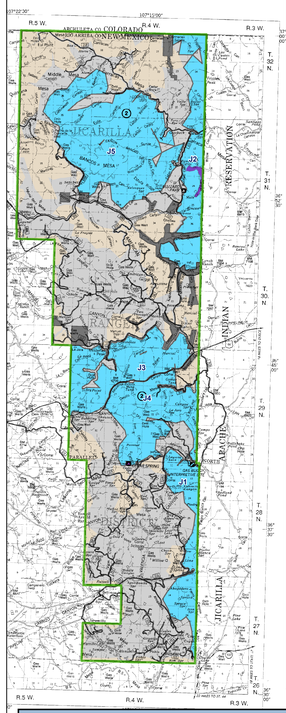
Carson National Forest Plan Revision Wilderness Process
Preliminary Wilderness Inventory (Final)



Why is this Preliminary Wilderness Inventory being done now?

As part of forest plan revision under the 2012 National Forest Planning Rule the Carson National Forest is analyzing lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System for potential recommendation as Wilderness. No wilderness designation will be made as a result of this plan revision since Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions regarding all wilderness designation.

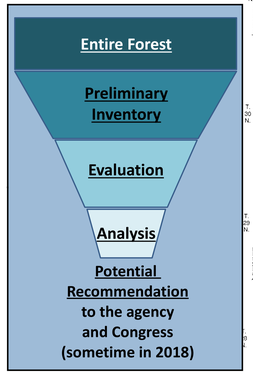
The plan revision wilderness process requires four primary steps, each of which will involve the public.
1.Preliminary Inventory
2.Evaluation
3.Analysis
4.Recommendation

The Preliminary Inventory prepares the forest to be characterized during step 2. This first step is meant to be inclusive, with the intent of breaking the forest into meaningful areas that can then be Evaluated for their wilderness character and manageability.

Based on the Evaluation and input from the public, some areas, or portions thereof, will be Analyzed in one or more alternatives in the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) analysis process as part of an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Based on this NEPA analysis and public input the Forest Supervisor may Recommend that certain areas be considered for wilderness designation.

Forest plan revision is an inclusive process, with involvement by local communities, land grant communities, federal, tribal, state, and local governments and agencies, and the general public through letters, meetings, presentations, and a web-based mapping tool.

We would like your input throughout the process. It will be important for the public to stay involved to help shape possible future recommendations for wilderness designation.



How was this map created?

The Preliminary Inventory prepares the forest to be characterized during the Evaluation phase. This first step is meant to be inclusive, not exclusive. A majority of the forest was divided into evaluation areas based on criteria that was developed using input from a series of January 2016 public meetings.

Inventoried areas:
1. are larger than 5,000 acres, or adjacent to existing wilderness areas,
2. do not contain open roads, and
3. do not contain improvements that suggest substantially noticeable human activity in the area as a whole.

The list of substantially noticeable improvements that were used to develop this Inventory on the Carson NF is shown below.

All areas that are larger than 5000 acres after the Preliminary Inventory criteria were applied have been retained. Smaller areas were added back in to the Preliminary Inventory if:
1. they are adjacent to an existing wilderness, or some other land designations, or
2. they are of sufficient size and geography that they may be effectively preserved, used and managed in an unimpaired condition.

Seven additional areas were included in the Preliminary Inventory based on public feedback to the initial map:

Wxs710ADD: This polygon is adjacent to roadless areas on the RGNF that, combined, are larger than 5,000 ac. The RGNF is currently inventorying lands for potential wilderness recommendation.
Wxs723ADD: This polygon is adjacent to roadless areas on the RGNF that, combined, are larger than 5,000 ac. The RGNF is currently inventorying lands for potential wilderness recommendation.
Wxs701ADD and Wxs573ADD: These polygons are adjacent to roadless areas on the RGNF that, all together, are larger than 5,000 ac. The RGNF is currently inventorying lands for potential wilderness recommendation.
Qxs162ADD: This polygon is adjacent to roadless areas on the RGdNNM that, combined, are larger than 5,000 ac. The RGdNNM has identified the adjacent land as the La Junta Rim area in the draft monument inventory of lands with wilderness character.
Wxs671ADD: This polygon is adjacent to roadless areas on the RGdNNM that, combined, are larger than 5,000 ac. The RGdNNM has identified the adjacent land as the Cerro Colorado area in the draft monument inventory of lands with wilderness character.
Wxs569ADD: This polygon is adjacent to roadless areas on the RGdNNM that, combined, are larger than 5.000 ac. The RGdNNM has identified the adjacent land as the Cerro Colorado area in the draft monument inventory of lands with wilderness character.

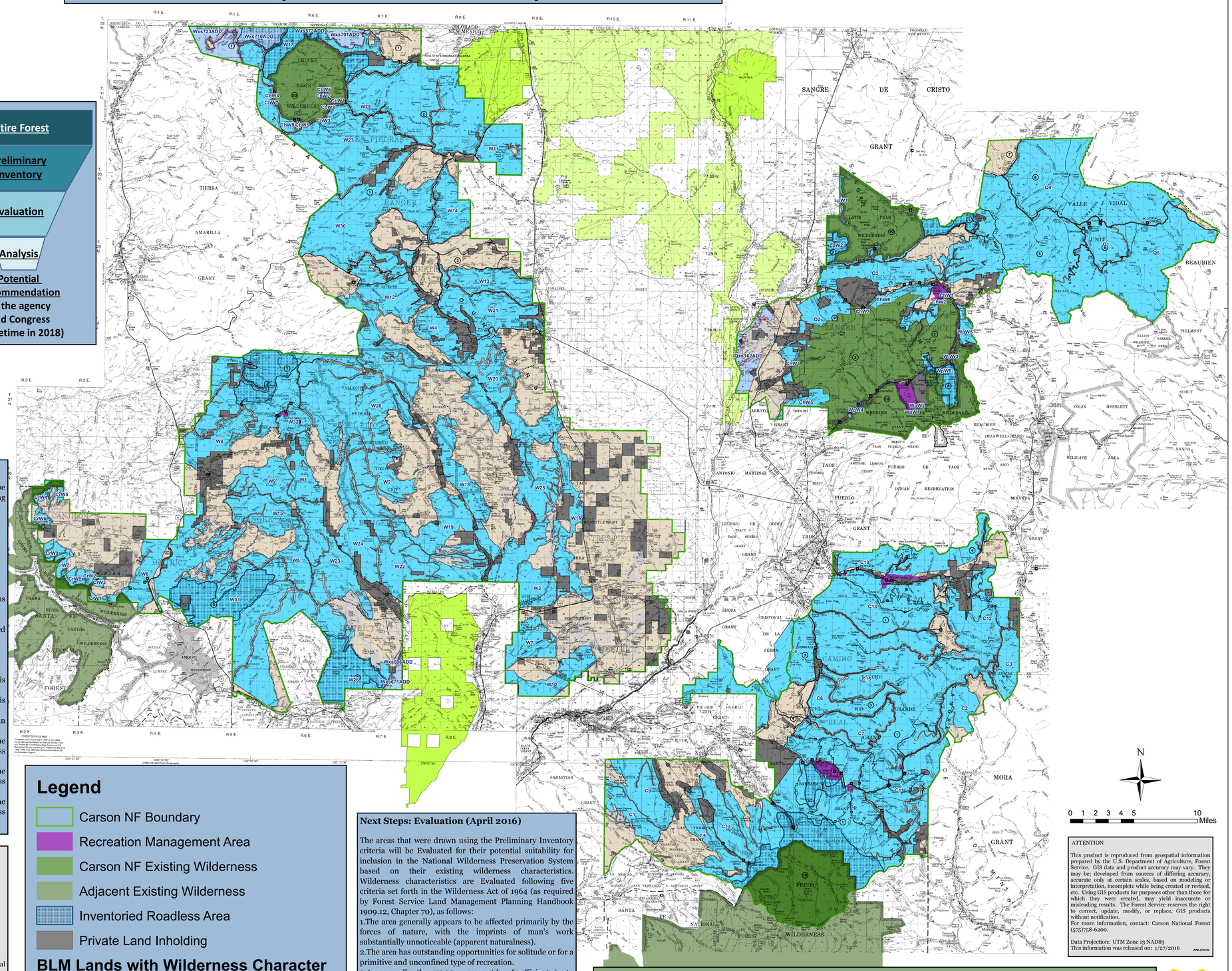
Criteria used to create this Preliminary Inventory

The Inventory was conducted on Forest Service lands (private inholdings were not considered). Existing Wilderness areas were not considered.

Size
Blocks of land must be 5,000 acres or larger. Smaller areas may be considered, but only in certain situations, with good justification.

Roads
Open roads (per the forest's travel management decision) are removed from the inventory.

Improvements
Improvements are not used as criteria unless they suggest substantially noticeable human activity in the area as a whole. The Carson National Forest determined that an improvement was substantially noticeable based on its visibility on aerial photographs at a scale of one inch to one mile. The improvements that follow are considered substantially noticeable and were removed from the inventory.
- Surfaced runways or landing pads with permanent structures.
- Clear cut forested areas (ex. Regeneration harvest areas, Unshaded fuelbreaks, and PJ chaining)
- Vertical structures over 20' tall that (1) require regular access for maintenance, (2) the associated ground disturbance is 1 acre or greater, and (3) occur in a complex with a density of 3 or more per 500 acres (remove entire complex-affected area).
- Water developments with windmills that are over 20 feet tall, that (1) have associated ground disturbance of 1 acre or greater, and (2) occur in a complex with a density of 3 or more per 500 acres (removed the entire complex-affected area).
- Gas extraction wells that occur in a complex with a density of 3 or more per 500 acres (removed the entire complex-affected area).
- Areas of active commercial open pit mining or open pit mines.
- Developed recreation sites (for example ski areas, campgrounds, or interpretive sites) as defined by management areas or special use permit boundaries.
- Powerlines or other utilities with cleared rights-of-way, permanent above ground pipelines over 6" in diameter.
- Railroad tracks that are active.
- Functional non-earthen dams that require maintenance, post-fire flooding control improvements (i.e., filter dams made of non-natural materials), and terraced areas.
- Complexes of permanent building structures (removed the entire complex-affected area). A complex is defined as at least three buildings per 25 acres.



Legend

- Carson NF Boundary
- Recreation Management Area
- Carson NF Existing Wilderness
- Adjacent Existing Wilderness
- Inventoried Roadless Area
- Private Land Inholding

BLM Lands with Wilderness Character

- Existing Inventoried Lands
- Tentative (as part of the draft RGdNNM plan)

Preliminary Wilderness Inventory

- W3 — Inventoried area
- Qxs162ADD — Addition to inventory
- Excluded based on size
- Excluded based on criteria

Next Steps: Evaluation (April 2016)

The areas that were drawn using the Preliminary Inventory criteria will be Evaluated for their potential suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System based on their existing wilderness characteristics. Wilderness characteristics are Evaluated following five criteria set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964 (as required by Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 70), as follows:
1.The area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable (apparent naturalness).
2.The area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.
3.Areas smaller than 5000 acres must be of sufficient size to make their preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.
4.The area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values are not required for recommendation, but they should be identified and evaluated.
5.It is possible to manage the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

The specific measures of these criteria to be considered during Evaluation will be developed in collaboration with the public to specifically address the conditions on the Carson National Forest. The application of those measures and the documentation of the five criteria will incorporate information and feedback from the public. The Carson National Forest plans to begin the Evaluation phase in April 2016.

N

0 1 2 3 4 5 10 Miles

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What is Wilderness?

Wilderness is a Congressionally Designated area of undeveloped federal land that retains its primeval character and influences, lacks permanent improvements or human habitation, and is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions. Wilderness areas are managed according to the 1964 Wilderness Act and are recognized as areas where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.

What is allowed in Wilderness?

- Hiking and Horseback Riding
- Mining on valid claims
- Fire Control
- Insect and Disease Control
- Livestock Grazing
- Water Resource Structures
- Visitor Use
- Hunting/ Fishing
- Camping
- Commercial Outfitting
- Trail Construction/Maintenance

What is prohibited in Wilderness?

- Roads
- Motorized Equipment
- Structure Installations
- Aircraft Landing (except emergency)
- Mechanical Transport (mountain bikes, game carts, etc.)
- Timber Harvest (with rare exceptions)