

# Inventory and Evaluation Process for Lands that may or may not be Suitable for Inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System

## DRAFT Evaluation Criteria Thresholds

### Using the Evaluation Criteria Thresholds

The thresholds in this document are used to help evaluate areas on the Inventory maps for wilderness character as part of the wilderness Evaluation process (step 2 of 4). The interdisciplinary team will evaluate every area for each criterion’s questions using geospatial data, interdisciplinary field knowledge, and public comment. Then, the below thresholds will be use to give a finding of High, Moderate, or Low wilderness character, which will be useful in evaluating the area’s overall wilderness character. A narrative describing the on the ground information and how they contribute or detract to wilderness character will be written for each area as well.

These findings will be presented to the Responsible Official, along with the individual evaluation narratives. The Responsible Official shall then identify which areas from the evaluation to carry forward as recommended wilderness in one or more alternatives in the plan Environmental Impact Statement.

**Table 1: Wilderness Character Evaluation Threshold Definitions**

WILDERNESS CHARACTERISTIC	Criteria	Finding
<b>Criterion 1: Apparent Naturalness</b>	Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities?	<b>High (3)</b> - Non-native species are not evident and composition of plant and animal communities appears natural.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> - Non-native species are evident in isolated spots or scattered throughout and composition of plant and animal communities appears natural in most areas.
		<b>Low (1)</b> - Non-native species are common in the area and composition of plant and animal communities appears natural in some areas.
	Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?	<b>High (3)</b> – Vegetation appears natural.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Vegetation does not appear natural in isolated or scattered spots.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Vegetation does not appear natural throughout or common to the area.
	Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?	<b>High (3)</b> – Little or no evidence of human activity. Appearance and concentration of improvements do not detract from apparent naturalness.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human activity. Appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Obvious evidence of human activity. Area has high level of human disturbance. Appearance and concentration of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in most areas.

<b>Criterion 2: Solitude/Primitive and Unconfined Recreation</b>	Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor’s opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.	<b>High (3)</b> – Significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Feeling of being alone is possible but signs of civilization are possible
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Little opportunity of feeling alone and human activities or presence is unavoidable
	Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor’s ability to feel a part of nature.	<b>High (3)</b> – There are many opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and unconfined recreation
		<b>Low (1)</b> – There are few opportunities to engage in primitive and unconfined recreation or opportunities are poor to nonexistent.
<b>Criterion 3: Unique and outstanding qualities</b>	Question 3a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?	<b>High (3)</b> – Area has three or more rare plant and animal communities.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Area has one to two rare plant and animal communities.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Area has no rare plant and animal communities.
	Question 3b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?	<b>High (3)</b> – Area has several or many outstanding landscape features.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Area has some outstanding landscape features.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Area has few to no outstanding landscape features.
	Question 3c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area of regional or national significance?	<b>High (3)</b> – Area has several or many historic and cultural resource sites.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Area has some historic and cultural resource sites.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Area has few to no historic and cultural resource sites.
	Question 3d. Are there any research natural areas?	<b>High (3)</b> – Area has several research natural areas.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Area has at least one research natural area.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Area has no research natural areas.
	Question 3e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?	<b>High (3)</b> – Area has several or many high quality water resources.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – Area has some high quality water resources.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – Area has few to no high quality water resources.
<b>Criterion 4: Management</b>	Question 4a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?	<b>High (3)</b> – presence and extent of other uses occurs in isolated spots and makes management to preserve the area’s wilderness characteristics high throughout the area.
		<b>Moderate (2)</b> – presence and extent of other uses occurs in scattered areas and makes management to preserve the area’s wilderness characteristics possible in most areas.
		<b>Low (1)</b> – presence and extent of other uses occurs across most of the area and makes management to preserve the area’s wilderness characteristics low in most areas.