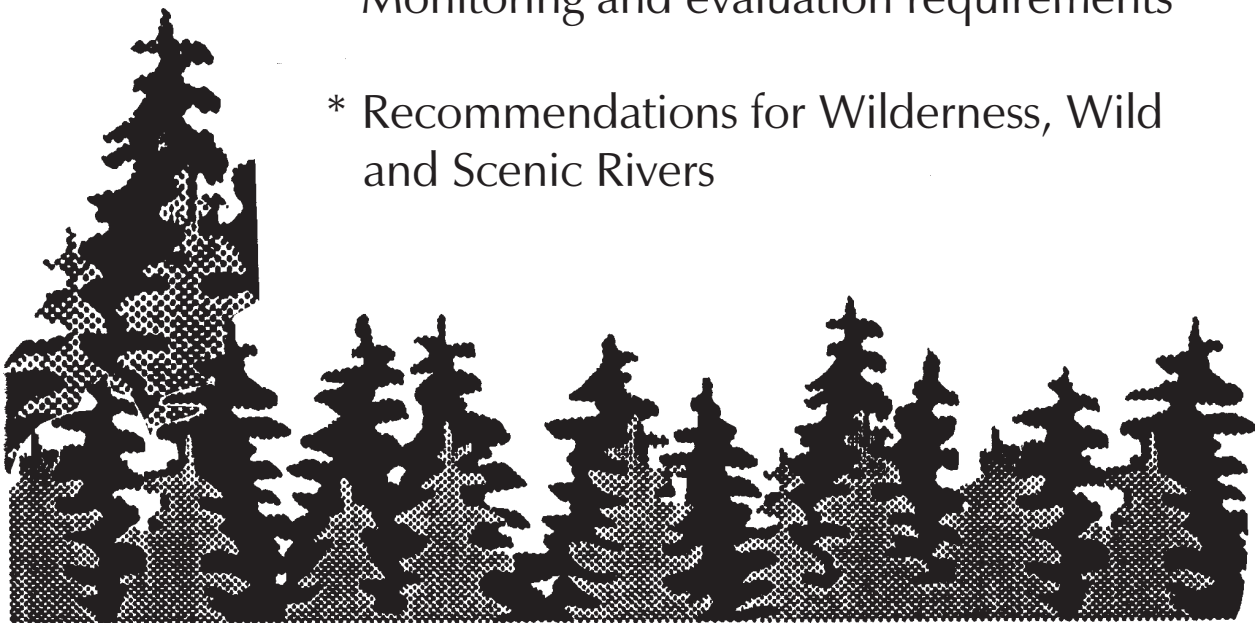


Forest Plans Decisions

The National Forest Management Act of 1976 requires each Forest to prepare a Forest Plan to guide management of all resources in a coordinated manner.

The Forest Plan establishes:

- * Forest-wide Goals and Objectives
- * Forest-wide Management Requirements
- * Management Area Direction
Desired Future Conditions
Standards and Guidelines
- * Suitability of Lands for resource use and production
 - * Monitoring and evaluation requirements
 - * Recommendations for Wilderness, Wild and Scenic Rivers



WHY PROGRAMMATIC WILDERNESS DIRECTION NEEDS TO BE IN THE FOREST PLAN

- * The Forest Plan is legally binding
- * Forest Plan standards are what triggers the need for management action
- * Wilderness needs to be fully integrated into overall
- * Forest program Programs are budgeted based on Forest Plans



United States Forest Washington 14th & Independence SW
Department of Service Office P.O. Box 96090
Agriculture Washington, DC 20090-6090

Reply to: 2320/1920

Date: May 27, 1992

Subject: Wilderness Management Planning

To: Regional Foresters

Wilderness now constitutes approximately 18 percent of the National Forest System and is becoming an increasingly significant element of the Forest Service mission. The General Accounting Office and Congress have called attention to the need for high quality wilderness planning. The Department and this Agency are committed to responding to that need for attention. Field units must ensure the land and resource management plans covering National Forests that contain wilderness, or wilderness complexes, provide substantive programmatic wilderness management direction.

Our 2320/1920 letter of September 4, 1991, established the framework for wilderness management planning as a part of the forest planning process. Also, our 6140 letter of November 1, 1991, established a performance standard for Regional Foresters and other personnel responsible for wilderness management that 'assures that wilderness planning is being initiated.'

The first step in complying with the above direction is to determine if the wilderness management direction contained in the current forest plan is adequate. If the direction is adequate, a Wilderness Implementation Schedule (WIS) must be developed to carry out that direction. The WIS should be a 1 to 5 year schedule of actions to guide annual wilderness management activities. It should schedule and prioritize project and normal operations and maintenance (O&M) activities. It should clearly identify the tasks, the costs, the time line, and who is responsible for each action item. The WIS is a flexible and dynamic document that is updated at least annually. It should be signed by the appropriate line officer(s) and staff to ensure adequate commitment and support for its implementation. It should reflect the interdisciplinary tasks necessary to manage wilderness and include support activities-and costs in other functional areas. In cases where forest plans did not provide sufficient wilderness management direction, forests with wilderness management responsibility should develop refined direction through forest plan amendment or revision. A process that can be used to develop wilderness management direction for the appropriate components of the wilderness resource is the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC). The LAC has been increasingly recognized as substantive methodology for developing wilderness management direction and monitoring procedures.

Where a LAC process is needed to develop the wilderness direction for forest plan amendment or revision, the WIS must identify the tasks, the time line, the costs, and those responsible for the activities involved. The WIS will incorporate the work plan (for the LAC process) to guide the development, revision, or amendment to the land management plan (LMP) as required by the Land and Resource Management Plan Handbook. Line officers and the staff officer support for and commitment to the completion of the LAC process must be demonstrated through sign off on the WIS. In addition to scheduling the LAC process, the WIS in this situation would also include the other project and regular ongoing O&M activities and costs that should be carried

2 The Planning Process

out while the LAC management proposals are being developed.

The LAC provides the data and analysis of some of the wilderness components for the LMP process. The planning elements of LAC (opportunity classes, indicators, and standards, monitoring, management actions, etc.) become the elements of forest plan management direction (standards and guidelines, management area prescriptions, monitoring, evaluation requirements, goals, and objectives).

A range of opportunity class alternatives must be incorporated through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and a record of decision must be maintained. In working through the LAC process with the public, it should be made clear that their role is to help define the wilderness elements for the NEPA process to amend or revise the forest plan.

The proposal resulting from completion of the LAC process must become a part of the land and resource management plan in order to be effective wilderness management direction. This is accomplished through forest plan amendment or revision with full compliance with NEPA procedures. Though this direction must be incorporated into the forest plan, it may also be set out in a supporting operational plan that details the management program necessary to translate that direction into project level actions. The operational plan may be necessary to display the consolidated wilderness management program where multiple wildernesses and/or multiple forests are involved.

Site specific (project-level) wilderness management decisions should not be included as forest plan amendments. Additional site specific NEPA analysis may be required for these subsequent decisions.

For further information contact Jerry Stokes, National Program Leader for Wilderness Planning at (202) 205-0925 or DG:G.Stokes W01C.

/s/ James C. Overbay

JAMES C. OVERBAY
Deputy Chief

National Park Service Planning Process

National Park Service Planning Framework

Introduction

Individual units administered by the National Park Service (e.g., national parks, monuments, recreation areas, historic sites) are required to have general management plans (GMPs) which provide the basic management philosophy and development plan for a park unit. This was mandated by Congress in the National Parks and Recreation Act of 1978 (P.L. 95-625).

GMPs are completed for each unit every 10 to 20 years. Generally comparable to the U.S. Forest Service's forest plan, the GMP addresses resources and visitor management as well as park wide facility development. In accordance with the National Park Service's Planning Guideline (NPS-2) and PL 95-625, a GMP is required to include the following elements:

- 1) measures for the preservation of the area's resources;
- 2) indications of the types and general intensities of development. This includes visitor circulation and transportation patterns associated with public enjoyment and use of the area, including general locations, timing of implementation, and anticipated costs;
- 3) identification of and implementation commitments for *visitor carrying capacities for all areas of the unit*; and
- 4) indications of potential modifications to the external boundaries of the unit, and the reasons therefore.

Typically, a GMP provides only general guidance for managing a park's wilderness or back country. Typically this guidance is in the form of management objectives for a wilderness or back country zone. Specific wilderness management plans, the National Park Service's second level of wilderness planning, are much more detailed and are prepared to outline management strategies for issues not adequately covered in a GMP.

For most park units with designated wilderness, the LAC approach has been used, at least in part, to develop wilderness management plans. However, a new planning process, VERP (Visitor Experience and Resource Protection process), is now being used to address visitor use management in all areas of a park unit, both front country and back country. This new planning approach is intended to provide a consolidated park wide visitor management strategy and be applicable in different areas of a park, ranging from the most remote wilderness to the urban-like mall in Yosemite Valley.

Visitor Experience and Resource Protection—VERP

As noted in the previous section, the National Park Service has had a statutory mandate to determine "visitor carrying capacity" for all areas of a park unit each time a GMP is completed. Unfortunately, planners have never had a defensible methodology or process to determine this capacity. Until now, planners have approached this several different ways: 1) they have determined park carrying capacity based on the area's total infrastructure capacity (i.e., number of campsites, hotel rooms, parking spaces, roadway capacity); 2) they have stated that carrying capacity determinations would be completed later after obtaining "more information;" or 3) they have ignored the

2 The Planning Process

mandate all together.

The impetus to develop VERP came, in part, from park managers being continually frustrated by gridlocked conditions in some of the most popular parks. In the past two decades, it has become increasingly apparent to planners and park managers that an increasing number of national park units are becoming “loved to death”—severely threatened by ever increasing visitation. Annual visitation to national parks is now counted in the hundreds of millions. In the decade of the 1970s visitation increased by 30 percent; in the 1980s it rose 35 percent. If this trend continues, national parks can expect a demand for an additional 60-90 million recreation visits by the year 2000.

Because most park use occurs in areas close to park roads and facilities such as concessions, campgrounds, and visitor centers, the Park Service needed to develop a strategy that would work in these often crowded settings. For the past several years planners at the Park Service’s Denver Service Center and consultants at the University of Minnesota and the University of Vermont have been developing this process.

The VERP Process

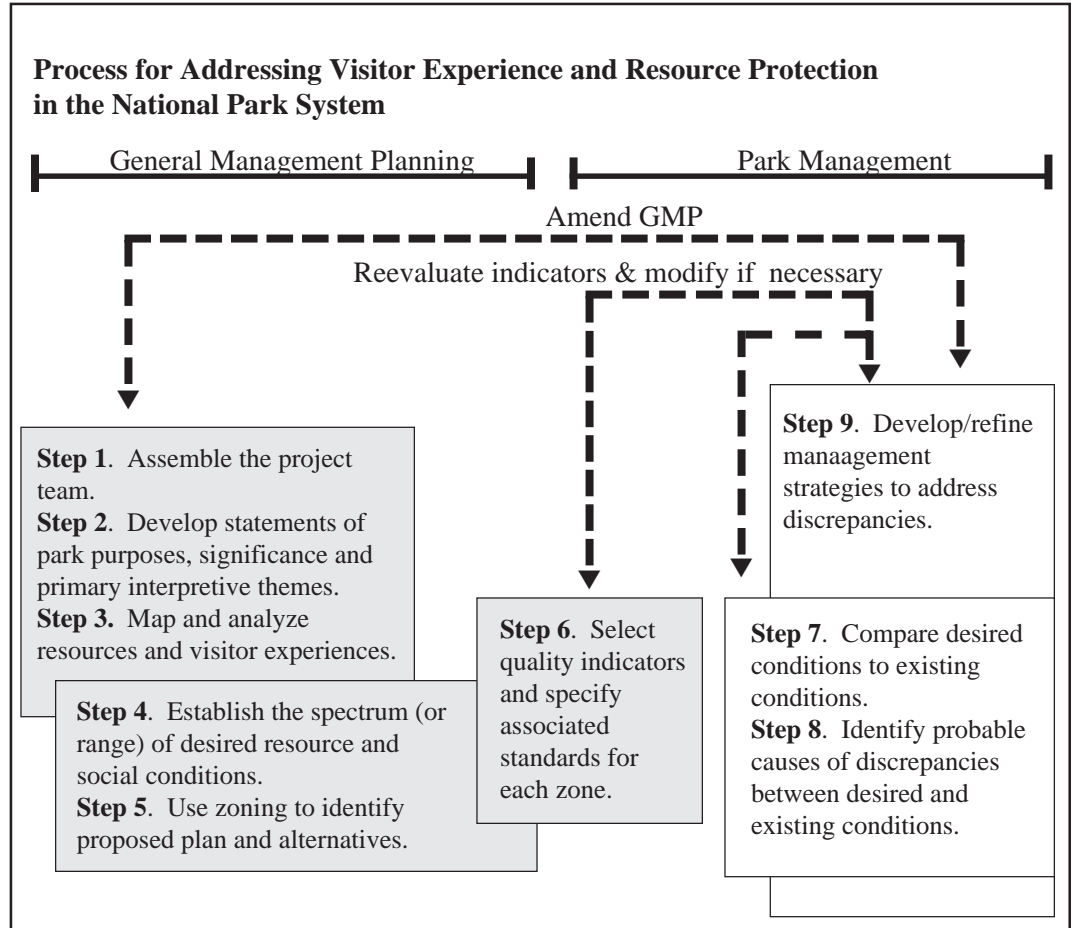
VERP defines carrying capacity as:

the type and level of visitor use that can be accommodated while sustaining the desired resource and social conditions that complement the purposes of the park units and their management objectives

In other words, the VERP process interprets carrying capacity not so much as a prescription of numbers of people, but as a prescription of desired ecological and social conditions. Measures of the appropriate conditions replace the measurements of maximum sustainable use that are often used to measure other types of carrying capacities (e.g., range capacity for domestic ungulates, wildlife habitat (Dassmann 1964)).

The process identifies and documents the kinds and levels of use that are appropriate, as well as where and when such uses should occur. The prescriptions, coupled with a monitoring program, provide park managers the information and the rationale needed to make sound decisions about visitor use, and gain the public and agency support needed to implement those decisions.

As shown in Figure 1, the VERP process consists of nine steps. The first six steps are requirements of general park planning, and ideally should be part of each park’s GMP. The later steps in the process require annual review and adjustment, and are accomplished through park operations and management activities.



The VERP process is based on many of the same elements and underlying logic included in LAC and the National Parks and Conservation Association’s visitor impact management (VIM) methodologies (Graefe, et al 1990; Lime and Stankey 1971). The primary difference between VERP and these other processes is that VERP is intended to be used in all areas of a park, both front country and back country whereas LAC and VIM have primarily been used in wilderness or back country settings.

One of the main elements of VERP involves examining a park’s topography and resources and segmenting the park into landscape units which ultimately guide zoning. Landscape units are areas of the landscape that are usually defined by their visual enclosure. When viewed from within or from the outside they are perceived as distinctive areas, each one different from the other. Each landscape unit evokes a “sense of place” and has inherent visitor opportunities unique to its resource characteristics.

In a park unit constructed park infrastructure (roads, campgrounds, etc) is left out of this evaluation. This reflects the agency’s desire to have a park zoning and visitor use be driven by its resources, rather than by existing constructed facilities.

This examination of landscape units looks both at the area’s resources (i.e., their sensitivity, scarcity, and “attractiveness” to visitors), and the visitor experience provided, or potentially provided, within the landscape unit. The attempt here is to

2 The Planning Process

ensure that there is an understanding of resource sensitivity, visitor opportunities, and how that is spatially distributed in a park before decisions are made about what type of uses are allowed in the various areas of the park.

A major premise of these methodologies and VERP is that management goals, which are qualitative in nature, must be translated to measurable management objectives through the use of indicators and standards. Measurable indicators will be selected for monitoring key aspects of the visitor experience and resources, then standards will be assigned based upon management goals. When standards are exceeded, land managers must take action to get an indicator back within its defined standard. In a complex park, the park will be zoned to reflect management goals for different areas. Then, specific indicators and standards would be selected for each zone.

Indicators are divided into two types: biological/physical indicators-those indicators that measure visitor use impacts to the biological or physical resources of a park; and social indicators-those indicators that measure impacts on park visitors that are caused by interactions with other visitors or with park or concession employees.

The underlying logic of indicators is easy to understand; however determining what standard to apply to different parts of the park is not so easy. It requires research, considerable thought, and bravery on the part of managers! Since VERP is driven by indicators and standards, a considerable amount of effort has to be spent determining what they are.

VERP at Arches National Park

The VERP process is being pilot-tested at Arches National Park. The purpose of this test application is to refine the VERP process and to provide a model for application to the national park system. The process is currently at step 6. The park has been zoned and the zones have been qualitatively described, indicators selected, and preliminary standards set. The next step is field checking assumptions and monitoring, to ensure existing conditions, the standards, and how to monitor them.

Indicators and standards

Selecting appropriate indicators and standards is the crux of VERP. Because indicators and standards are so quantitative in nature and our perceptions of acceptable conditions so qualitative, most managers are very reluctant to arbitrarily set standards based on their perceptions and “feel for the area.” Because of this, the Park Service has spent a significant amount of time and money evaluating every conceivable indicator, and determining what standards (particularly standards for social indicators) visitors would support.

Biological indicators

Nineteen indicators were evaluated in different habitats along visitor use corridors with high, moderate, and low use levels. Most of the potential indicators were discarded for a variety of reasons: they were too difficult to measure, too costly, correlated poorly with changes in visitor use, too dependent on environmental variables such as rainfall, too slow to recover once impacts were reduced, or were not usable in different habitats.

However, three indicators showing considerable promise were selected:

cryptobiotic soil crust condition. This crust, which forms atop nearly all soils on the Colorado Plateau, is very important for nutrient cycling; it is very sensitive to visitor use; is easy to measure and quantify visually; and is indicative of overall ecosystem health.

soil compaction. Despite their sandy nature, soils of the Colorado Plateau are compactible, which adversely affects water uptake, nutrient cycling, and plant germination and growth. Again, this is a very easy indicator to measure and soils here recover from compaction fairly quickly once causal factors are removed.

formation of social trails. This indicator is an effective measure of off-trail use and indicates how much of an area away from designated trails is being trampled by visitors.

In addition to the above first tier indicators, which will be monitored on a weekly or monthly basis, a set of second tier indicators will be measured on a 5-year cycle. These indicators include cover and frequency of vascular plants by species, elemental tissue analysis of dominant plants, cover and frequency of ground cover (litter, cyanobacteria, mosses and lichens), soil characteristics (organic matter, bulk density, porosity, etc.). The purpose of these indicators is to more directly measure the ecosystem health, and to also check the validity and utility of the first tier indicators.

Social indicators and standards

The social carrying capacity research program at Arches National Park was approached in two phases. Phase I was conducted in the summer of 1992 and aimed at identifying potential social indicators (Manning et al. 1993). Personal interviews were conducted with 112 visitors throughout the park. In addition, ten focus group sessions were held with park visitors, park staff and local community residents. Phase I research was qualitative in nature; its purpose was simply to explore for potential indicator variables. Additional research, phase II, was needed to become more quantitative by asking respondents to rate the relative importance of these potential indicators. This required a larger and more representative sample. It also required some innovative sampling techniques based on image capture technology (Nassauer 1990, Chenoweth 1990, Pitt 1990, Lime 1990). Base photographs of park sites were taken and these images were then modified with computer software to present a range of impact conditions. A set of sixteen photographs was developed for each attraction site and trail presenting a wide-ranging number of visitors present. An analogous set of photographs was developed for a range of environmental impacts caused by off-trail hiking. Respondents rated the acceptability of each photograph.

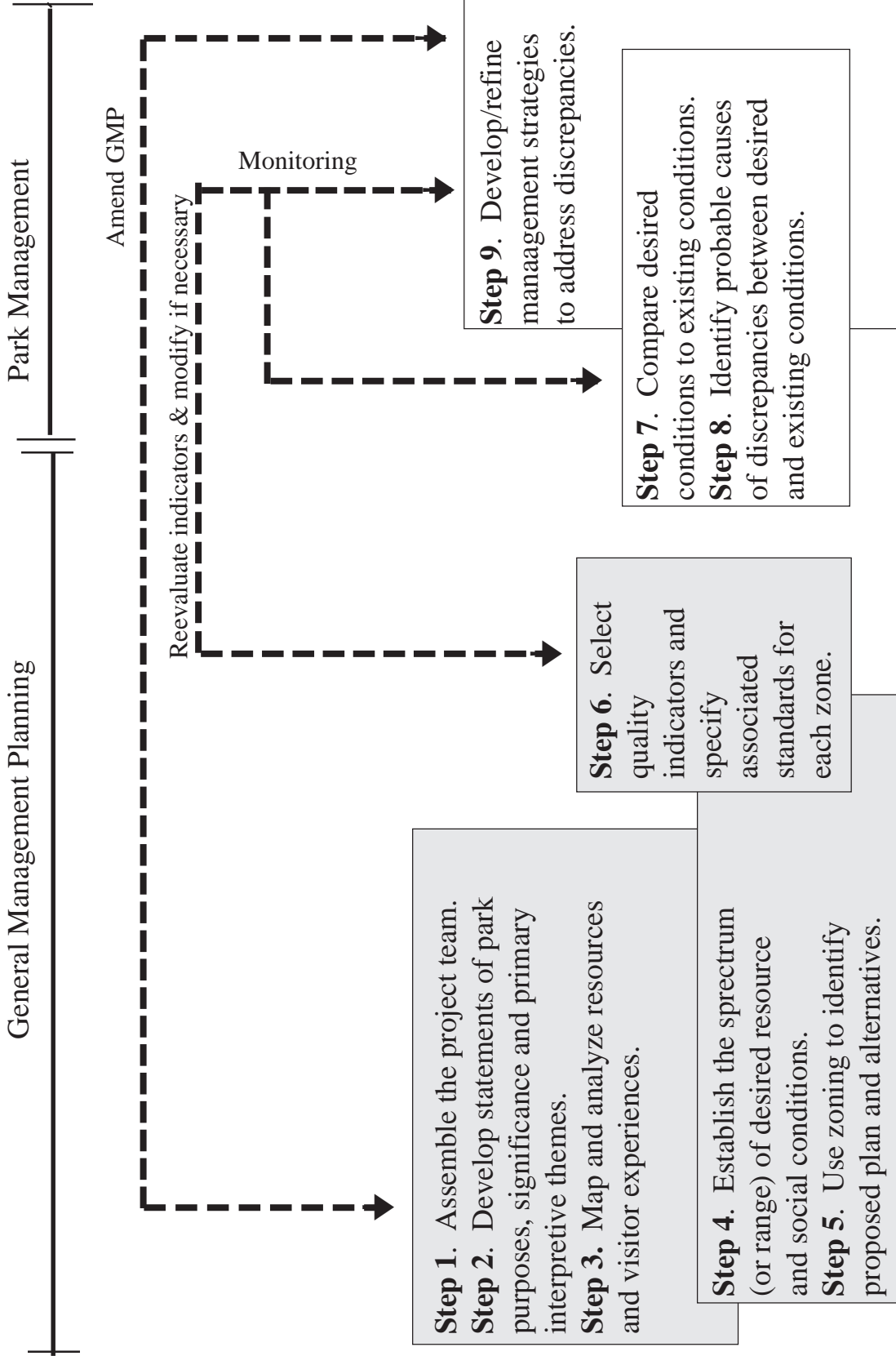
Data from the second phase of the research program was used to determine visitor norms for social crowding in various areas of the park. Individuals were indeed able to determine when crowding levels became unacceptable to them. However, as expected, visitors varied widely in their individual tolerances. At Arches National Park, a decision was reached to set the social standards (the point beyond which requires management action to correct the condition) at the point where 50 percent of the visitors judged crowding as being unacceptable.

2 The Planning Process

References

- Chenoweth, R.E. 1990. Image-Capture Computer Technology and Aesthetic Regulation of Landscapes Adjacent to Public Lands. *Managing America's Enduring Wilderness Resource*. St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, pp. 563-568.
- Dassmann, R.F. 1964. *Wildlife Biology*. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Graefe, A.R., F.R. Kuss, and J.J. Vaske. 1990. *Visitor Impact Management: The Planning Framework*. Washington, D.C.: National Parks and Conservation Association.
- Lime, D.W. and G.H. Stankey. 1971. Carrying Capacity: Maintaining Outdoor Recreation Quality. *Recreation Symposium Proceedings*, USDA Forest Service, pp. 174-184.
- Lime, D.W. 1990. Image Capture Technology: An Exciting New Tool for Wilderness Managers! *Managing America's Enduring Wilderness Resource*. St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, pp. 549-552.
- Manning R.E., D.W. Lime, R. F. McMonagle, and P. Nordin. 1993. Indicators and Standards of Quality for the Visitor Experience at Arches National Park: Phase I Research. University of Minnesota Cooperative Park Studies Unit, 54 pages.
- Nassauer, J.I. 1990. Using Image Capture Technology to Generate Wilderness Management Solutions. *Managing America's Enduring Wilderness Resource*. St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, pp. 553-562.
- Pitt, D.G. 1990. Developing an Image Capture System to See Wilderness Management Solutions. *Managing America's Enduring Wilderness Resource*. St. Paul, Minnesota: University of Minnesota, pp. 541-548.

Process for Addressing Visitor Experience and Resource Protection in the National Park System



Potential Topics to be Included in Wilderness Planning

Planning topics

The intent of this section is to provide a “tickler” list to help managers think about planning questions relevant to developing programmatic Wilderness management. It is not an exhaustive list of topics since individual Wildernesses will have unique situations that generate additional questions. As managers address planning questions, they should be guided by the Wilderness Act, the legislation that established the specific Wilderness, the code of federal regulations, and the agency’s national Wilderness policy. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) is a significant piece of enabling legislation that affects all Wilderness in Alaska. Due to the special provisions and complexities associated with ANILCA, managers working in Alaska are advised to consult with specialists so that management direction meets the intent of this legislation.

Legislation guiding development of management direction for individual agencies:

Bureau of Land Management: Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976.

National Park Service: Organic Act of 1916 and the General Authorities Act of 1970.

Forest Service: Multiple Use - Sustained Yield Act of 1960 and the Forest and Rangeland Renewable Resources Planning Act of 1974 with associated amendments contained in the 1976 National Forest Management Act.

Fish and Wildlife Service: National Wildlife Refuge System Administration Act of 1966.

Enabling legislation and individual agency mandates may modify the overall goals identified for the topics listed in this section.

For all questions that include determining the range of natural variability, managers must recognize the limitations of data that only cover a short time period or small area. Do not describe a static picture of desired vegetation or population conditions, since this implies that management intervention might be taken to produce a specific condition. This would contradict the intent of the Wilderness Act to study and learn about conditions that evolve as a result of natural processes operating as freely as possible (Sprugel 1991, Landres 1992)

Overall Goal

Cooperate with State wildlife agencies to provide an environment where the forces of nature, rather than human actions, determine the diversity, abundance, and distribution of wildlife species. Protect native wildlife from human-caused conditions that could lead to Federal listing as threatened or endangered. Aid recovery of threatened, endangered, and sensitive species and their habitat.

Key documents include the Endangered Species Act and the “Policies and Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Management in National Forest and BLM Wilderness.”

Planning Questions

1. In general terms, what wildlife species would exist in a naturally functioning system (considering predators, ungulates, small mammals, birds of prey, perching birds, waterfowl, reptiles, amphibians, and insects)?
2. What do we know about the range of natural variability on key habitats (e.g. crucial

Wildlife

2 The Planning Process

winter range, threatened, endangered, and sensitive species habitat)? How much human impact is acceptable in these habitats?

3. What do we know about the range of natural variability in population abundance and age structure for key species and what are natural movement patterns? Given that hunting is a legitimate activity in National Forest and BLM Wilderness, how much population alteration is acceptable? What should the hunting experience be like?

Overall Goal

Cooperate with State wildlife and fish agencies to emphasize quality and naturalness in managing fisheries.

Fish stocking may be conducted by the State in coordination with the federal agency where this practice occurred prior to designation and where it meets specific criteria (refer to agency national Wilderness policy and “Policies and Guidelines for Fish and Wildlife Management in National Forest and BLM Wilderness”).

Planning Questions

1. What fish species would exist in a naturally functioning system? What do we know about the range of natural variability in population abundance, distribution, and age structure?
2. Given that fishing is a legitimate activity in most Wildernesses, how much population alteration is acceptable from fishing pressure and stocking practices?
3. What standards are needed regarding fish stocking methods?
4. What do we know about the range of natural variability for fish habitat? How much human impact on fish habitat is acceptable?

Overall Goal

(Include consideration of rangelands, exotic plant invasion, riparian areas, fire, and insect/disease infestations)

Allow natural processes to determine plant community composition, structure, and patterns. Permit naturally occurring fire ignitions and native insects/diseases to play, as nearly as possible, their ecological role within Wilderness. Reduce the risk and consequence of wildfires and insect/disease infestations escaping from the Wilderness. Prevent human-caused introductions of noxious or exotic plants. Protect threatened, endangered and sensitive plant species. Manage rangelands to protect watershed conditions and maintain native plant communities. Apply the Congressional grazing guidelines in a practical, reasonable and uniform manner (refer to the Colorado Wilderness Act of 1980 for complete text of grazing guidelines).

Planning Questions

1. What do we know about the variability in natural fire regimes for the vegetation types occurring within the Wilderness? How much human interference with the natural fire process is acceptable (balancing life, property, local economy, and smoke concerns with goal of allowing natural process to occur)? What standards are needed regarding wildfire suppression activities (incorporating minimum impact suppression tactics)?
2. What are acceptable infestation levels of noxious weeds? What standards are

Fisheries

Vegetation

needed to prevent the introduction of exotics and for the methods of control of existing or new infestations?

3. What do we know about the natural variability in insect/disease infestations? How much human interference with the insect and disease outbreaks is acceptable to reduce the chance of spread outside of the Wilderness? What standards are needed regarding methods of control?
4. Under flooding, beaver activity, and other natural events, what is the range of riparian conditions that might exist? What is the acceptable level of disturbance in riparian areas from livestock and recreational stock grazing, recreation activity and trail development?
5. What standards are needed to protect threatened, endangered, and sensitive plant species and their habitats.
6. What are desired rangeland conditions in areas grazed by livestock or recreational stock? What are acceptable forage utilization levels? Are standards needed to constrain where and when recreational stock grazing occurs? What visual quality standards should range structures conform to?

Overall Goal

Air quality

Protect air quality and related values, including visibility, for Class I airsheds.

Relevant legislation includes the Clean Air Act amendments of 1977 and 1990. Any Wilderness 5,000 acres or larger designated prior to 1977 is considered a Class I airshed. Under the Prevention of Significant Deterioration provisions of the Clean Air Act, the federal land manager has “an affirmative responsibility to protect the air quality related values (including visibility) of any Class I area and to consider, in consultation with the Administrator, whether a proposed major emitting facility will have an adverse impact on such values.”

Planning Questions

1. What are the air quality related values for this Wilderness (those features that are affected in some way by air pollution—visibility, odor, flora, fauna, soil, water, geological features, and cultural resources)? What are the sensitive receptors (an element of an air-quality-related-value that is very sensitive to, or first modified by, air pollution)? How much change in the condition of a sensitive receptor (e.g. lake alkalinity, view distance, lichen species composition) is acceptable?

Overall Goal

Water quality

Protect water quality and natural watershed conditions.

Planning Questions

1. What conditions should exist in a naturally functioning aquatic system (considering physical and biological characteristics)? How much human disturbance from recreation activities or introduction of exotic species is acceptable?
2. What water quality is desired in terms of pathological characteristics (bacteria, virus, protozoa)?

2 The Planning Process

Cultural resources

Overall Goal

Protect the recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, and historical values of prehistoric and historic resources (although not necessarily the physical site).

Relevant legislation includes the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966, the American Indian Religious Freedom Act of 1978, the Archeological Resources Protection Act of 1979, and the Native American Graves and Repatriation Act of 1990.

Planning Questions

1. What types of prehistoric and historic cultural resources require protection in this Wilderness (what cultural themes are represented)? How much physical evidence of historic resources is desired in different portions of the Wilderness?
2. Are standards needed to protect cultural resources from disturbance by recreational or managerial activities? What standards are needed to constrain scientific or educational study of cultural resources?

Caves

Overall Goal

Protect the scientific, educational, and recreational values associated with caves.

Relevant legislation is the Federal Cave Resources Protection Act of 1988.

Planning Questions

1. What is the desired condition of cave resources considering unique plants, animals, and physical/geological features which may be present?
2. How much change in cave conditions is acceptable?

Wilderness recreation

Overall Goal

(Include consideration of the experience, campsites, trails, signing, trailheads, overflights, and search and rescue). Address unique issues that may be associated with hiking, backpacking, horsepacking, canoeing, skiing, climbing, and organizational group use.

Provide opportunities for public use, enjoyment and understanding of wilderness through experiences that depend upon a wilderness setting. Provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, self-reliance, challenge, and primitive (i.e. non-motorized, non-mechanized), unconfined types of recreation. Maximize visitor freedom within the Wilderness. Maximize the opportunity for campsite privacy. Minimize campsite impacts (both in terms of real extent and impact on individual sites). Maintain trails where they are needed to protect the resource and desired for the experience. Maintain trailless conditions where this is desirable.

Planning Questions

1. What is the spectrum of experiences desired in this Wilderness. Desired experiences are usually described in terms of acceptable types of activities, acceptable numbers of encounters between groups on the trail or river and at camps, acceptable visitor behavior, and desired degrees of self-reliance and personal risk.
2. What are acceptable campsite conditions? Campsite conditions are usually described in terms of numbers of sites, location of sites, and level of impact associated with individual sites.

3. What level of trail development is desired to provide a spectrum of experiences within Wilderness and protect the resource? Are trailless areas desired and, if so, how is trailless defined? What maintenance standards are needed? What standards are needed to constrain how trails are reconstructed?
4. What level and type of signing is needed to allow people to enjoy the area while also providing the desired level of challenge and self-discovery? What standards are needed on visual quality of signs?
5. What level and type of development is appropriate at trailheads (including road access) to meet the desired type of experiences (i.e. the level of trailhead development should vary depending on the desired type of experience in the portion of the Wilderness accessed by the trailhead)?
6. What are acceptable numbers and types of overflights seen or heard within the Wilderness?

Overall Goal

Provide opportunities for outfitters to help the public use, enjoy and appreciate wilderness in a manner that meets the recreational, educational, conservation, historical, scientific and scenic purposes of Wilderness.

Planning Questions

1. What public need exists for outfitter services? (Note: public need refers to the desired role of outfitters to help meet wilderness goals such as helping people enjoy the wilderness in a responsible manner, increasing public understanding of natural and cultural history, and increasing understanding of the Wilderness system so that public support continues. Public need does NOT equal demand)? What types and levels of service are needed to meet Wilderness purposes (considering resource protection needs and desired experiences)? Are standards needed to constrain how outfitting operations are carried out?

Overall Goal

Provide a setting that is not occupied by humans, without permanent improvements or human habitation. Provide facilities and improvements only for the protection of the wilderness resource. Limit administrative structures to those determined to be the minimum necessary to meet the purposes of the Act. Structures that are needed for proper management of range allotments are maintained under provisions of the Congressional grazing guidelines. Structures listed on the National Register of Historic Places may be maintained.

Planning Questions

1. What structures are the minimum needed for administration of the Wilderness to meet the purposes of the Act?
2. What types of structures are needed for proper management of range allotments?
3. What visual quality standards should structures meet?
4. What standards are needed to constrain how structures are maintained or reconstructed?

Outfitting

Structures and facilities

2 The Planning Process

Scientific use

Overall Goal

Encourage scientific uses that help protect the wilderness character or promote better understanding of natural systems and people's relationship with nature. Ensure scientific methods are compatible with wilderness values.

Planning Questions

1. What types of scientific uses are desired?
2. What standards are needed to constrain the type of equipment or scientific methods used?

Other special

Overall Goals

(For example, airfields, dams, mining, access to private lands)

Minimize the impact associated with activities that are specifically covered in the Wilderness Act or enabling legislation.

Planning Questions

1. What are acceptable levels and types of airfield use? What is the desired condition of airstrips? What standards are needed to constrain how maintenance of airstrips is carried out?
2. What is the desired condition of dams owned by the federal agency or operated under special use permit? What standards are needed on how maintenance of dams is accomplished?
3. What standards are needed to keep the impacts associated with mining to an acceptable level? What is considered reasonable access to valid mining claims or private inholdings?