Draft Evaluation Process Documentation and Criteria for the Lincoln National Forest Wilderness Recommendation Process

Introduction

When revising the Forest Plan, the Lincoln National Forest is required to identify and evaluate lands that may or may not be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and determine whether to recommend to Congress any such lands for wilderness. A description of this process can be found in Chapter 70 of the Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12. This process includes the following four steps:

1. Inventory: Identify and create an inventory of all lands that may or may not be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) using a given set of criteria.

2. Evaluation: Evaluate the wilderness characteristics of all lands included in the inventory that may be suitable for inclusion in the NWPS using a given set of criteria and assign a ranking of high, moderate, low, or no for their wilderness characteristics.

3. Analysis: Based on the ranking, the forest supervisor will determine which areas to further analyze through the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process.

4. Recommendation: Based on the analysis, the Forest Supervisor will decide which areas, if any, to recommend to Congress for inclusion in the NWPS.

Lands evaluated and analyzed through this process and the resulting NEPA analysis are only preliminary administrative recommendations. Recommended wilderness is distinct from designated wilderness, and is managed in accordance with Forest Plan direction as opposed to the Wilderness Act. Congress has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation.

More information on wilderness areas and the wilderness recommendation process can be found on the plan revision website.

Step 1: Inventory

The primary function of the inventory step is to efficiently, effectively, and transparently identify all lands on the Lincoln National Forest that will be evaluated for wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act of 1964. The inventory is intended to be broad and inclusive. Chapter 70, Sections 71.21 thru 71.22b, of the Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12 outlines criteria for what should and should not be included in the inventoried areas. There are two broad categories of criteria: 1) size and 2) improvements.

The final inventory criteria identified in the Forest Service Handbook ([FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70](#), Section 71.2; 71.21 thru 71.22b), and further defined through interdisciplinary team and public engagement, along with the final inventory map can be found [here](#).

Step 2: Evaluation
The primary function of this step is to evaluate the wilderness characteristics of all lands included on the [final inventory map.](#)

The evaluation is based on the criteria identified in the *Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70, Section 72.1)* and further defined by the Lincoln National Forest through resource specialist and public engagement.

Chapter 70, Section 72.1, of the Forest Service Land Management Planning Handbook 1909.12 outlines criteria for evaluation of lands for wilderness characteristics. In this step we will be evaluating the areas from the inventory for their wilderness characteristics: (1) size, (2) apparent naturalness, (3) outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, (4) unique and outstanding qualities, and (5) manageability. These criteria, definitions, and ranking guides, as defined by the Lincoln National Forest and our publics, are outlined in this document.

The evaluation step of the process has a given set of criteria that are explained and identified below in the following sections. These criteria will be used for ranking areas as HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, or NO for the level of wilderness characteristics the area has.

Process for Step 2: Evaluation
The ID Team has taken the following steps in evaluating the inventoried areas:

1. **Released the Draft Evaluation Criteria for Public Review and Comment (June 28, 2019 – July 31, 2019).** The intent of the Forest Supervisor and the planning team is to ensure that the process for evaluation is transparent and accessible to the public for input and feedback. The [draft Evaluation Criteria](#) for the Lincoln National Forest Wilderness Recommendation Process has been through one round of public review.

   This document reflects changes based on input from all public comment. By allowing the public an opportunity review the development of this document, stakeholders were able to provide input and be familiar with the process used to evaluate the wilderness characteristics of the lands identified through the Inventory step. A summary of public input and concerns received through comment on the draft evaluation criteria from June 28, 2019 – July 31, 2019 are as follows:

- Some comments on this document were focused on interpreting the Wilderness Act and/or the *Forest Service Handbook (FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70)* direction.

  "… recommends LNF's definition of 'substantially noticeable' be altered…"

  "…we believe the draft inventory process paper accurately reflects the Chapter 70 inventory requirements…"

- Comments also focused on clarifying what constitutes substantially noticeable improvements and how they would be evaluated.

  "…areas with constructed and nonconstructed features related to livestock watering be [should be] removed from further consideration…"

  "…the forest should include any areas with vegetation treatments – regardless of noticeability…"

- Other comments were in support of particular polygons as recommend wilderness while other comments were opposed to recommended wilderness.

  "I strongly support putting GRD81 (11,592 acres) into federal protection as a wilderness area…"

  "The…Guadalupe District needs to continue to be managed for multiple use NOT managed for Wilderness."

In response to comments both internal and external, the forest developed a scoring system to assist with and clarify the evaluation of wilderness characteristics in order to help distinguish between polygon ratings. The scoring system was used to help rank apparently naturalness, opportunity for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and manageability. These changes to the evaluation criteria are reflected in the tables 1-6 in this document. The directives state the forest should evaluate the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value (FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70 Section 72.1). These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist. Such features or values may include:

a. Rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems. Rare can be determined locally, regionally, nationally, or within the system of protected designations.

b. Outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features.

c. Historic and cultural resource sites. (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

d. Research natural areas.

e. High quality water resources or important watershed features.

All unique and outstanding qualities were described when present in the area, but no additional points were assigned to the polygons as the values are not required to be present.

All comments and concerns were considered in the revisions of this document and referenced when working through the evaluation process, which is documented in Step 2 below (Evaluation of Lands Inventoried for Wilderness Character).

2. **Evaluation of Lands Inventoried for Wilderness Character (November – December 2019)**
   From November through December of 2019, the ID Team systematically evaluated all lands identified in the inventory and ranked the areas either HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, NO for the level of wilderness characteristics they contain. The wilderness characteristics criteria are derived from the definition of Wilderness provided in the Wilderness Act of 1964, and by the Forest Service Planning Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70. Each area was evaluated for the following characteristics:

   1. **Size**;
   2. **Apparent Naturalness**;
   3. **Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation**;
   4. **Unique and Outstanding Qualities**, This is not mandated to be present for an area to have wilderness characteristics, but is noted where it occurs;
   5. **Manageability** to Protect Wilderness Characteristics.

   The Lincoln National Forest held five internal evaluation meetings on the forest to walk through the evaluation criteria for each of the inventoried areas. These meetings were held in Alamogordo, New Mexico on October 28 and 31, November 15 and 25 and December 12, 2019. At these meetings a team of representatives from the districts and forest sat down and evaluated the inventoried areas polygon by polygon for their wilderness characteristics using the evaluation criteria. In order to ensure consistency in evaluation, three members of the team attended all five days of the meetings. Notes and ranking determinations for each of the inventoried areas can be found in the Draft Wilderness Evaluation Rationale.

   During the evaluation process, the team recommended the adjustment of boundaries due to features inconsistent with wilderness characteristics (i.e. an area with mostly high apparent naturalness with the exception of an obvious gravel pit near the boundary). This helped ensure that areas were given an accurate rank for their level of wilderness characteristics. An entire polygon was not removed initially, if a small boundary adjustment could be made. Additionally, the ID Team worked to accurately identify improvements contained within the polygon, both which were considered substantially noticeable and those which were not considered substantially noticeable, and ensured that the boundaries of the polygons were consistent with the improvements on the ground. Notes on these suggested adjustments can be found within the Draft Wilderness

Evaluation Rationale. In making these determinations, the team referenced comments received (both internally and externally) on the inventoried areas to ensure that identified improvements were noted and evaluated accordingly.

3. **Release Draft Evaluation Map and Draft Documentation for Public Review (March – April 2020)** The Lincoln National Forest will release a draft evaluation map and draft documentation to support assigned rankings. The Draft Wilderness Evaluation Process Documentation, Draft Wilderness Evaluation Rationale and Draft Evaluation Maps will be available for public review from March X to April X, 2020. Public input received during this step will be used in finalizing the evaluation step.

4. **Final Documentation of Evaluation (to be determined)**
   After consideration and incorporation of public comments, the ID Team will complete the evaluation process with the Final Wilderness Evaluation Process document, Final Wilderness Evaluation Rationale, and Final Evaluation Map. Additionally, this documentation will be included as an appendix to the Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

   Any lands (areas) shown on the series of inventory and evaluation process maps and described in the future Final Evaluation Determination Rationale, and other process documentation, will not imply designation or require a particular kind of management. Inclusion or removal of any of these lands in the analysis will continue to be open for consideration throughout the plan revision process until the Forest Supervisor signs the Record of Decision (ROD) for the Forest Plan Environmental Impact Statement (EIS).

Evaluation Rank Determination Guide

Each criterion will be evaluated systematically in the numerical order they are assigned in the Evaluation process documentation. If at any point in the process an area receives a rating of "NO" for any of the first three evaluation criteria (size, apparent naturalness, and opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation), the evaluation will not continue for that area. The evaluated area shall instead be assigned a summary score of "NO" for the level of wilderness characteristics that it contains, and it shall be removed from any further discussion in the evaluation. The evaluation will not continue for that area because these are required characteristics of a wilderness area in the Wilderness Act. Through the process, all polygons evaluated met the size requirement, including those with recommended boundary adjustments.

Each evaluated area will be assigned an overall ranking of the level of wilderness characteristics it possesses: HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, or NO. These rankings are determined through a point system based on the wilderness characteristics of the area, the apparent naturalness, opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation, and manageability. For these

characteristics, a ranking or score will be assigned based on the following number of points:

- NO = 0 – 2.5 points
- LOW = 2.6 – 5.0 points
- MODERATE = 5.1 – 7.5 points
- HIGH = 7.6-10 points

Table 1 describes the criteria and the points possible in each category. Table 2 through Table 6 outline the considerations to be made when determining the rank given in each category (high, moderate, low, or no).

In the evaluation of the inventoried areas, the intent of each consideration is to help further describe potential discussion topics for each criterion that are indicated for the five wilderness characteristics per FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70. The specific considerations utilized in the evaluation will depend on the area being evaluated, and it may not be necessary to consider all points outlined in the tables below. Further determinations on the evaluation criteria are in Table 2, Table 3, Table 4, Table 5, and Table 6.

Table 1: Points Possible for Wilderness Characteristics

Wilderness Characteristic	Description	How Evaluated	Total Points Possible
Size	This criterion evaluates if an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable. More information on this criterion can be found in Table 2.	**Yes / No** If an area receives a "yes" this criteria it will move forward in the evaluation process, if it receives a "no", the area is given an overall wilderness characteristic rank of NO.	N/A
Apparent Naturalness	This criterion evaluates the degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable. There are 3 categories of Apparent Naturalness: the composition of plant and animal communities, the ecological (vegetation treatments) conditions, and improvements. More information on this criterion can be found in Table 3.	**Average Rank Value** The Lincoln National Forest will give an averaged score based on the three categories: the composition of plant and animal communities, the ecological (vegetation treatments) conditions, and improvements.	10

Wilderness Characteristic	Description	How Evaluated	Total Points Possible
Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Unconfined Recreation*	This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. More information on this criterion can be found in Table 4. *An area only has to possess one or the other; the area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.*	**Highest Rank Value** The score will be determined by the highest rank value between the two categories: Solitude or Unconfined Recreation.	10
Unique and Outstanding Qualities*	This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may contain ecological, scenic, historical/tribal, features of scientific or high value water resource value. There are 5 categories of unique and outstanding qualities. More information on this criterion can be found in Table 5. *These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and noted where they exist.*	**Yes / No** If the area has any unique or outstanding qualities, these qualities are noted in the description of the polygon, but no points will be given for having a unique and outstanding quality.	N/A

Wilderness Characteristic	Description	How Evaluated	Total Points Possible
Manageability	This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics, considering current conditions. More information on this criterion can be found in Table 6.	**Rank Value** Points will be determined based on the rank value the area is given.	10
Preliminary Overall Score and Rating	There is a possible rating of No, Low, Moderate, and High, these ratings are based on scores (No 0-2.5, Low 2.6-5.0, Moderate 5.1-7.5, High 7.6-10)	Scores from Apparent Naturalness, Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation and Manageability will be averaged for the total points possible.	10
		Averaged Total Points Possible	**10**

Size

This criterion evaluates if an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable. The ID Team will assign a score of YES or NO to all of the inventoried areas. Rationale for the score will be documented. If they receive a score of NO the evaluation of that area will be discontinued, and the area will receive a wilderness characteristic ranking of "NO" If the area receives a score of YES it will continue to be evaluated.

Table 2. Size Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Characteristic Determination Guide
Evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.	• Consider areas less than 5,000 acres if they are adjacent to another Wilderness area – or an area proposed to be one. • Consider primitive areas, or areas that are part of another wilderness inventory on an adjacent land management agency unit. • Consider if areas smaller than 5,000 acres can be combined. • Consider if the terrain, bodies of water, vegetation, and/or geographic location may facilitate protection of wilderness characteristics of the entire area. • Consider if the surrounding or inholding areas are in non-federal ownership or are managed currently for uses that would make the area impractical to manage as a wilderness due to its relative size. • Include any additional information related to the manageability of an area less than 5,000 acres.	Yes • Any area greater than 5,000 acres. • Areas less than 5,000 acres but is contiguous to existing wilderness, primitive areas, administratively recommended wilderness, or wilderness inventory of other Federal ownership. • Areas less than 5,000 acres but are sufficient size to manage as a wilderness based on considerations. No • Areas less than 5,000 acres not contiguous to any existing wilderness, primitive areas, administratively recommended wilderness, or wilderness inventory of other Federal ownership,

Apparent Naturalness

This criterion evaluates the degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable. For each identified area the ID team will evaluate the apparent naturalness of the area. The standard for this criterion is how natural the area would appear to an average forest visitor.

This criteria includes three basic questions: (1) what is the composition of plant and animal communities; (2) What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention (degree of noticeable vegetation treatments) and; (3) what is the extent to which improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

The ranking score given by team members for this criteria will be averaged to determine the overall score for apparent naturalness. The ID Team will apply an overall ranking of HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, NO for the level of apparent naturalness, accompanied by a detailed narrative documenting the considerations made and the rationale of the assigned rank. Team member individual scores will be averaged for an overall ranking and score.

- NO = 0 – 2.5 points
- LOW = 2.6 – 5.0 points
- MODERATE = 5.1 – 7.5 points
- HIGH = 7.6-10 points

Table 3. Apparent Naturalness Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Characteristic Determination Guide
Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural.	Do the plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural to the average forest visitor? • Describe the vegetation types, associations, and plant and animal communities, including atypical vegetation associations or type changes (e.g. forest to woodland conversion from large catastrophic fires). • How are concentrations of nonnative plants and/or animals distributed across the landscape? • Other (Include any additional information related to the question above).	High –The composition of plant and animal communities appears natural to the average forest visitor. The presence of exotic, invasive and/or non-native plant and animal communities are sparse to absent in the area. Moderate – In most areas the composition of plant and animal communities would appear natural to the average forest visitor. The presence of exotic, invasive and/or non-native plant and animal communities are found in infrequent small to moderate patch sizes in the area. Low – The composition of plant and animal communities appears unnatural to the average forest visitor in substantial portions of the area. The presence of exotic, invasive and/or non- native plant and animal communities represent frequent small to moderate patch sizes in the area. No – The composition of plant and animal communities represents a departure from apparent naturalness in the majority of the area and is easily noticed by the average forest visitor. The presence of exotic, invasive and/or non-native plant and animal communities are predominant in the area.

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Characteristic Determination Guide
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?	How would the average forest visitor perceive the impacts to the naturalness of the area from human intervention? • Describe the appearance, distribution and amount of vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning), timber harvest areas, and associated activities (e.g., clear cuts, bulldozer lines, fuel breaks). • Does the vegetation appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to vegetation, wildlife, soil, air, etc.)? • Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	High – To the average forest visitor the vegetation appears natural, reflects healthy ecosystem function, and shows little to no influence of previous human intervention. Restoration treatments in the area have minimal physical impacts and have the potential to restore a more natural appearance in a short time. Moderate – To the average forest visitor the vegetation does not appear natural in isolated spots or is scattered. Evidence of human intervention on the landscape is uncommon and most visitors to the area would not notice any previous human intervention. The area may require more intensive restoration treatments in insolated spots to improve the apparent naturalness, and impacts/signs of human intervention would only persist for a few years. Low – To the average forest visitor the vegetation does not appear natural commonly in the area. Ecosystem function is impaired. Limited signs of human intervention are visible to the average visitor. The area may require more intensive restoration treatments in a moderate proportion of the overall area in order to improve the apparent naturalness, with the physical impacts/signs of human intervention persisting for a number of years. No – To the average forest visitor the vegetation does not appear natural throughout the area. Human intervention to the apparent naturalness is obvious to the average forest visitor. The majority of areas require intensive treatments to restore apparent naturalness and physical impacts/signs of human intervention are likely to persist for long periods of time.

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Characteristic Determination Guide
Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?	• Consider the extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole. Consider the appearance and concentrations of all improvements listed below: 　o　Linear travel ways, including any remaining roads (including system, decommissioned, temporary, or user-created), system trails, and known unauthorized routes 　o　Airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones 　o　Permanently installed vertical structures extending above the tree line 　o　Areas of mining activity, including exploration and prospecting 　o　Range or wildlife improvements (such as fences, agricultural water pipelines (typically less than 2 inch diameter), water troughs, earthen tanks, corrals, or trick tanks) 　o　Recreation improvements 　o　Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines, and powerlines 　o　Watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) 　o　Structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation (that are not considered a part of the cultural landscape)	High – Little or no evidence of human influence on the landscape. Prevalence of improvements is rare or scattered. The presence or appearance of improvements does not detract from apparent naturalness. It is rare to see improvements. Moderate – Unnoticeable or unobjectionable human influence. Prevalence of improvements is overall low throughout the area, it may be concentrated in some spots but is more typically dispersed through the area. It is common to find spots where improvements are absent or unseen. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in some areas. Low – Noticeable evidence of human influence, area has high level of human disturbance. Prevalence of improvements is overall high throughout the area, and is often concentrated. Although spots where improvements are absent or unseen are uncommon, they exist. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness in most areas. No – Obvious evidence of human influence. Prevalence of improvements is very high throughout the area and there are very few or no spots where improvements are absent or unseen. Appearance of improvements detract from apparent naturalness throughout the area.

	o Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation

This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. An area only has to possess one or the other; the area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre. The definitions for this criterion are identified in Table 4.

Since an area does not need both opportunities for solitude or unconfined recreation for it to have wilderness character, one score for the highest ranking of the two categories will be the overall score for this characteristic. The ID Team will apply an overall ranking of HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, or NO for the outstanding opportunity for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation, accompanied by a narrative documenting the considerations made and the rationale of the assigned rank. Team member's individual numeric scores will be averaged for an overall ranking and score.

- NO = 0 – 2.5 points
- LOW = 2.6 – 5.0 points
- MODERATE = 5.1 – 7.5 points
- HIGH = 7.6-10 points

Table 4. Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or a Primitive and Unconfined Type of Recreation Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Characteristic Determination Guide
Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.	• Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Consider proximity of area to high use areas, private lands, level 2 roads or those with higher level of maintenance, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider pervasiveness of impacts, and also potential seasonal variabilities. • Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. • Other (Include any additional information).	High – Common or significant feeling of being alone or remote from civilization throughout the area. Views of high human impact areas are distant, absent or seldom. Encounters with humans is rare. Moderate – Opportunities to feel alone are possible in the majority of the area, though signs of civilization are possible. Views of high human impact areas occur infrequently, but are possible. Encounters with, or evidence of, humans is uncommon. Low – Little opportunity of feeling alone and there are some signs of civilization. Frequent views of high human impact areas and encounters with, or evidence of, humans is common or likely. No – No opportunity of feeling alone. Encounters with, or evidence of, humans is unavoidable. Signs of civilization are pervasive. Views of high human impact areas occur frequently.

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. *Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, cross-country skiing, bouldering, primitive camping, and enjoying nature.*	• Is the area relatively free of restrictions on visitor behavior, providing an unconfined experience? • What is the level of challenge and risk in the area? What is the likelihood of encounters with others? • Are facilities or user controls provided that decrease opportunities for self-reliant recreation? • Does adjacent land management support or decrease opportunities for self-reliant recreation? Other (Include any additional information)	High – There are abundant opportunities for engaging in primitive and/or unconfined recreation. These opportunities are of high quality and/or risk. Moderate – There are some opportunities for engaging in primitive and/or unconfined recreation. At least some of these opportunities are of high quality and/or risk or these opportunities are all of moderate quality and/or moderate risk. Low – There are few opportunities to engage in primitive and unconfined recreation. Most existing opportunities are poor quality, with low risk. No – There are no opportunities to engage in primitive and unconfined recreation.

Unique and Outstanding Qualities

This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. When evaluating unique and outstanding qualities, consider if the feature is iconic, unique at a regional or national scale, and the extent that the feature defines how people think about and value the area. These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

Table 5. Unique and Outstanding Qualities Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Character Determination Guide
Question 3a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems? *Note: Rare in this context is defined as national or regional in scale.*	• Presence of rare species, habitat or ecosystems? • Other (Include any additional information)	Yes – Yes there is habitat or known occurrences of rare plant or animal communities (e.g., Threatened and Endangered species, Species of Conservation Concern). No – No unique or outstanding values for rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems.
Question 3b. Percentage of scenery class 1, in addition are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?	• Percent of area mapped as Scenic Class 1 in the Forest's Scenery Management System inventory. • Description of any outstanding and unique features in the area, including significance and extent. • Other (Include any additional information)	Yes – There are unique or outstanding landscape features (e.g. waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features) No – There are no unique or outstanding landscape features.

Question 3c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area of regional or national significance for example are there National Register listed resources? Also, are there areas of importance to Tribes? *Consider if the feature is nationally recognized (for example, through an official designation such as the National Register) or if the features is considered a priority heritage asset.*	• Presence of significant historic or cultural resources sites? • Are there Tribal traditional cultural properties, sacred sites or traditional use areas. • Other (Include any additional information)	Yes – There are regionally or nationally significant historic and cultural resource sites, for example are there National Register of Historic Places listed sites. No – There are not unique or outstanding historic and cultural resources.
Question 3d. Are there any research natural areas?	• Percent of area that is part of a research natural area. • Other (Include any additional information)	Yes – There are RNAs. No – There are no RNAs.
Question 3e. Are there any high quality water resources such as eligible Wild and Scenic rivers, municipal watersheds or important watershed features?	• Presence and extent of high quality water resources or important watershed features in the area. • Other (Include any additional information)	Yes – There are high quality watershed values and features in the area. No – There are no high quality water resources or important watershed features.

Manageability

This criterion evaluates the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics, considering current conditions, trends of use, and existing management challenges. For each identified area the ID team will evaluate if the area could be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics. The ID Team will apply an overall ranking of HIGH, MODERATE, LOW, or NO for manageability. Team members' individual numeric scores will be averaged for an overall ranking and score.

- NO = 0 – 2.5 points
- LOW = 2.6 – 5.0 points
- MODERATE = 5.1 – 7.5 points
- HIGH = 7.6-10 points

When reviewing public comments received during the comment period June 28, 2019 – July 31, 2019, the public expressed their concern with the Lincoln National Forest's ability to manage wilderness areas to preserve their wilderness characteristics. Being able to effectively manage an area as a recommended wilderness is important to the Lincoln National Forest and through providing effective management the Lincoln National Forest can work to maintain or enhance the wilderness characteristics of an area if recommended. The ID team did make recommendations on polygon boundary changes to improve manageability, these comments are included in the draft wilderness evaluation rational.

Table 6. Manageability Criteria

Evaluation Criteria	Considerations Made During Evaluation	Wilderness Character Determination Guide
Question 4a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics? *Describe factors that are or are not compatible with managing for wilderness character.*	• Shape and configuration of the area. Describe the boundary, edge to interior ratio, and presence and extent of cherry-stemmed roads, etc. • Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area and how these uses may support or impact managing an area for wilderness characteristics (e.g. active mining claims, special uses, inholdings). • Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics (including but not limited to recovery, designated or proposed critical habitat). • Describe management of adjacent lands. • Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include percent if possible. • Describe management activities or restrictions within the area (e.g. signed management decisions). • Presence of Inventoried Roadless Area. Include % if possible. • Other (Include any additional information)	High – Management to preserve the wilderness characteristics is easy throughout the area. Shape, configuration, extent of cherry-stemmed roads and inholdings have few impacts manageability. The presence and extent of management activities and other uses that detract from wilderness characteristics are isolated. Moderate – Management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics are possible throughout most of the area. There are some characteristics of shape, configuration, extent of cherry-stemmed roads and inholdings that would impact the wilderness characteristics of the area. The presence and extent of management activities and other uses that detract from wilderness characteristics are scattered. Low – Management to preserve the area's wilderness characteristics is difficult throughout most of the area. There are aspects of shape, configuration, extent of cherry-stemmed roads and inholdings that commonly impact the wilderness characteristics of the area. The presence and extent of management activities and other uses that detract from wilderness characteristics occurs across most of the area. No – It is impossible to manage the majority of the area to preserve its wilderness characteristics. Aspects of shape, configuration, extent of cherry-stemmed roads and inholdings that impact the wilderness characteristics of the area are unavoidable. The presence and extent of management activities and other uses that detract from wilderness characteristics is pervasive throughout the area