



U.S. Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

Date: January 29, 2014

Topic: Wilderness Character Monitoring

Issue: The Wilderness Program plans to meet its interagency commitment to monitor wilderness character by revising the current technical guide for monitoring wilderness character, to be consistent with the interagency strategy. If funding can be secured, the plan would be to start the revision process in FY 2015, with a target completion the following fiscal year.

Summary/Key Points:

- The Forest Service completed a technical guide for monitoring wilderness character in 2006 and conducted pilot testing in every region. The resources needed for nationwide implementation were not found at that time.
- In FY 2008, the four federal wilderness management agencies completed a strategy titled “Keeping It Wild”, and have since progressed with implementation of their own protocols, consistent with the interagency strategy.
- Development of an agency-wide consistent protocol for monitoring wilderness character has the benefit of:
 - Our ability to determine the outcome of our stewardship actions and our ultimate success at meeting the primary mandate from the Wilderness Act;
 - Fulfilling our commitment to the other federal wilderness management agencies and the eventual ability to evaluate trends in wilderness character across the entire National Wilderness Preservation System.
 - Proof-of-concept, pilot test, case study showcasing the goals and objectives of the IM&A Program.
- This month, the Forest Service completed its own strategy for revising their existing protocol to be consistent with the interagency approach, and plans to participate in an interagency “Lessons Learned” workshop in March to complete the collection of business requirements.
- The Wilderness Program plans to revise their existing technical guide, beginning in FY 2015, if the necessary resources can be found. A proposal was submitted for IRDB consideration in November 2013, but recent communications indicate the proposal has not fared well in that process. The IRPM request was for: \$177k. (FY15), \$87k. (FY16) and \$21k. (FY17).

Background:

Please refer to the proposed project timeline on the reverse side.

Contact: Leanne Marten; Director, WWSR; (202) 205-0925, lmarten@fs.fed.us

de Revision Schedule

