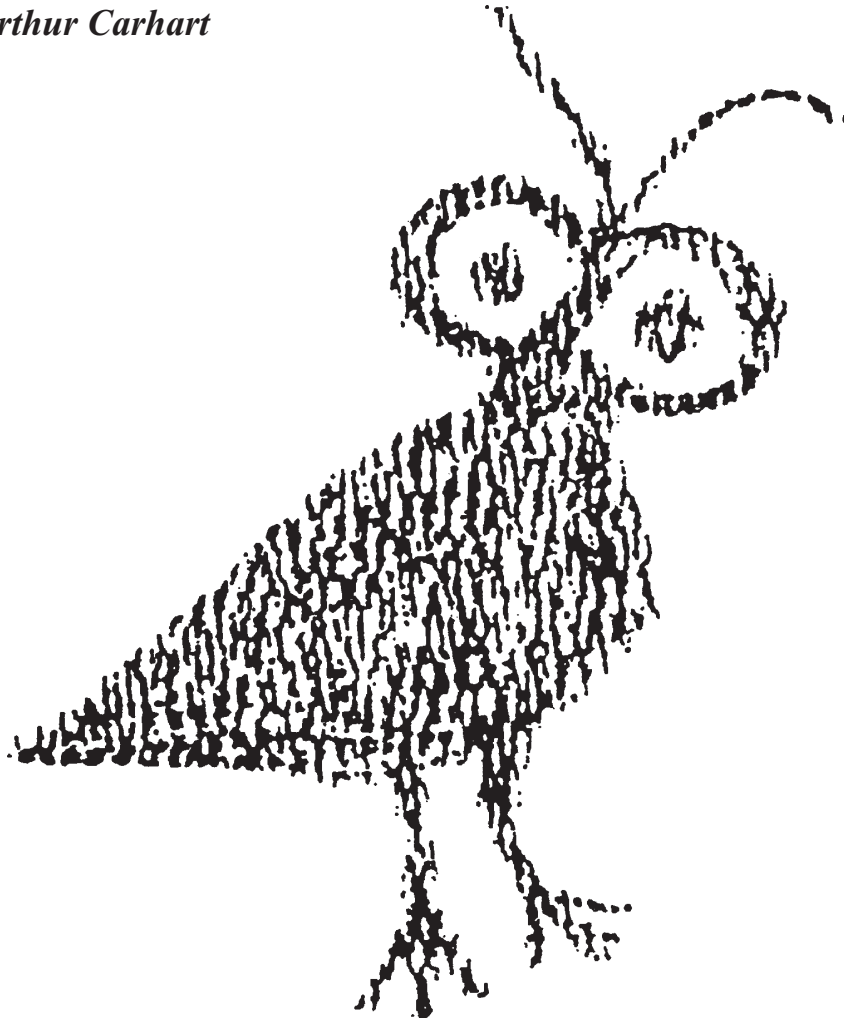


# THE NEED

*"There is a limit to the number of lands of shoreline on the lakes; there is a limit to the number of lakes in existence; there is a limit to the mountainous areas of the world; and...there are portions of natural scenic beauty which are God-made, and ...which of a right should be the property of all people.*

*Arthur Carhart*



# FOR CHANGE

## Need For Change

You cannot tackle the world. The purpose of this unit is to present ideas on how to focus your effort on fixing inadequacies in your current management direction and addressing the significant issues. Good problem statements make it clear why you are proposing different management direction.

### Objectives

1. Participants can write a clear statement describing why their current wilderness management direction needs to be changed and what issues will be addressed.

### Key points

- Identify critical resource stewardship issue to focus effort.
- Strive to improve current conditions, not for perfection.
- Use criteria for effective plans to assess adequacy of current management direction.

## The Need For Change

### Existing direction

Depending on the agency that employs you, programmatic wilderness management direction will be found either in the Resource Management Plan (Bureau of Land Management), Comprehensive Management Plan (Fish and Wildlife Service), Forest Plan (Forest Service), or General Management Plan (Park Service). Wilderness management direction has often focused on outputs rather than desired future conditions or has contained vague goals and objectives that did not provide a “yardstick” to measure progress. Outputs include such things as recreation visitor days or acres of wilderness. Such outputs provide no information about the condition of the wilderness and whether the intent of Congress is being met. To determine if wilderness management direction is adequate, the following criteria should be used.

1. The intent of the Wilderness Act, enabling legislation, and agency national wilderness policy is met.
2. Desired future conditions are clearly defined so that there is a “target” to shoot for.
3. Measurable objectives are set for acceptable conditions so explicit rationale can be developed to determine when management action is needed.
4. Important elements of the wilderness setting are identified to focus monitoring efforts so that progress towards desired future conditions can be tracked.
5. Comprehensive, integrated direction for all wilderness resources and activities is provided.
6. Consistency in management direction is provided when an individual wilderness crosses administrative boundaries.

Where gaps exist between current direction and what is needed to address the criteria listed above, the need for change can be demonstrated. The next job is to articulate and prioritize problem areas. One way to do this is to measure the relative gaps between what you have and what you need for each of the criteria. For example, if your existing direction fails miserably at meeting the intent of the Wilderness Act but contains some well-defined standards, it should be obvious where your efforts need to be spent.

Further refinement of the need for change can be accomplished by focusing on the most significant issues and concerns expressed by the public or agency managers. Well-developed and prioritized issues provide a clear focus for wilderness planning efforts.

### Identify key issues

An issue is a point, matter, or question of public interest that should be addressed through the planning process. Identifying issues, then focusing on the most significant ones, will help reduce a potentially overwhelming planning effort to a manageable level. Describing the most significant issues is also important to convince your line officers that wilderness planning is a necessary task. To get started identifying issues, consider these sources:

- Issues that have already come up through existing documentation such as wilderness

ranger reports and annual reports to Congress, trailhead registers, letters, or comments received by visitor center staff.

- Unique features and values of the wilderness.
- Outside influences (new roads or timber sales near the wilderness, what’s happening on adjacent or nearby private land, influences on air and water quality, overflights).
- Threatened and endangered species.
- Resource degradation (unacceptable existing conditions). What do we already know is a problem?

After preliminary issues are listed, pick the ones that really matter, i.e., what topic will do the most to improve conditions on-the-ground? These will drive the rest of the planning process. By identifying key issues you can focus your planning effort on what really matters. A major challenge is getting agreement that something IS a problem—e.g. conditions are not what we want them to be, we aren’t meeting the intent of the law, or we aren’t meeting public needs and they are complaining. The plan becomes our vehicle to solve the problem.

Once you’ve decided on a few key issues, describe them in clear detail. Writing an issue statement takes some thought. The more specific it is, the more likely it will be useful for stating a need. Sometimes you have to go back and ask the person who brought up an issue these things: What is the concern? Where it is happening? What’s causing it? What observable or potential effects are of concern? Examples of how to write an issue statement, based on key human-induced change to natural systems:

Vague: Loss of open meadows.

Better: Meadows in the lower Limestone Breaks have been encroached upon by Douglas fir due to fire suppression for the past 50 years. This has resulted in a reduction of over 1000 acres of critical bighorn sheep habitat. Natural fire would have kept these meadows open.

Vague: Effects on fish.

Better: Past stocking of brook trout in Rainbow Lake has reduced the size and population of native Colorado cutthroat trout, a sensitive fish species.

Key issues can be determined by grouping a longer list of issues into categories for disposition. Here are some suggestions on how to focus in on the most significant issues.

1. An issue may be dismissed if it is beyond the scope or otherwise irrelevant to the wilderness planning process. For instance, if someone says “the Horse Puckey Wilderness should be declassified so I can ride my snowmobile through it” they are raising an issue that is beyond wilderness management sideboards.
2. An issue may be relevant, but it won’t drive the development of different alternatives. An example may be air quality—managers have an “affirmative responsibility” to set standards for acceptable conditions to protect air quality but the same desired condition and standards would probably apply to the entire wilderness, thus different alternative “zone” maps would not be needed.

# 4 Need for Change

3. Some issues may be laid to rest if a mitigation measure is included in all alternatives to address the concern. For instance, if a summer home owner is concerned that natural fire in the adjacent wilderness will burn up his cabin, a mitigation measure to reduce fuel buildup along the wilderness boundary could be part of all alternatives.

4. Finally, there will be key issues that must be addressed in the wilderness planning effort through the development of alternatives.

Remember to call your issues “preliminary.” After getting line officer support for going ahead with the wilderness planning effort, one of the first tasks will be to verify what issues should be addressed with the public. Citizens may have a different idea of what is most important.

**A caution:** If your plan is driven by very specific issues, and those issues go away, then your plan direction will become obsolete. Focus instead on topic areas that will do the most to provide for long-term stewardship (e.g. fire direction, air quality, outfitted use).

## Need for change

Describe the need, its significance, and the consequences of doing nothing. Part of your job of describing the need for change is to give management and line officers a compelling reason to care. Not only must you demonstrate the gap between existing direction and what is needed, you must show its significance and the consequences of failing to act.

One example of a Need for Change statement is included in Unit #10—scoping document for the High Unita Wilderness.

## Example

The Wonder Wilderness was designated in 1984 to recognize its outstanding wilderness character, particularly primitive recreation opportunities, crucial habitat for wildlife, and watershed values. In the last ten years, the population of communities within the region have increased from 1.3 million people to two million. This population is projected to grow to 2.5 million people in the next five years. Many people are drawn to the area for outdoor recreation opportunities, scenic beauty, quietness, and a clean environment.

As development pressure has increased, monitoring data and public input have noted a decline in wilderness conditions. In particular:

1. It is becoming harder to find solitude in Mosquito Basin and Roaring Fork areas. The number of encounters between groups has increased from six per day to 15 per day in the last ten years.
2. Fifty miles of user-created trails have been inventoried in areas where there are no maintained system trails. This trail development has resulted in watershed damage (increased sedimentation in creeks that supply water to the community of Rosebud) and less opportunity for people who wish to use their own navigational skills.
3. Fire has not been allowed to play its natural role in the Wilderness. Fires within the Wilderness have been suppressed for the past 50 years. Fire suppression combined with increased recreation pressure has altered the distribution of bighorn sheep,

especially within historic lambing areas. Development of homes adjacent to the eastern boundary of the Wilderness increases the risk of property loss due to fire. Fire suppression has also reduced the scientific values associated with learning how natural disturbances work. This is especially critical in the northern half of the wilderness which contains vegetation communities very similar to the communities under intensive management in the Milky Way watershed.

Existing direction for this area was approved in 1981. When the Wilderness was designated in 1984, the Plan was amended to reflect this change; however, the management direction was not changed. Thus, the current management direction does not reflect the Wilderness Act or the legislation which designated the area in 1984. In particular, the current management direction does not provide a description of desired wilderness experiences, nor does it define objectives to measure the quality of the experience. Desired watershed conditions and objectives have not been defined. Updated direction regarding fire management is also needed to allow fire to play a more natural role and reduce the potential for property loss. Monitoring elements to track progress toward achievement of desired conditions have not been identified. New direction regarding wilderness experience, watershed condition, and fire are essential to the long-term stewardship of the Wilderness resource so that future generations can obtain the benefits designation of this area intended to provide.

## THE NEED FOR CHANGE

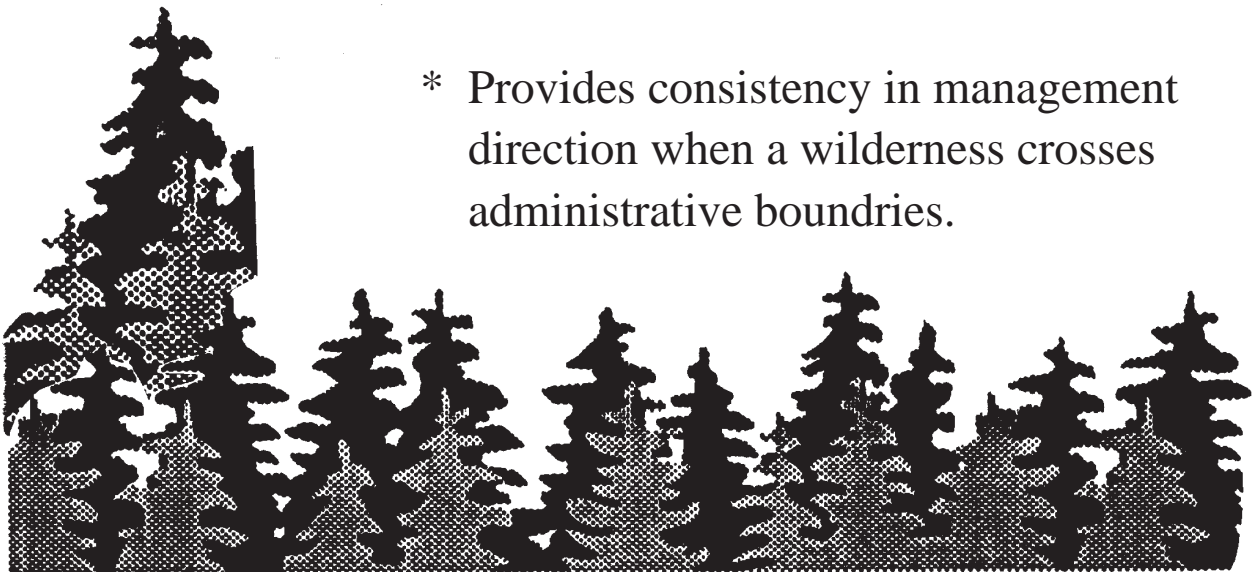
### Identify Key Issues

**Assesing the adequacy of existing wilderness management direction**

**Describe the consequences of doing nothing**

#### Criteria:

- \* Meets the intent of the Wilderness Act, enabling legislation, and agency National Wilderness policy.
- \* Clearly defines what is to be achieved.
- \* Sets measurable objectives for acceptable conditions.
- \* Provides comprehensive, integrated direction for all wilderness resources.
- \* Provides consistency in management direction when a wilderness crosses administrative boundaries.



# WORKSHEET

## NEED FOR CHANGE

1. Identify key stewardship issue. Be specific.

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2. What does Wilderness Act enabling legislation and policy say?

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Evaluate how well your programmatic plan meets the following criteria for wilderness management direction. Write out specifically why it does or does not meet each criterion.

3. Criteria

a. The intent of the Wilderness Act, enabling legislation, and agency National Wilderness policy is met.

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b. Desired future conditions are clearly defined so that there is a “target” to shoot for.

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c. Measurable standards are set for acceptable conditions so explicit rationale can be developed to determine when management action is needed.

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d. Important elements of the wilderness setting are identified to focus monitoring efforts so that progress towards desired future conditions can be tracked.

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# 4 Need for Change

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e.. Comprehensive, integrated direction for all wilderness resources and activities is provided. Hint: is the role of natural fire discussed?

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f. Consistency in management direction is provided when an individual wilderness crosses administrative boundaries.

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4. Consequences of doing nothing

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