It is required by law and policy that every National Forest undertaking Forest Plan Revision must undergo this process.

Inclusion in the inventory is not a designation that conveys protections or requires a particular kind of management.

Stakeholder involvement in the process is vital to helping us make informed decisions.

Only Congress may designate wilderness by passage of legislation.

Forest Supervisor decides which, if any, lands to recommend to congress for designation.
4-Step Process Identifying and Evaluating Lands that May be Suitable to Recommend to Congress for Wilderness Designation

Gila National Forest – 3.3 Million Acres of Lands

Step 1: Inventory to Identify Lands with Potential Wilderness Characteristics
- Only includes lands that:
  - Do not contain Level 2 or higher roads
  - Do not contain any substantially noticeable improvements
  - Of size practicable to manage as wilderness

Step 2: Evaluation of Inventoried lands for the following Wilderness Characteristics:
- Apparent Naturalness
- Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation
- Manageability to protect wilderness characteristics
  - If smaller than 5,000 acres, manageable as wilderness at current size

Step 3: Analysis
- Alternatives in Plan EIS
  - Range of alternatives
  - Inclusion in alternatives is based on compatibility with the “theme” of each

Step 4: Recommendation
- Forest Supervisor decides which, if any, lands to recommend to congress for designation
We are at Step 1: Inventory of Lands with Potential Wilderness Characteristics Process

• First, we will exclude areas that contain any open roads
  We will also put a “buffer” along roads, that is 300 feet in most areas, but may be adjusted case-by-case for conditions

• Next, we will identify & remove all areas with “substantially noticeable” improvements and installations
  We will remove a 300 foot buffer around it from the inventory as well

• Finally, we remove areas that are Unmanageable as wilderness due to their size
  Areas less than 5,000 acres, and do not border an existing wilderness (or similar management area) are not generally considered manageable to protect wilderness characteristics, unless they have unique circumstances due to terrain, location, natural barriers, etc.

The areas that are left in the Inventory will move on to the Step 2: Evaluation of the Lands Inventoried for Wilderness Characteristics – where it will be determined how much, if any, wilderness characteristics they possess.
“Substantially Noticeable?”

As part of the *Inventory of lands with potential wilderness characteristics process*, the forest must determine what existing structures and improvements are “substantially noticeable”, and exclude them from the inventoried areas.

Exercise: Please answer 3 questions regarding the examples we have provided:

**Question 1:** Do you think it is substantially noticeable?

**Question 2:** Why or Why not?

**Question 3:** Can you think of any change in circumstance that would change your answer to question 1?