

**VENTANA
SILVER PEAK
SANTA LUCIA
MACHESNA MOUNTAIN
GARCIA
SAN RAFAEL
DICK SMITH
MATILIJA
CHUMASH
SESPE
WILDERNESS EDUCATION PLAN**

Los Padres National Forest
2012

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BACKGROUND

Los Padres National Forest contains 875,000 acres of congressionally designated Wilderness, representing 48% of the land managed by the Forest.

Ventana Wilderness

The Ventana Wilderness was established in 1969 and expanded in 1978 by the Endangered American Wilderness Act, with additional lands designated in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act and in 2002 by the Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act. It now contains a total of 240,026 acres. 736 of these acres are managed by BLM. First established as a Primitive area in 1931 the Ventana straddles the Santa Lucia Mountains south of the Monterey Peninsula. The wilderness gained its name from a legend that the unique notch at the summit of Ventana Double Cone (4,853 feet) was once connected by a rock bridge forming a window, or ventana in Spanish.

The topography of the Ventana Wilderness is characterized by steep-sided, sharp-crested ridges separating V-shaped valleys. Most streams fall rapidly through narrow, nearly vertical-walled canyons flowing on bedrock or a veneer of boulders. Waterfalls and cold, deep pools are found along major streams. Elevations range from 600 feet, where the Big Sur River leaves the Wilderness, to about 5,862 feet at the summit of Junipero Serra Peak. Marked vegetation changes occur within the Wilderness attributed to dramatic climate and topographic variations coupled with an extensive fire history. The great diversity of vegetation is dominated by chaparral, which is typical of that found throughout Southern California's fire susceptible mountains. The contrast of annual grass meadows and oak woodlands or open pine stands may be found throughout the Wilderness. Deep narrow canyons cut by the fast moving Big and Little Sur Rivers support virgin stands of coastal redwood. Small scattered stands of the endemic Bristlecone or Santa Lucia Fir may be found on rocky slopes. Mountain lions, the largest cat in North America are found in the Santa Lucia Mountains. California condors can often be spotted soaring along the steep cliffs and bald eagles and peregrine falcons are known to frequent the area.

The area contains an extensive trail network, but dense vegetation, heavy winter storms, and frequent fire activity means that not all trails are passable at all times. The Pine Ridge Trail (24 miles) in the middle of the northern section is one of the most popular. Trails from Little Sur River in the north and Kirk Creek in the south also attract many hikers and backpackers.

Silver Peak Wilderness

This wilderness was established in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act and the Big Sur Wilderness and Conservation Act of 2002 added 17,055 acres to the existing wilderness. It now contains a total of 31,555 acres.

Encompassing the drainages of Willow Creek and Salmon Creek, Silver Peak Wilderness rises sharply from near the shore of the Pacific Ocean in an area of steep terrain that is part of the Santa Lucia Mountains. Silver Peak rises to 3,590 feet in the northwestern section. Lush vegetation along the creeks, fern-covered canyons, grass and oak-dotted meadows, and small areas of heavy timber are some of the area's features. The Wilderness hides an isolated stand of the world's southernmost redwoods. Also hidden here are groves of rare Sargent cypress, gray pines, and Santa Lucia fir.

Trails are moderate to strenuous in difficulty. One of the more popular trails follows Salmon Creek to the 100 foot plus Salmon Creek Falls. Access to parts of the backcountry is from trailheads along Highway 1 and dirt roads with access subject to weather conditions.

Santa Lucia Wilderness

The 20,486 acre Santa Lucia Wilderness was designated by the United States Congress in 1978 as part of the Endangered American Wilderness Act. The Forest Service manages 18,679 acres with the remaining 1,733 acres managed by the BLM.

Elevations range from about 800 feet in Lopez Canyon to about 3,000 feet near Hi Mountain Lookout at the eastern end. A stream flows yearlong through Lopez Canyon into Lopez Lake, lush streamside vegetation, and chaparral-covered slopes and peaks that rise above the canyon are the prime physical attributes of the Santa Lucia Wilderness.

This wilderness is located inland from the coastal cities of Arroyo Grande and San Luis Obispo. From the ridge top there are vistas of Morro Rock and the Seven Sisters. These scenic images are part of the Santa Lucia Wilderness experience. This wilderness offers short day hike trails that include waterfalls and shaded hiking opportunities just ten minutes from San Luis Obispo.

Machesna Mountain Wilderness

The United States Congress designated the Machesna Mountain Wilderness in 1984 and it has a total of 19,882 acres, 122 of which are managed by the BLM.

Only 25 miles from the city of San Luis Obispo, from a low point of about 1,600 feet, the Wilderness climbs to the 4,063-foot summit of Machesna Mountain in the southwest section. Here in the La Panza mountain range, three-fourths of the area is chaparral brushland, roughly another 10 percent is pine-crowned peaks and majestic rocky crags, and the rest consists of an oak-dotted grassland. A 1,500-acre Research Natural Area that has been set aside for the study of a unique strain of coulter pine. American Canyon is the region's major drainage. You may see deer, prairie falcon, tule elk, an occasional California condor, mountain lions, or black bears, within the Machesna Mountain Wilderness.

Human use is light on the two trails: the American Canyon and the Machesna Mountain, both approximately eight miles long.

Garcia Wilderness

The 14,100 acre Garcia Wilderness was established in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act.

The Garcia Wilderness preserves the long east-west ridge of Garcia Mountain and separates Santa Lucia and Machesna Mountain Wildernesses. The terrain ranges from chaparral covered mountains to grasslands and abundant creekside vegetation. A remarkable diversity of plant and animal life populates the area as well as a variety of lush wildflowers in springtime.

There are several trails leading into the area. Two hiking trails cut through the wilderness and there are two designated camps. Fires are permitted in established fire rings at Balm of Gilead and Buckeye camps only.

San Rafael Wilderness

In 1968 the San Rafael became the first primitive area in the Nation reclassified as wilderness under the Wilderness Act of 1964. Additional acreage was added in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act and it now contains 197,380 acres.

The San Rafael Wilderness is located in the San Rafael and Sierra Madre Mountain Ranges in southeastern Santa Barbara County. Elevations range from 1,166 feet near the confluence of Manzanita Creek and the Sisquoc River in the west to over 6,800 feet on Big Pine Mountain near the eastern boundary and Dick Smith Wilderness.

Too rocky and shallow to entice river runners, except perhaps in spring high water, all but two of the Sisquoc's 33 Wild and Scenic miles are within the Wilderness, tumbling through pools and oak-shaded grasslands, over waterfalls and past archaeological sites. The region known as Hurricane Deck stretches for 22 miles of steep escarpments, grassy potreros, dry plateaus, and wind-carved sandstone formations.

The Wilderness contains the Sisquoc Condor Sanctuary, and black bears and mountain lions also live here with numerous smaller animals. Most trails follow the creeks and rivers. In the water are steelhead, western pond turtles, and aquatic garter snakes, to name a few. Arroyo toads and red legged frogs are but some of the threatened and endangered species found here. Bordering the water you may find the western toad or hear the call of the Pacific and California tree frogs. From April through June you can hear the many songbirds that nest in riparian zones, such as the yellow warbler, house wren, orange-crowned warbler, and plain titmouse. Further from the creek, up in the brush, you will hear the scrub jay, California quail, and mountain quail.

Other points of interest include the Manzanita Schoolhouse and the standing ruins of homesteads along the Sisquoc River. These sites are all that remain of a vigorous farming community that settled the flats along the river around the turn-of-the-past century. The South Fork Cabin is a historic Forest Service line shack that sheltered generations of backcountry rangers. The Dabney Cabin, nestled on a small terrace above Manzanita Creek, was built in 1914 as a retreat for the family of Charles Dabney.

San Rafael Wilderness has over 125 relatively rugged miles of trails that receive moderate human use. A path follows the Sisquoc River east-west for about 26 miles, and camps abound. Large portions of the Wilderness can be closed during fire season (July through mid-November) because of extreme fire danger.

Dick Smith Wilderness

The 64,700 acre Dick Smith Wilderness was established in 1984 by the California Wilderness Act. Dick Smith--writer, artist, photographer--was deeply devoted to preservation of the wild and was called by some the "conscience of Santa Barbara." The Wilderness that bears his name is an area of extremely rugged terrain with elevations varying from 3,750 feet along the Cuyama Rim to over 6,500 feet atop Madulce Peak and near Big Pine Mountain. Chaparral dominates the vegetation, but a splendid collection of mixed conifers grows around Madulce Peak. To the east lies the more-open Rancho Nuevo region, with massive sandstone formations and stands of Douglas fir and Great Basin sagebrush. In the higher country, several creeks flow year-round in Indian, Mono, Alamar, Don Victor, Santa Barbara, and other canyons.

Only a slim road corridor separates Dick Smith from San Rafael Wilderness to the west. There are eight main trails and several side trails totaling about 49 miles; human use is light. Chumash Indians, Spanish soldiers, and early settlers used to cross this area via the Alamar and Puerta Suela Trails.

Matilija Wilderness

The United States Congress designated the 29,600 acre Matilija Wilderness in 1992 as part of the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act. Steep and brushy, overgrown with alder and maple in the canyons with a few stands of conifers in the higher country, the Matilija Wilderness includes the scenic canyons of Matilija Creek, as well as its Upper North Fork. Sixteen miles of the creek have been nominated for Wild and Scenic designation. The creek flows year-round and drains southward, and the elevation climbs steadily and steeply as you hike north. Matilija poppies are prevalent in the springtime, growing in clumps up to eight feet high. Black bears, deer, coyotes, bobcats, mountain lions, rattlesnakes, hawks, eagles, and California condors inhabit the area.

There is one hiking trail with four camps along it. Fishing in Matilija creek is possible at certain times of the year.

Chumash Wildernesses

The 38,150 acre Chumash Wilderness was established in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act. The terrain of Chumash Wilderness drops toward the southwest from Mt Pinos, the highest peak on the Los Padres NF at 8831 feet. Mt. Pinos was an integral part of Chumash life and is still extremely important to the local Chumash residents. Conifers populate the higher elevations of the Wilderness and lead down to fire prone chaparral which dominates the lower elevations of the southern California mountain ranges. Barren, knifelike ridges stand between steep-walled drainages, representing some of the highest and most rugged terrain in all of southern California. Snow in the winter provides opportunities for winter recreation.

Sespe Wilderness

The 219,700 acre Sespe Wilderness was established in 1992 by the Los Padres Condor Range and River Protection Act. The 53,000-acre Sespe Condor Sanctuary is contained within the Wilderness. This area, closed to the public, was established to promote the propagation and growth of the California condor. The landscape is predominantly chaparral covered with jagged rock cliffs. Sespe Creek, the last remaining undammed river in Southern California, runs for 31.5 Wild and Scenic miles (most of it in the Wilderness), and 10.5 miles of Upper Sespe Creek are under consideration for designation. Sandstone cliffs rise as much as 500 feet above the water in places, and fabulous sandstone formations stand in portions of the area. There are petroglyphs and other evidence of Native Americans. Black bears, deer, mountain lions, bobcats, coyotes, rattlesnakes, red-tailed hawks, and golden eagles inhabit the wilderness.

The area is a part of the fourth largest roadless region left in the Lower 48, and it is the one closest to a large metropolitan area. Numerous trails provide access, and human use is heavy. The Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca National Recreation Trail leads 8.7 miles through impressive white rocks to pleasant campsites nestled in conifers, a boon when much of the area lies without shade. Popular destinations include Sespe and Willet Hot Springs.

EDUCATION GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Wilderness education is an important component of wilderness management. A well-educated wilderness visitor will have less impact on the natural and social resources of wilderness as well as positive influence on the behavior of other visitors. Education assists in protecting wilderness values for the future through promoting a wilderness ethic and developing commitment both internally and externally to preserve natural processes in Wilderness. Wilderness education teaches people the value and benefits of wilderness, explains rules and regulations, and helps visitors understand how their actions affect wilderness ecosystems. Wilderness education has the potential to reduce and/or prevent resource damage and, therefore, can be cost effective. Successful educational efforts reduce the need for regulations, closures and law enforcement, allowing visitors more opportunity for "unconfined" recreation within the Wilderness.

The overall purpose of the Los Padres National Forest Wilderness Education Plan is to introduce various audiences to:

1. The values and purposes of the National Wilderness Preservation System
2. The goals of wilderness management and the Wilderness Act
3. Specific methods of protecting Wilderness through:
 - Understanding and complying with wilderness regulations
 - Understanding and adopting light on the land, Leave No Trace techniques
 - Helping visitors to plan ahead and be prepared
4. Create stewards and champions of Wilderness targeting 4 main audiences:
 - Forest Service employees (wilderness and non-wilderness) at *all* levels
 - Wilderness volunteers and partners
 - Wilderness visitors
 - The general public

TARGET AUDIENCES

Programs for Forest Service Employees

Front Desk Staff

Recognizing that front desk staff interact with many wilderness visitors in person and on the telephone, programs will emphasize strengthening their knowledge about the value and meaning of wilderness, wilderness regulations and Leave No Trace (LNT) skills and ethics.

- Organize annual front desk staff training to bring all staff to a sufficient understanding of the wilderness education goals and objectives listed above so that they can effectively interpret them to wilderness visitors and other members of the public.
- Ensure that employees are familiar with online resources that provide information about wilderness such as wilderness.net
- Provide opportunities for front desk staff to strengthen their knowledge by attending LNT awareness workshops and participating in online training courses through Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and Epley Institute for Parks and Public Lands.
- Provide opportunities and encouragement for front desk staff to visit the wilderness and/or wilderness trailheads to familiarize themselves.
- Provide opportunities for wilderness program staff to intermittently interact with front desk staff to share information with other staff members and volunteer partners.

Recreation/Wilderness Staff

As the primary delivery method of educational messages in the field, all wilderness crew members should be well versed in wilderness management priorities, regulations, and LNT practices.

- Provide opportunity to attend annual Wilderness Ranger Academy to improve skills and understanding of wilderness issues.
- Provide opportunity to attend LNT trainer course.
- Provide opportunity for eligible crew members to attend law enforcement training so they can obtain the qualifications to enforce regulations in the Wilderness.
- Provide opportunity for information sharing between recreation staff and volunteer partners.

Other Forest Service Staff

Recognizing that non-wilderness Forest Service staff may perform work in wilderness, interact with the public about wilderness, and make management decisions that impact wilderness values, wilderness education opportunities will be made available to them and their participation encouraged.

- Create opportunities for staff with wilderness responsibilities to give presentations to different departments who work in the wilderness. Such departments include trails, wildlife, botany, fire and archaeology.
- Provide opportunities for non-wilderness staff to strengthen their knowledge by attending LNT awareness workshops and participating in online training courses through Arthur Carhart

National Wilderness Training Center and Epley Institute for Parks and Public Lands.

- Coordinate with Fire program to ensure that training on wilderness management is included in annual training to Fire staff and in cooperator plans that provide mutual aid.

Programs for Wilderness Volunteers and Partners

Partner organizations are currently shouldering the majority of the burden for direct, in the field public contact and education. It is therefore important for the Forest to:

- Provide positive leadership to partner organizations.
- Ensure volunteer knowledge of the educational goals and objectives outlined in that section above.
- Provide opportunities for training to assist key partners in strengthening the knowledge, skills, and commitment of their volunteer members, including attendance of the annual Region 5 Wilderness Ranger Academy.

Ventana Wilderness Alliance (VWA) provides critical volunteer activities in the Monterey Ranger District that include performing trail projects, patrol in the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses, and leading a Youth in Wilderness program with environmental education and restoration trips. The VWA website contains interactive trail conditions reports which can be useful for front desk and recreation staff.

Los Padres Forest Association (LPFA) provides critical volunteer activities in the Southern Los Padres that include operating the Wheeler Gorge Visitor Center, providing seasonal weekend interpretive programs, performing trail projects, and patrol in the Santa Lucia, Garcia, Machesna Mountain, San Rafael, Dick Smith, Matilija and Sespe Wildernesses.

Ranger District personnel are directly involved in supporting and training LPFA and VWA volunteers including an annual volunteer training day, as well as a pack stock training class. Wilderness values should be a primary context for the training, including practical interactive skills workshops on visitor contact and communication, including LNT practices and principles, for all volunteers who will be interacting with the public. The "Authority of the Resource" technique of de-emphasizing regulations and confrontation in favor of discussions that relate to the workings of nature and mutual appreciation of the natural world should be presented (and practiced) as a more effective method of influencing behavior.

Programs for Wilderness Visitors

Los Padres National Forest Website

Investigate ways to improve the Los Padres National Forest website to help visitors plan ahead and prepare so they minimize impacts to the Wilderness. Make sure Recreational Opportunity Guides (ROGs) relevant to wilderness visitors are available online. Include online access to wilderness maps. Ensure that primary issues and key messages outlined in that section below are clearly addressed on the website. Include LNT information or a link to an LNT page. Provide a link to content on wilderness.net. For the Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses, provide a link to trail condition information on the VWA site. Review the website regularly to maintain up-to-date wilderness content.

Trailhead Information

Trailhead information is often the first (and possibly only) source of communication with the wilderness user. Information should be presented in a clear and compelling way through professional quality interpretive content embedded in board design. Trailhead information and presentation should be reviewed, improved, and updated regularly. The quality of trailhead information and presentation currently varies greatly across the Forest. Primary wilderness portals with the lowest quality signage should be given the highest priority for updating.

When campgrounds and trailheads are well maintained, it models appropriate conduct to visitors. Messy campground host areas with multiple trailers and invasive weeds model poor stewardship. Strengthening campground hosts' knowledge about the value and meaning of wilderness, wilderness regulations and LNT skills and ethics will enable them to become partners in educating the visiting public.

Maps

Update "A Guide to the Ventana Wilderness and Silver Peak Wilderness" and "A Guide to the Dick Smith Wilderness" as necessary to ensure that trail information is accurate, educational content clearly addresses primary issues and key messages outlined in this plan, and design is contemporary and compelling. LNT principles and practices should be emphasized. Maps should address the changeable nature of trail conditions. Ensure that these maps are available at district offices and visitor centers.

Regularly review commercially produced maps such as *San Rafael Wilderness Backcountry Guide* and *Matilija & Dick Smith Wilderness Backcountry Guide* published by Bryan Conant, and the *Sespe Wilderness Trail Map* published by Tom Harrison Maps to ensure that trail information is accurate and up to date. Contact publishers to recommend edits where needed because of changes in trail conditions or locations. Encourage publishers to include LNT principles and practices as well as other wilderness education messages related to primary issues and key messages outlined in this plan.

Regularly review and update forest recreation maps to ensure that wilderness information is current and includes LNT and other wilderness education messages including information about the risks involved in wilderness travel.

Brochures

Develop Recreation Opportunity Guides (ROGs), that are available at district offices and visitor centers with relevant wilderness content presented in a compelling way. ROGs should be available in Spanish.

Wilderness Exhibit

Develop a traveling exhibit on wilderness that could be used at fairs, trade shows, libraries, schools, etc. Exhibit could highlight local key issues and concerns. Whenever possible, collaborate with volunteer partners to design and execute educational exhibits and events to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act (September 2014.)

LNT Reference Cards

LNT reference cards could be distributed to Forest Service employees working in the wilderness (particularly trail and fire crews), to wilderness visitors through the front desk and contacts in the field, and through outreach to volunteer groups -- as funding availability allows. LNT reference cards

should also be provided in Spanish.

Wilderness Ranger Contacts

Wilderness ranger presence in the field is an essential delivery system for a successful wilderness education program. Seeing Forest Service personnel working in the field sends a clear message to the visiting public that the wilderness is being cared for. Managing agencies must model the land stewardship values and desired behaviors that they are trying to cultivate in the visiting public. Educational messages that involve direct human contact using the power of the landscape itself can leave an enduring impression. Although this is not the preferred first method of education, regulation enforcement is an educational tool that should be available. Retention of trained wilderness personnel with knowledge and experience of the area should be a priority.

Programs for the General Public

Interpretive Programs

Work with interpretive staff and partner organizations to develop and deliver content related to LPNF Wilderness.

Local School Programs

Santa Lucia Ranger District provides presentations to local schools about wildlife and opportunities for open space recreation including wilderness messages. Other managers could utilize similar program opportunities to provide wilderness education messages to the public as well as existing Smokey program (fire prevention) and LNT efforts.

Public Events

Work with partners to develop displays and presentations about appreciation of wilderness, stewardship and ethics, and LNT practices for local County Fairs and other events.

PRIMARY WILDERNESS EDUCATION ISSUES

Forest Service Personnel have Nominal Understanding of Wilderness Values

Local Forest Service personnel have only a general understanding of wilderness values and LNT principles and practices. This results in missed opportunities to educate the public about wilderness values as well as a lower of consideration of wilderness values in forest management decisions (for example: unnecessary impacts to wilderness resources resulting from fire suppression decisions and techniques that do not differentiate management of wilderness from other forest lands).

Fire is a part of the ecosystem and the flora and fauna indigenous to the wilderness of the Los Padres developed with and are dependent on fire. While difficult to quantify just what that natural range of fire may have been – many scientists think the stalwart approach to fire suppression has altered the vegetation composition of the Forests – including the chaparral ecosystems of the Los Padres. As a result we tend to have a higher amount of acres of chaparral that grow to mature and over mature – resulting in larger and more intense wildfires. No longer do low intensity fires keep portions of the wilderness rejuvenated. Excessive chaparral build-up in the wilderness has contributed to loss of hundred plus year old pine stands in the Sespe Wilderness (Day Fire) and the San Rafael Wilderness (Zaca Fire) and the Ventana Wilderness (Basin Fire). Greatly diminished are the wilderness potreros and rapidly expanding are invasive weeds.

Educational Goals:

- Offer opportunities for all Forest employees to gain a better understanding of wilderness values, management, and regulations.
- Help Forest employees understand how to incorporate LNT principles and practices during management activities including fire suppression, trail maintenance, and signing.
- Strengthen line officers' understanding of wilderness legislation and issues so that these are fully considered when making management decisions.
- Provide opportunities for non-wilderness staff to strengthen their knowledge by attending LNT awareness workshops and participating in online training courses through Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands.
- Help Forest employees understand that fire is considered to be part of the ecological processes that create the natural conditions that have statutory protection in wilderness and to protect wilderness values when fire suppression within or near wilderness boundaries is necessary. Review portions of the Resource Advisor Training that deals with fire suppression in wilderness.
- Help Forest leadership understand the necessity of a fully functioning wilderness program to meet minimum land stewardship objectives.
- Provide opportunities for fire personnel to gain skills in the use of traditional tools.
- Ensure that forest staff knows how to complete a Minimum Requirement Decision Guide when deciding on what tools need to be used in the wilderness.
- District Ranger ensures that fire staff and fire cooperators are aware of restrictions when using mechanical equipment in the wilderness. Include direction in annual operating plans with cooperators.

Public Lack of Understanding of Wilderness Values

There is generally poor awareness of wilderness values and ethics by the visiting public. All contact with visitors, whether directly or through written delivery methods, should inspire both a personal connection to land stewardship and specific methods of caring for and protecting wilderness through LNT practices.

Educational Goals:

- Help wilderness visitors learn about the values of Wilderness.
- Encourage wilderness visitors to become wilderness stewards to help protect wilderness values.
- Emphasize outreach to youth as advocates and stewards of wilderness.
- Encourage appreciation of wilderness values by all Forest Service personnel so they can inspire and influence visitors.

Poor Visitor Practices / LNT Skills

Because many visitors are not aware of the values that wilderness designation protects, they often give little consideration to the ethics involved in visiting such places. Visitors are focused on their own personal enjoyment of the outdoors without understanding how their recreation may have negative impacts on the places they visit. Vegetation loss, tree damage, litter, cutting switchbacks, and improper human waste disposal are some symptoms of how ignorance of wilderness values leads to degradation of natural resources. Education on LNT skills and ethics may help prevent these impacts.

Educational Goals:

- Help wilderness visitors understand how to camp in the wilderness using methods that minimally impact resources.
- Help wilderness visitors become knowledgeable of LNT principles and practices.

Day Use Crowding at Wilderness Boundaries

Visitors not seeking a wilderness experience congregate at major portals to wilderness creating overcrowding on the most accessible sections of trails and waterways. The impacts to the environmental resources can be similar to heavily visited day use recreational areas. Opportunities for solitude are diminished. Many visitors are not prepared for the challenges within wilderness even close to its edges.

Educational Goals:

- Help wilderness visitors learn about the values of Wilderness.
- Help visitors protect the resources of Wilderness
- Direct visitors whose recreational needs do not require being in Wilderness to appropriate non-Wilderness alternatives.

- Develop protocol and timeline to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of educational efforts on physical resource and visitor experience of solitude for identified high use trails (ex. Pine Ridge Trail in the Ventana Wilderness) to determine whether more intensive management solutions such as a visitor permit system are required.
- Suggest alternatives to highly-impacted day use areas.

Wildland Fire Risks

The risk of wildfire is the biggest threat to wilderness safety on the Forest. Fire suppression and the resultant change in vegetation, may be the greatest threat to wilderness on the Los Padres. We suppress fires for good reason - - but suppressing every single fire and containing it to the smallest possible footprint isn't for the benefit of the ecosystem. As a society, and as an agency, we have a difficult time differentiating wanted fire from unwanted fire in backcountry so close to large urban populations. Yet from an educational standpoint, we shouldn't step back from the discussion that in wilderness (where ecosystems are supposed to function as close to natural as possible) that it is our active fire suppression that stands as a bigger threat to wilderness than fire itself.

During fire season campfires are often not allowed. Many visitors disregard fire restrictions, thinking they are outside the restricted area or incorrectly assuming that they can control their fires. Also, many wilderness areas in the State are exempt from campfire restrictions, confusing users. This presents a serious threat to all visitors, the resource of wilderness, the remainder of forest land, and outlying communities.

Educational Goals:

- Help visitors protect the resources of Wilderness through proper fire practices.
- Teach visitors how to safely dispose of ashes from campfires.
- Emphasize fire safety in a compelling way that leads to a greater understanding of risks and adoption of appropriate behaviors.
- Train rangers and volunteers on seasonal placement (and retrieval) of "no campfire" signage in backcountry camp fire rings.

Management Actions that Contradict National Education Efforts

Man-made, unnatural structures such as fire grills and pit toilets have been installed by the Forest Service at camps within Wilderness as solutions to issues associated with campfires and human waste. Campsites designated on Forest Service maps and containing Forest Service installed infrastructure are sometimes closer to water than universally promoted LNT practices.

The contradiction between management actions and national educational efforts creates confusion for the visiting public about appropriate behavior in Wilderness. This confusion is transported to other wilderness settings and causes destructive practices like camping too close to water, poor sanitation, and proliferation of fire rings and other structures. This confusion diminishes the positive influence of large scale educational efforts and wastes the resources of other Forests and agency programs.

Educational Goals:

- Help forest leadership understand that man-made, unnatural features are not normally appropriate in Wilderness.
- Where such installations are the only effective solution to resource impacts or campsites are designated closer to water than LNT recommendations, provide explanation to the public about why these exceptions to universally accepted practices are necessary to protect natural resources in specific locations.

Trail Conditions

Fast-growing vegetation, frequent wildfires, and insufficient funding have caused trails to become overgrown, difficult to find, or impassable. This can lead to safety issues for visitors as they assume that trails indicated on a map are clearly defined and well maintained. Impacts occur as visitors deviate from trail tread or become lost. Some trails have no water available and human deaths have occurred due to heat exhaustion. Frustration about trail conditions reduces appreciation of wilderness, depreciates perceived value of wilderness, and diminishes public opinion of the Forest Service.

Educational Goals:

- Help wilderness visitors understand that there are reasons behind minimal trails signs and directions in wilderness.
- Help wilderness visitors understand that not all trails are maintained and passable at all times. This should be clearly indicated on all Forest produced maps.
- Develop a better system of collecting and distributing trail and road access condition information so that it is accessible and easily obtainable
- Provide specific information to wilderness visitors through all outlets about trail conditions and dangers.
- Encourage hikers to be prepared and leave an itinerary.

Motorized and Mechanized Vehicle Trespass

Trespass of motor vehicles and bicycles into wilderness can have a significant impact on both visitor experience and physical and biological resources. OHV and mountain bike travelers may not understand or appreciate the differing protection for Wilderness. OHV recreation options are limited on Los Padres National Forest and trespass may occur as OHV recreationists seek new routes.

Educational Goals:

- Provide clear and useful information about location of wilderness boundaries.
- Inform OHV recreationists about appropriate non-wilderness routes available for their use and enjoyment and provide motor vehicle travel maps.
- Strengthen public understanding of wilderness values and impacts of OHV encroachment.
- Identify areas where there is a persistent problem so that site specific solutions can be formulated.

Graffiti

Vandalism, graffiti, and defacing of trees and rocks is a problem in easily accessed areas close to urban populations. The presence of graffiti diminishes the perceived value of wilderness and reduces opportunities to experience wilderness that is natural. Unlike trash, graffiti is not easily removable and its impact is long lasting.

Educational Goals:

- Encourage appreciation of wilderness values.
- Emphasize outreach to youth as advocates and stewards of wilderness.

Heritage Sites

Native American sites as well as artifacts of early settlers sites can be found throughout Los Padres National Forest, including petroglyphs in several of the Wildernesses. Sites are fragile and should not be disturbed. Sites are protected by law. Coordinate efforts with the Heritage Program lead to include LNT messages in the training of site stewards.

Educational Goals:

- Protect archaeological sites
- Steer public to known trails without promoting use of areas with known archaeological concerns.

Marijuana Gardens

In addition to creating extensive resource impacts, marijuana plantations are protected by squatters who are potentially dangerous. Firearms and other hazardous weapons are devices used in protecting the gardens. If the public comes across a site there is high potential for injury.

Educational Goals:

- Inform public about the dangers of marijuana plantations and what to do if they encounter one.
- Inform staff about mitigation of toxic or dangerous marijuana plantation remnants.

Safety

Wilderness visitors may not understand the dangers inherent in wilderness travel. The dangers can include extreme climate, lack of water, remoteness, and unavailability of help or rescue. Unprepared visitors that do not possess an understanding of the environment and appropriate skills not only pose greater risk to themselves, but can cause impacts to natural resources due to poor decisions. Rescue efforts further diminish wilderness character and cause greater impact to natural resources.

Educational Goals:

- Appreciation of wildness of wilderness.
- Greater understanding of need to plan ahead and prepare.
- Warning to carry sufficient water.
- Greater understanding of ephemeral nature of trail and camp conditions.

TARGET AUDIENCES, KEY MESSAGES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS

ISSUE	TARGET AUDIENCES	KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY METHODS
Forest Service Personnel Lack of Understanding of Wilderness Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Service employees (wilderness and non-wilderness) at <i>all</i> levels 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciation of Wilderness Wilderness ethics and stewardship LNT principles and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness 101 1-day training for trail crew, fire personnel, line officers, and leadership team Online training programs through Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center and Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands. Encourage Forest Service personnel to visit and spend time in Wilderness. Provide LNT cards to Forest Service employees in English and Spanish Wilderness DVDs Internal website Develop unified messages for wilderness education programs
Public Lack of Understanding of Wilderness Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest and wilderness visitors K-12 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How wilderness is special Appreciation of Wilderness Wilderness ethics and stewardship LNT principles and practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Maps ROGs Front desk visitor contacts Trailhead information Wilderness ranger contacts Presence at local events and fairs

TARGET AUDIENCES, KEY MESSAGES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS Continued

ISSUE	TARGET AUDIENCES	KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY METHODS
Poor LNT practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All wilderness visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness ethics and stewardship LNT principles and practices How to dispose of human waste in wilderness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Maps ROGs Front desk visitor contacts Trailhead information Provide LNT cards to visitors in English and Spanish Wilderness ranger contacts
Day Use Crowding at Wilderness Boundaries	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Forest Visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How wilderness is special Appreciation of Wilderness Wilderness ethics and stewardship LNT principles and practices Identify more appropriate alternate recreational locations for day users whose activities are not dependent on Wilderness setting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Maps ROGs Front desk visitor contacts Trailhead information Wilderness ranger contacts
Wildland Fire Risks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Forest Visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wilderness ethics and stewardship LNT principles and practices Wildfire risks are real Respect fire restrictions Metal fire rings are provided in designated sites to reduce fire danger How to dispose of cold ashes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Website Maps ROGs Front desk visitor contacts Trailhead information Wilderness ranger contacts

TARGET AUDIENCES, KEY MESSAGES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS Continued

ISSUE	TARGET AUDIENCES	KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY METHODS
Forest Management Contradicts National Educational Efforts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All wilderness visitors • Forest Service Managers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness ethics and stewardship • LNT principles and practices • Installing man-made, unnatural features is not appropriate in Wilderness • Why such installations are chosen solution in specific situations: metal fire rings at designated sites to reduce fire risks and toilets to reduce resource impacts from subsequent concentrated use at designated sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Maps • ROGs • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead information (particularly at THs that provide access to where this is occurring) • Wilderness ranger contacts
Trail Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All wilderness visitors • Non-FS map publishers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness ethics and stewardship • LNT principles and practices • All trails are not fully maintained at all times • Up-to-date, specific information about trail conditions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website (link to VWA trail information for Ventana and Silver Peak) • Maps • ROGs • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead information • Wilderness ranger contacts
Motorized Vehicle Trespass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest visitors • OHV recreationists • Forest Service employees 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness ethics and stewardship • Adhere to legal routes as shown on motor vehicle use maps to avoid wilderness trespass • Tread lightly • Plenty of adventure can be had on approved routes • You can be cited 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • ROGs • Front desk visitor contacts • Outreach to OHV groups and through their media (websites and newsletters) • Visitor centers: MVUM maps & CA trail user coalition maps • OHV patrols • Vehicle barriers and signage

TARGET AUDIENCES, KEY MESSAGES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS Continued

ISSUE	TARGET AUDIENCES	KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY METHODS
Graffiti	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forest and wilderness visitors • K-12 students 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilderness ethics and stewardship • Appreciation of Wilderness • Don't carve/paint trees or rocks 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Maps • ROGs • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead information • Wilderness ranger contacts • Outreach to local school and youth groups
Heritage Sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Front desk managers & staff • Hikers • Consult with Heritage staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LNT principles and practices • Historic value of sites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Maps • ROGs • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead signs • Wilderness ranger contacts
Marijuana Gardens	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marijuana plantations are protected by squatters who are potentially dangerous • If you encounter marijuana plants, black piping, fertilizer, or people and things that look out of place, exit the area immediately and return to a safe place. • Report what you saw to a Ranger Station as soon as possible. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Newsletters • Local newspaper articles • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead signs

TARGET AUDIENCES, KEY MESSAGES AND DELIVERY SYSTEMS Continued

ISSUE	TARGET AUDIENCES	KEY MESSAGES	DELIVERY METHODS
Safety	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hikers • Equestrians 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared for emergencies • Hazards exist • Let someone know where you are going and when you will return • Bring sufficient water • Condition yourself appropriately for your trip 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Website • Newsletters • Local newspaper articles • Front desk visitor contacts • Trailhead signs • Wilderness ranger contacts

WILDERNESS SPECIFIC ISSUES

Ventana and Silver Peak Wildernesses

Pine Ridge Trail

The Big Sur River is also protected by Wild and Scenic River designation. The Pine Ridge trail to Sykes Camp receives the majority of use in the area as well as a corresponding amount of impact. Visitors staying beyond the standard 14 day stay limit have been a persistent problem for many years. Permanent or semi-permanent residency is not compatible with wilderness designation and creates lasting resource impacts. Social impacts range from lack of solitude to criminal activity including theft of personal property. Trailhead information for this popular trailhead in particular needs improvement so that it is presented in a clear and compelling way (through professional quality interpretive content embedded in board design). Consistent patrol of the area would demonstrate that the agency has an interest in caring for the land and serving the public. Though not the preferred first method of education, regulation and enforcement is an educational tool that can be effective.

Multi-Agency Facility Visitor Center

Because the majority of visitors access the region from the west (rather than the east where the district office is located), the Big Sur Multi-Agency Facility represents an important opportunity to provide quality information and education to the visiting public. Staff should have a clear understanding of the value and meaning of wilderness, wilderness regulations and LNT skills and ethics (through programs described for front desk staff on page 7). Up-to-date information about trail conditions should be available. All current Forest Service maps should be available for sale.

Sudden Oak Death

Provide interpretive information about Sudden Oak Death as well as specific practices for visitors to follow to help prevent its spread through all available delivery systems.

Santa Lucia Wilderness

Mountain Bike Use

The location of the Santa Lucia Wilderness close to urban areas provides a trail that is attractive as a bike run even though the use is prohibited in wilderness. Continued education efforts should include signing at trailheads and outreach to local bike clubs about the value of wilderness and prohibited activities.

Overuse of Big Falls Trail

Being close to urban areas, the easily accessed camp within the wilderness is often overused as a party spot diminishing the opportunities for solitude and a true wilderness experience. It also has an above normal level of trash left near the swimming holes. Further education efforts and increased patrol to explain the values and resources of wilderness could help increase public awareness of the resources.

Fire Prevention

The Santa Lucia Wilderness has multiple homes located adjacent to the boundary. Fire in this area would quickly spread to all of these homes. A strong fire behavior and wilderness ethic message could be included in public and visitor contacts.

Sespe Wilderness

Santa Paula Canyon - graffiti, trash and gang related activity

The graffiti, trash and gang related activity has grown significantly in the last ten years. The Forest Service, Santadores, Boy Scouts and youth groups do their best to remove the trash and graffiti. Signage is almost immediately tagged or destroyed by visitors. Of the thirty-five signs that have been installed by the Forest Service along the route to the Punchbowls, only two remain. More frequent patrols, presence of Forest Service and Ventura County Law Enforcement and education in local schools would aid in preserving this wilderness area.

Sespe River, Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca and Red Reef Trails - mountain bike trespass

The Sespe River Trail is along a National Wild and Scenic River. The Gene Marshall-Piedra Blanca Trail is a National Recreation Trail. All three trails have an issue with mountain bike trespass. Prior to the designation of the Sespe Wilderness in 1992, vehicles and bikes were one of the primary modes of transportation to the various backcountry camps. All three trails do not start in the wilderness, which makes signing and education more challenging for the Forest Service. Education might begin with bike shops and with user groups about wilderness values.

Johnson Ridge Trail & Little Mutau Trail – OHV trespass

The Mt Pinos District has an extensive system of Off-Highway Vehicle trails that are adjacent to the Sespe Wilderness. Today, motorcycles and ATVs frequently trespass beyond the wilderness boundary. The signing at the trailhead provides the information on wilderness, but more efforts in education and presence of Forest Service personnel is needed.

IMPLEMENTATION WORKSHEET

This plan will be in effect for three years or until a revision is deemed necessary. It is intended to be a living document and it is assumed that annual program progress goals will be worked on each year. These efforts can be listed and developed here to provide reference for future efforts and evaluation.

The focus of this plan for the next three years will be on public information, employee readiness, facilities (web, signs, etc.) and partnership development.

YEAR	ACTION ITEMS
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2013

Front Desk employees: Develop and provide training to all front desk personnel on the key points of safety in wilderness, LNT (resource protection, cutting of trees, human waste, switchback use along trails and cold ash disposal), and wilderness risk factor messages for the public. Educate all front desk personnel on the importance of checking trail condition status before recommending trails to visitors.

Partnerships: Expand volunteer LNT training to include volunteers for all wilderness areas.

Website: Develop trail condition blog for the San Rafael Wilderness.

Signing: Develop, design and implement trailhead signs for the San Rafael and Dick Smith Wildernesses. Focus on LNT messages.

Expand Outreach: To local communities through schools, youth groups etc establish at least 3 new partnerships.

2014

Employees: Provide briefing on wilderness ethics, LNT, and wilderness values. The focus is on recreation and fire groups.

Partners: Provide wilderness tool training as part of volunteer wilderness ranger program.

Website: Expand trail condition blog to 3 wilderness areas.

Signing: Expand trailhead signing to 3 more wilderness areas.

2015

All employees: Refresher on LNT.

Signing: Complete trailhead signs for all wilderness areas. Focus on LNT.

Website: Complete trail condition blog for all wilderness areas.

Partners: Nourish partnerships to expand funding for future signs to interpret heritage, resource features, etc. (ie. Homestead Districts).

REFERENCES

Wilderness Act of 1964

The foundation of wilderness education can be found in the 1964 Wilderness Act. The Act states:

“there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as ‘wilderness areas,’ and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness and so to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character; and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness.”

National Strategy

In 1991, a National Strategic Plan for Wilderness Education was developed. This plan states that the Forest Service is at the forefront of Wilderness management and uses education as a primary management tool. The Wilderness education program exemplifies the Agency’s role as a wise steward of wild lands and will fulfill the Forest Service’s mandate to preserve Wilderness quality. A high quality, fully supported wilderness education program, targeted both within the agency and at our publics, will:

- Foster knowledge and understanding of wilderness values.
- Influence behavioral changes that promote the preservation of wilderness quality.
- Instill and strengthen a wilderness ethic that results in informed decision making.
- Carry wilderness values to those who do not experience wilderness through visitation.
- Create a constituency, which supports Forest Service wilderness management.

Forest Service Manual Direction 2323.12(2) – Policy

1. Maximize visitor freedom within the wilderness. Minimize direct controls and restrictions. Apply controls only when they are essential for protection of the wilderness resource and after indirect measures have failed.
2. Use information, interpretation, and education as the primary tools for management of wilderness visitors.

The Chief’s 10-Year Wilderness Challenge Action Plan

The 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (10YWSC) was developed by the Chief’s Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG) as a quantifiable measurement of the Forest Service’s success in Wilderness stewardship. The goal identified by the Wilderness Advisory Group, and endorsed by the Chief, is to bring every wilderness under Forest Service management to a minimum stewardship level for 10 comprehensive elements by the 50th Anniversary of the Wilderness Act in 2014 -- and to have this make a difference on the ground. One of the 10 elements is the completion and implementation of a wilderness education plan for each designated wilderness area.

SIGNATURES

Prepared by: **Ken Kunert**, Recreation Officer, Landscape Architect/Recreation Planner
Santa Lucia Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Reviewed by: **Bruce Emmens**, Recreation/Lands/Engineering Staff
Los Padres National Forest

Tom Murphey, Assistant Recreation Officer
Monterey Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Patrick Bailey, Wilderness & Stock Program Manager
Monterey Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Kyah LaPorta, Wilderness/Trails Tech & Animal Packer
Santa Barbara Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Charlie Robinson, Recreation Officer
Ojai Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

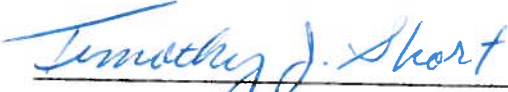
Heidi Anderson, Wilderness/Trails Manager
Ojai Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Loreigh Brannan, Recreation Assistant
Mt Pinos Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Joe Duran, Wilderness/Trails Manager
Santa Lucia Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

SIGNATURES Continued

Recommended by:



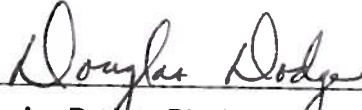
Date: 5-17-2012

Timothy J. Short, District Ranger
Monterey Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest



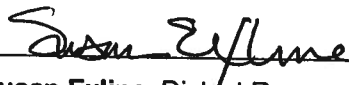
Date: 5/15/2012

Kathleen Phelps, District Ranger
Santa Lucia Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest



Date: 5/16/12

Douglas Dodge, District Ranger
Santa Barbara Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest



Date: 5/15/2012

Susan Exline, District Ranger
Ojai Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest



Date: 5-15-12

Erik Van Walden, District Ranger
Mt Pinos Ranger District, Los Padres National Forest

Approved by:



Date: 8/16/12

Peggy Hernandez, Forest Supervisor
Los Padres National Forest