



United States  
Department of  
Agriculture

**Forest Service**

Pacific  
Southwest  
Region

Stanislaus  
National Forest



November 1999

# August 1999

# Wilderness

# Standards and Guidelines Review



Lilypad Lake, Emigrant Wilderness, Stanislaus National Forest (USDA Forest Service)

# August 1999 Wilderness

## Standards and Guidelines Review

### 1. Introduction

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The Regional Forester approved the Stanislaus National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan (Forest Plan) and Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) on October 28, 1991 (USDA 1991). Chapter V of the Forest Plan identifies a need for program and activity reviews to insure consistent use of Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) to improve the reliability of subsequent evaluations. Evaluation is the analysis and interpretation of monitoring data to determine whether changes in the Forest Plan, or in project implementation are necessary. Monitoring and evaluation are critical elements ensuring that the Forest Plan remains a dynamic and responsible tool for managing the Forest's land and resources in a changing social and economic climate.

This report documents the results of an August 1999 Stanislaus National Forest FLT review of Wilderness S&Gs.

### 2. Programs and Activities Reviewed

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The FLT conducted this review in the Emigrant Wilderness on the Summit Ranger District, from August 17-19, 1999. Prior to the field trip, the FLT discussed selected S&Gs from the 1991 Forest Plan (USDA 1991) and from the 1998 Emigrant Wilderness Direction (EWD) Forest Plan Amendment (USDA 1998). They later reviewed specific programs and activities related to Wilderness, comparing conditions to the selected S&Gs. They reviewed these results in an integrated fashion to develop the recommendations shown in this report. Table 1 (see Action Plan) lists the specific actions needed to implement these recommendations.

In order to draw conclusions and make recommendations, the FLT identified the following objective.

#### **Objective**

- Determine adherence to Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines (S&Gs) to insure consistent use of S&Gs and improve the reliability of subsequent monitoring and evaluation.

## 2.1 Crabtree Trailhead

### **Objectives**

Does the trailhead project meet selected Forest Plan S&Gs? Are those S&Gs still valid?

### **Management Area**

Developed Recreation Site

### **Selected S&Gs**

*1991 Forest Plan (see Appendix Attachment 1)*

Interpretive Services Management (10-M)

Installation and Construction of Interpretive Services Facilities (10-N)

### Results

- Information at the trailhead focuses on Wilderness Regulations and Leave No Trace ethics
- Information at the trailhead does not identify the unique features of the Wilderness

### Conclusions

- The findings of this portion of the Emigrant Wilderness review also apply to the forestwide Wilderness Management Program
- It is often too late to promote Leave No Trace education at the trailhead
- Need to identify unique features of the Wilderness at the trailhead
- S&Gs still valid

### Recommendations

- Apply findings of this Emigrant Wilderness review to improve application of Wilderness Direction forestwide
  1. Incorporate Wilderness information into the Forest Interpretive and Environmental Education Programs
  2. Emphasize unique cultural/historic Wilderness features through the Heritage Resource Program

## 2.2 Emigrant Wilderness

### **Objectives**

Do selected Emigrant Wilderness Direction S&Gs help protect Wilderness resources? Does the Emigrant Wilderness Direction meet the intent of selected Forest Plan S&Gs?

### **Management Area**

Wilderness

### **Selected S&Gs**

*Emigrant Wilderness Direction (see Appendix Attachment 2)*

Crowding (EWD-1)

Campsite and Stock Holding Area Condition (EWD-2)

Campfire Wood and Campfires (EWD-3)

Water Developments (EWD-5)

Facilities, Structures and Signs (EWD-9)

*1991 Forest Plan (see Appendix Attachment 1)*

Wilderness Inventory and Planning (20-A)

Wilderness Management (20-B)

### Results

- Discussed trail construction methods and maintenance needs
- Discussed management actions implemented in response to selected EWD S&Gs
- Discussed management direction for stream condition
- Discussed management direction for campfire wood and campfires

### Conclusions

- The findings of this portion of the Emigrant Wilderness review also apply to the forestwide Wilderness Management Program
- Without a designated coordinator, the Forestwide Wilderness Program is not coordinated effectively
- The Emigrant Wilderness Direction meets the intent of selected Forest Plan S&Gs
- Some primary trail segments are not maintained or constructed to Forest Service standards
- Signs and fences constructed with non-native materials are obtrusive
- Once implemented, the selected Emigrant Wilderness Direction S&Gs will help protect Wilderness resources

## Recommendations

- Apply findings of this Emigrant Wilderness review to improve application of existing Wilderness Direction forestwide
  1. Designate a Forest Wilderness Coordinator
  2. Advise users with trail pre-cautions and upgrade primary trails to standards as funding allows
  3. Favor the use of native materials when installing signs, fences and other structures within Wilderness
- Prioritize and collect Emigrant monitoring information over the next 2-3 years
- Schedule another Wilderness S&Gs review in the Emigrant after evaluating 2-3 years of monitoring information

## 3. Action Plan

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The FLT developed a schedule to identify the actions needed for implementing their recommendations (see Programs and Activities Reviewed). This is a cumulative action plan that incorporates the findings of the previous S&G reviews and supercedes their action plans (USDA 1998a and USDA 1998b).

Full implementation depends on adequate funding. The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) process and regulations apply to any subsequent site-specific projects or Forest Plan Amendments.

Table 1: **Action Plan**; Forest Leadership Team (FLT) and Forest Planning Interdisciplinary Team (IDT); Stanislaus National Forest.

Action	Who	When
<p><b>Complete Forest Plan Review, <i>considering</i> needs to:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Identify incompatible Forest Plan S&amp;Gs</li> <li>▪ Validate Forest Plan fire matrix S&amp;G</li> <li>▪ Update snag retention guidelines</li> <li>▪ Develop S&amp;Gs for fire suppression and BAER treatment of roadside hazard trees</li> <li>▪ Update Forest Plan to reflect current conditions</li> <li>▪ Fully integrate fire ecology into the Forest Plan</li> <li>▪ Set general direction for overall priorities (i.e. urban interface, old growth, plantations) for fuels management projects</li> <li>▪ Adjust Forest Plan developed recreation sites to include entire designated "Recreation Areas"</li> </ul>	IDT and FLT	9/30/2001
<p><b>Coordinate Forest Plan effectiveness and NEPA implementation monitoring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Incorporate monitoring into Program of Work</li> <li>▪ Prioritize and collect Emigrant monitoring information</li> <li>▪ Conduct Forest Plan S&amp;Gs reviews</li> <li>▪ Schedule another Emigrant Wilderness S&amp;Gs review</li> <li>▪ Involve Regional Office in future S&amp;Gs reviews</li> </ul>	<p>FLT</p> <p>Summit District Ranger</p> <p>FLT</p> <p>FLT</p> <p>Forest Supervisor</p>	<p>10/1 annual</p> <p>9/30/2002</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>9/30/2002</p> <p>On-going</p>
<p><b>Provide clear written direction (decisions) during the NEPA process</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Utilize the 1900-2 training</li> <li>▪ Rate snags per acre on a landscape basis</li> <li>▪ Emphasize long-term snag retention</li> <li>▪ Establish requirements for post fire monitoring of suppression and BAER treatments</li> </ul>	FLT	On-going
<p><b>Complete implementation of the Sourgrass recreation area</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Update Sourgrass site plan</li> <li>▪ Designate Sourgrass area as a "Recreation Area"</li> <li>▪ Retain pool level above bridge if environmentally and economically feasible</li> <li>▪ Construct shaded fuelbreaks in and around Sourgrass recreation area</li> </ul>	<p>Public Service</p> <p>Forest Supervisor</p> <p>Public Service</p> <p>Calaveras District Ranger</p>	<p>9/30/2000</p> <p>9/30/2000</p> <p>On-going</p> <p>9/30/2000</p>
<p><b>Improve application of existing Wilderness Direction</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Designate a Forest Wilderness Coordinator</li> <li>▪ Advise users with trail pre-cautions and upgrade primary trails to standards as funding allows</li> <li>▪ Favor the use of native materials when installing signs, fences and other structures within Wilderness</li> <li>▪ Incorporate Wilderness information into the Forest Interpretive and Environmental Education Programs</li> <li>▪ Emphasize unique cultural/historic Wilderness features through the Heritage Resource Program</li> </ul>	<p>Public Service</p> <p>Public Service</p> <p>District Rangers</p> <p>FLT</p> <p>Public Service</p>	<p>9/30/2000</p> <p>9/30/2001</p> <p>9/30/2001</p> <p>9/30/2001</p> <p>9/30/2001</p>

 = Action items added to the cumulative Action Plan based on this review.

## 4. Participants

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### Forest Leadership Team

Karen Caldwell, Summit District Ranger  
Larry Caplinger, Resource Protection Program Area Leader  
Ann Denton, Mi-Wok District Ranger  
Ben del Villar, Forest Supervisor  
Rob Finch, Resource Management Program Area Leader  
Sue Fitzgerald, Administration Assistant  
Bob Wetzel, Acting Calaveras District Ranger  
Glenn Gottschall, Deputy Forest Supervisor  
John Swanson, Groveland District Ranger  
Sue Warren, Public Service Program Area Leader

### Regional Office Staff

Sue Danner, Regional Appeals Coordinator

### Support Staff

Marty Gmelin, Summit Ranger District Wilderness Supervisor  
Dave Martin, Summit Ranger District Public Service Program Area Leader  
John Maschi, Land Management Planner  
Barb Miranda, Interagency Wilderness Education Coordinator

## 5. Public Notification

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This report is available by request. The Forest will inform the public of its availability by news release; and, posting on the Forest's Internet site (<http://www.r5.fs.fed.us/stanislaus/mgmt/mreport>). Comments received on this report will be considered in preparing future reports. Please submit comments to:

Stanislaus National Forest  
Attn.: Monitoring  
19777 Greenley Road  
Sonora, CA 95370

## 6. References

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USDA Forest Service. 1991. Stanislaus National Forest Land and Resource Management Plan, EIS, Forest Plan and Record of Decision. Pacific Southwest Region; San Francisco, CA.

USDA Forest Service. 1998. Emigrant Wilderness Management Direction Environmental Impact Statement, Forest Plan Amendment and Record of Decision. Stanislaus National Forest, Sonora, CA.

USDA Forest Service. 1998a. June 1998 Fire Salvage Standards and Guidelines Review. Stanislaus National Forest, Sonora, CA.

USDA Forest Service. 1998b. September 1998 Recreation Standards and Guidelines Review. Stanislaus National Forest, Sonora, CA.



## 7. Appendix

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### Attachment 1

Selected S&Gs from 1991 Forest Plan:

<b>Selected S&amp;Gs</b>	<b>General Direction</b>	<b>Standards and Guidelines</b>
▪ Interpretive Services Management (10-M)	Interpret unique features of each Wilderness	Prepare maps, brochures, signs and other interpretive devices to explain special features and reduce resource damage.
▪ Installation and Construction of Interpretive Services Facilities (10-N)	Provide information and education material at trailheads outside Wilderness to explain Wilderness use and protection.	Develop maps, brochures and publications for visitor use that stress Wilderness manners, health, safety, no trace camping, control of dogs and proper use of firearms.
▪ Wilderness Inventory and Planning (20-A)	Complete and update Wilderness Management Plans for all designated Wildernesses. Use monitoring data and public input to recommend major changes in Wilderness management direction.	Develop plans using the limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) method. Review or develop new management strategies or controls for this planning period. Utilize systems for judging impacts on Wilderness campsites such as Frisell method of condition classification and LAC.
▪ Wilderness Management (20-B)	Manage to preserve unique Wilderness characteristics. Implement LAC. Wilderness management will be consistent with adjoining National Park Wilderness management and will limit use as necessary. Allow commercial uses by permit only after evaluation shows that such use will not compromise Wilderness resources and character.	Use Wilderness permit system and/or field observation to collect visitor data. Control use as follows:  When Lac standards are exceeded for a site or area, implement appropriate management actions to remedy the situation. Close, rotate, or rehabilitate campsites to allow for site recovery. Require parties with recreation stock to carry feed when conditions warrant. Restrict stock use from steep and rocky terrain. Grant permits to collect native plants only when needed to meet administrative or research needs.  Limit commercial outfitter/guide activities to those meeting specific public needs that cannot be provided outside Wilderness. Do not issue permits for training activities or recreation events.

The above S&Gs are consistent with and will be used in conjunction with the Management Plans for each Wilderness.



## Attachment 2

Selected S&Gs from 1998 *Emigrant Wilderness Direction (EWD) Forest Plan Amendment*.

### 1. Crowding

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#### General Direction

<b>Opportunity Class Objectives</b>	The opportunity for solitude is...	I - outstanding
	The opportunity for a primitive or unconfined recreation experience is...	II - high to outstanding III - moderate to outstanding IV - low to outstanding

#### Standards and Guidelines

<b>Crowding Indicator</b>	Implement the standards, possible actions and thresholds shown in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.
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### 2. Campsite and Stock Holding Area Condition

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#### General Direction

<b>Opportunity Class Objectives</b>	The imprint of human influences is...	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - substantially unnoticeable IV - substantially unnoticeable
	Human influences on aquatic life, hydrologic processes, soils (and) vegetation are?	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - minimal IV - minimal

#### Standards and Guidelines

Continue monitoring the condition of larger areas, such as large meadows where stock are grazed, through range condition and trend analysis as undertaken for cattle allotments.

<b>Campsite Condition Indicator</b>	Implement the ratings, standards, possible actions and thresholds shown in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.
<b>Stock Holding Area Condition Indicator</b>	Implement the ratings, standards, possible actions and thresholds shown in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.  When a particular category of stock user (commercial, private, alternative stock) can be distinguished as the primary cause of the problem at a given destination, then tailor actions to that particular category when possible.

### 3. Campfire Wood and Campfires

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#### General Direction

<b>Opportunity Class Objectives</b>	The imprint of human influences is...	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - substantially unnoticeable IV - substantially unnoticeable
	Human influences on soils vegetation and woody debris accumulation are...	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - minimal IV - minimal

#### Standards and Guidelines

A campfire is defined as any controlled fire set by humans in association with camping activities for various purposes such as cooking, burning garbage, warmth, aesthetics, or social activities. Firewood is considered any down woody debris between one inch in diameter and 4 inches in diameter.

Continue campfire restrictions above the 9,000 foot contour. Allow site-specific variations based on monitoring firewood availability indicators and standards.

<b>Firewood Availability Indicator</b>	Implement the ratings, standards, possible actions and thresholds shown in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.
	Do not consider areas with less than sparse stand densities for campfire wood gathering.

### 4. Stream Condition

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#### General Direction

<b>Opportunity Class Objectives</b>	Human influences on aquatic life, hydrologic processes, soils (and) vegetation are?	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - minimal IV - minimal
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#### Standards and Guidelines

Evaluate stream condition in the Emigrant Wilderness by the degree to which human uses disturb the natural pattern, profile and dimension of stream channels.

Measure stream condition in stream reaches sensitive to disturbance using the USDA Forest Service Pacific Southwest Region Stream Condition Inventory (SCI) protocols (or future similar protocols).

<b>Stream Condition Indicator</b>	Implement the standards, possible actions and thresholds shown in the Monitoring and Evaluation section.
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## 5. Water Developments

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### General Direction

<b>Opportunity Class Objectives</b>	Ecosystems are unaffected by human manipulation and influences so that plants and animals develop and respond to natural forces.	I - no noticeable effects from human uses II - localized human uses may have limited effects in very few areas. III - localized human uses may have limited effects in few areas. IV - localized human uses may have limited effects in some areas.
	Human influences on aquatic life and hydrologic processes are...	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - minimal IV - minimal
	The imprint of human influences is...	I - unnoticeable II - unnoticeable in most areas III - substantially unnoticeable IV - substantially unnoticeable
	Facilities Structures and Signing may be utilized for...	I - resource protection when other less obtrusive measures have been exhausted. II - resource protection, administration or Wilderness purposes. III - same IV - same

### Standards and Guidelines

Base decisions for management of water developments on applicable law, policy and Opportunity Class objectives for ecosystems, aquatic environment, imprint of human uses and facilities, structures and signs.

Dams that will not be maintained should be allowed to deteriorate naturally (no maintenance) consistent with FSM direction, rather than removed. If a safety concern warrants removal, conduct the appropriate level of analysis to determine removal method.

## 9. Facilities, Structures and Signs

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### General Direction

#### *Opportunity Class*

#### *Objectives*

General	The imprint of human influences is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I - unnoticeable</li> <li>II - unnoticeable in most areas</li> <li>III - substantially unnoticeable</li> <li>IV - substantially unnoticeable</li> </ul>
	Facilities Structures and Signing may be utilized for...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I - resource protection when other less obtrusive measures have been exhausted.</li> <li>II - resource protection, administration or Wilderness purposes.</li> <li>III - same</li> <li>IV - same</li> </ul>
Trails, trail structures and signs	The opportunity to utilize a high degree of skill and self reliance, while experiencing risk and challenge is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I - outstanding</li> <li>II - high to outstanding</li> <li>III - moderate to outstanding</li> <li>IV - low to outstanding</li> </ul>
	Trails...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I - are rare to non-existent, consisting of historic ways.</li> <li>II - are few, consisting of non-system historic ways, and secondary system trails.</li> <li>III - may be common, consisting of non-system historic ways, secondary and primary system trails.</li> <li>IV - same</li> </ul>

Remove existing structures not determined essential to the administration, protection or management of wilderness for wilderness purposes or not provided for in the establishing legislation. (FSM 2320.3(4)).

Maintain structures determined essential for administration, resource protection, special uses or wilderness purposes. Wilderness purposes include recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use (sec. 4(b)). Maintenance activities will be in conformance with all applicable laws, policies and direction.

### Standards and Guidelines

The Forest Supervisor may approve stabilization or restoration and subsequent maintenance of National Register eligible sites, buildings and structures in Wilderness if their continued existence is determine essential for administration, protection, special uses or wilderness purposes. All structures determined eligible and deemed necessary will be managed pursuant to 36 CFR Part 800, regulation implementing Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act and the Secretary of the Interior's Standards and Guidelines for Treatment of Historic Properties. The authority to approve maintenance of Historic structures was delegated to from the Regional Forester to the Stanislaus National Forest Supervisor for the Emigrant Wilderness. (2323 - Regional Forester Letter of Delegation, February 27, 1998)

**Trails**

Abolish the trail designation of "un-maintained - Stock use not advised". Manage trails currently in this category as historic ways (removed from the map), or primary or secondary system trails. Historic Ways are traditional cross-country routes that sometimes develop into a developed path. These are not part of the trail system and receive no regular maintenance. Primary system trails are the main arteries into the Wilderness and may receive relatively heavy use. Secondary system trails are often destination trails, or connecting corridors and may receive less traffic than primary system trails.

When the objective for maintenance on a trail is determined, maintain trails to be established and FSH (2309.18) standards. Consider trail re-routes for resource protection needs only, including dispersal of use.

Maintain all existing primary and secondary system trails in current designation. In addition, maintain the following trails as:

**Historic Ways**

- Studhorse Meadow
- Grouse Creek Lake
- Between Cow Meadow Lake and Lord Meadow.
- Blue Canyon
- Waterhouse
- Snow Lake to Bigelow Lake
- Deer Lake to Long Lake
- Golden Stairs to Rosasco and Pingree Lake

**Secondary Trail**

Bell Meadow Trail to Big Lake

**Trail Signs**

Place directional signs only at major trail intersections.

**Trail Structures and Bridges**

Maintain trail structures and bridges for resource protection. Resource protection needs apply to the stream channel and immediate area of the crossing, as well as, areas affected by the crossing.

**Fencing**

When maintaining or building fencing, place it in the least visible location possible, using the most unobtrusive methods and materials.