



SALMON-CHALLIS NATIONAL FOREST

WILDERNESS INVENTORY PROCESS

The process to inventory lands for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System is based on direction found in Forest Service Handbook 1909.12, Chapter 70, Section 71. Our inventory included all lands managed by the Salmon-Challis but excluded lands with existing special designations, such as wilderness, national recreation areas, and non-National Forest System lands.

The handbook allows a Responsible Official to carry forward to the evaluation process lands that would otherwise be eliminated in the inventory process. So, we took a conservative approach to eliminating areas from consideration during the inventory step to allow for a more robust discussion about areas during evaluation.

In accordance with the handbook, the following criteria were applied within the administrative boundary of the Salmon-Challis National Forest to make the first cut of lands potentially suitable for wilderness preservation.

CRITERION 1: SIZE

We excluded areas that did not meet specific size criteria. According to the handbook, the size criteria for areas to be considered are:

- 5000 acres or greater;
- less than 5000 acres, greater than 50 acres, but, as determined through staff and public review, of sufficient enough size that it is practicable to include in the inventory; and
- less than 5000 acres, adjacent to existing designated wilderness, primitive areas, recommended wilderness, and wilderness study areas on both National Forest System lands and adjacent to other federally-managed lands.

CRITERION 2: IMPROVEMENTS

For this criterion, we completed a worksheet detailing all substantially noticeable improvements, or those improvements that have a strong degree of contrast with the existing character of the landscape as a whole. These worksheets can be found in Appendix A.

Areas are excluded from the inventory when:

- management actions or public use have left substantially noticeable change on the landscape that has impaired wilderness character and that cannot practicably be restored;
- developed recreation sites exist; and
- power lines, pipelines and other permanently installed linear right-of-way structures have been cleared.

Areas where timber harvest or vegetation treatments have taken place were included in the inventory. Examples of management activities that may have eliminated an area from consideration include mining operations, and water systems.

CRITERION 3: ROADS

We excluded areas from the inventory that met specified size criteria but also have:

- National Forest System roads maintained to level 3, 4, or 5;
- a valid easement; or
- level 2 roads when:
 - they have been improved and maintained by mechanical means for regular and continued use;
 - have cumulatively degraded wilderness character;
 - a NEPA decision, such as a travel plan decision or a site-specific project decision, has identified the route for continued public access; and
 - other on-the-ground knowledge of the road would preclude the area from further consideration.

We buffered roads by a short distance when excluding areas from the inventory.

COMPLETING THE INVENTORY PROCESS

We rounded out the inventory process by:

- creating a draft set of maps depicting lands that remained after applying the three criteria above;
- completing a staff review;
- posting maps to [web resources](#) and asking for public input on accuracy of data and on-the-ground knowledge;
- holding public meetings; and
- reviewing public comments.

Maps can be found in Appendix B. Public meetings where we presented and answered questions on the results of the inventory were held during April 2017 in Arco, Salmon, May, Mackay and Ketchum.

Figure 1. Deputy Forest Supervisor Cheri Ford and Forest Plan Revision Team Leader Josh Milligan present inventory results at a public meeting held in Mackay April 26, 2017.

