



National Wilderness Update

Winter/Spring 2016



Interagency Wilderness Character Monitoring Strategy Updated

Beginning in 2001, the BLM, USFWS, NPS, and USFS collaborated with the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute to develop a national strategy to monitor trends in wilderness character. In 2008, with publication of *Keeping It Wild: An Interagency Strategy for Monitoring Wilderness Character Across the National Wilderness Preservation System* (NWPS), the agencies began implementing this strategy.

In 2014, the NPS published an agency-specific **user guide** for integrating wilderness character into park planning, management, and monitoring. This user guide referenced much of the monitoring

protocol from *Keeping It Wild* while adding the “Other Features of Value” quality to wilderness character integration.

Following this, the interagency wilderness character community agreed that “Other Features of Value” among other additions were important for wilderness character monitoring. An interagency team worked to update the original interagency wilderness character monitoring protocol and *Keeping It Wild 2* was published in 2015 - see Appendix 2 (page 77) for key changes between the 2008 and 2015 versions.

This guidance document is part of Reference

Manual 41: Wilderness Stewardship and recently received a National Association of Government Communicators’ Blue Pencil and Gold Screen Award.

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Ideas for next newsletter? Contact:
Erin Drake, WASO Wilderness - erin_drake@nps.gov

New NPS.gov Sites for Wilderness Now Live

The NPS Wilderness Program has been without a public website for quite some time - but the wait is over! The Wilderness Stewardship Division has built two new sites that showcase NPS wilderness:

1. [NPS.gov/wilderness](https://www.nps.gov/wilderness) - Known as the "subject site" for wilderness, this site provides general information about NPS wilderness. Learn about different parks with wilderness, recreational opportunities, and wilderness heritage.
2. [NPS.gov/wsd](https://www.nps.gov/wsd) - This is the "organization site" for the Wilderness Stewardship Division. Learn about the work we do and our collaborative partners.

Check back often, as the sites' content will change seasonally to include project status updates, summaries of completed projects, new videos and multimedia, and upcoming initiatives in NPS wilderness throughout the country.

WILDERNESS DIGITAL CONTENT NEEDED!

Does your park or program have an NPS.gov site that includes wilderness information?

Using the "shared content" feature, NPS.gov/wilderness can co-promote your site. Email Erin Drake (erin_drake@nps.gov) for details.

Inaugural Wilderness Character Building Blocks Workshop Is A Success

In March, 21 NPS park/program staff from six regions and WASO participated in the first Wilderness Character Building Blocks Workshop hosted by the WASO Wilderness Stewardship Division (WSD) in Denver - all training costs were covered by WASO Learning & Development. WSD partnered with the Denver Service Center to facilitate



instruction of the building blocks as discussed in the [NPS Wilderness Character User Guide](#) (page 19), which address wilderness character preservation:

1. Wilderness Basics
2. Wilderness Character Assessment
3. Integration into Management

WILDERNESS DOWNLOAD

A quick review of immediate + upcoming wilderness happenings

2020 VISION DRAFT IMPLEMENTATION PLAN NOW AVAILABLE FOR REVIEW

NPS staff can now comment on the interagency Wilderness 2020 Vision Draft Implementation Plan, available on [PEPC](#) through May 5th. A month-long external review for partners and other key stakeholders will follow.

AGENCY REVIEW OF INTERAGENCY RESTORATION IN WILDERNESS FRAMEWORK

The Evaluation Framework for Proposed Ecological Intervention/Restoration in Wilderness, developed by the Leopold Institute and piloted in several parks, will be available for NPS review beginning in mid-June. Interested in reviewing the framework? Contact Beth Hahn (bhahn@fs.fed.us).

NPS WILDERNESS DATABASE NEEDS

[NPS National Wilderness Database](#) is open for data validation by all wilderness parks. This database serves as the go-to location for all pertinent wilderness data, including acreages, stewardship tracking, and contacts. If your park has

data to update, contact your Regional Wilderness Coordinator or Erin Drake (erin_drake@nps.gov).

WILDERNESS EXHIBIT AVAILABLE FOR LOAN

The [NPS Wilderness exhibit](#) is available for use in park visitor centers or program offices. The host park pays for shipping (~\$80 total). Exhibits are available for up to 12 weeks.

CARHART TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

- ANILCA Overview - Specific to Wilderness (Online Course - Anticipated Release of 4/22)
- Diversifying the Ecological Representation of the NWPS (Webinar on 4/28)
- Framework to Assess Effects of Commercial Air & Tour Noise on Wilderness (Webinar on 5/5)
- Progress in Wilderness Fire Science: Embracing Complexity (Webinar on 5/26)
- Economic Values of Wilderness and Current Economics Research (Webinar on 6/2)
- Find these + many other online trainings on wilderness.net

REGIONAL HIGHLIGHTS

Six of the seven NPS regions have designated wilderness and other lands managed as wilderness. Each region has appointed a Regional Wilderness Coordinator that works closely with wilderness park staff and the WASO Wilderness Stewardship Division. The following highlights feature an update from a park and/or regional office in the six regions with wilderness.



Parks Report on 2015 Accomplishments: The **2015 NPS Alaska Region Wilderness Summary Report**, published in December, highlights key accomplishments across the designated and eligible wilderness parks within the region. Highlights include the development of a region-specific implementation plan for the *Wilderness 2020 Vision*, wilderness GIS boundary mapping for eligible wilderness, progress made by the region's Backcountry and Wilderness Advisory Group, and wilderness stewardship accomplishments specific to each park.



Point Reyes NS Hosts Pilot Test for Restoration Framework: In January, staff from the Seashore collaborated with staff from the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute and WASO Wilderness Stewardship Division to pilot the Evaluation Framework for Proposed Restoration/Intervention in Wilderness, focusing on the on-going restoration work surrounding Drakes Estero. The group also discussed the potential to position the Phillip Burton Wilderness as an introduction to wilderness for the diverse urban communities living in the Bay Area.

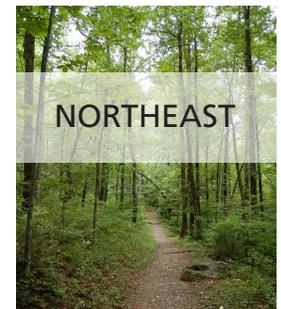


Region Nears Completion of Wilderness Character Assessments with 2016 Wilderness Fellows Cohort: Through regional funding, 11 Wilderness Fellows have completed wilderness character assessments for 19 parks since 2010, leaving only 9 parks to complete assessments regionwide. The assessment reports document the state of a park's wilderness resource and help in the preparation of future wilderness stewardship planning. This summer, three Wilderness Fellows at Capitol Reef NP, Bandelier NM, and Organ Pipe Cactus NM will complete these assessments.

Pictured Rocks NL Hosts Wilderness Character Workshop: Interdisciplinary staff hosted and participated in a Wilderness Character Assessment Workshop at the Lakeshore in November. Park and regional staff were joined by a team from the Denver Service Center and WASO Wilderness Stewardship Division to select indicators and measures to monitor change in wilderness character over time. A gorgeous opening day hike was followed by two days of intensive workshop discussion. This workshop followed a Wilderness Basics Workshop conducted in 2014.



Shenandoah NP Reviews Use of New Accessibility Device: Approached about use of the Action Trackchair on park trails, including those in wilderness, the park examined the device more closely with consultation from Janet Zeller, National Accessibility Manager for the USFS. It was determined that the adult vehicle's width of greater than 36" does not meet the legal definition of a wheelchair "suitable for indoor use." 36" is established in Section 1017.3 of the Architectural Barriers Act for establishing the accepted size of wheelchair intended for indoor use.



CONTRIBUTING AUTHORS

- Alaska Region: Erin Drake, WASO Wilderness
- Pacific West Region: Erin Drake, WASO Wilderness
- Intermountain Region: Stephanie MacDonald, S. AZ Office
- Midwest Region: Tokey Boswell, MW Regional Office
- Northeast Region: Chris Ziegler, Shenandoah NP
- Southeast Region: Mark Kinzer, SE Regional Office

Region Continues to Explore Opportunities for New Wilderness: In October 2015, Regional Director Stan Austin approved a Record of Decision proposing 42,200 acres of new wilderness and about 43,100 acres of new potential wilderness at Everglades NP. This proposed wilderness is located in the park's East Everglades Expansion Area. In coming months the region will see continuation of a wilderness study at Big Cypress NPr and initiation of a wilderness eligibility assessment for expansion lands at Congaree NP.

