



Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts

Evaluation Criteria Definition Matrix and Comment Form



The Cibola National Forest plan revision interdisciplinary team developed draft questions and measures to address each of the five wilderness characteristic criteria listed in FSH 1909.12, Chapter 70- Wilderness. These are to be used to evaluate the Phase 2 Inventory areas for wilderness characteristics, and are outlined below.

Please use this form to comment on individual areas from the Phase 2 Inventory maps. Please use one form for each individual identification area, and note its identification number and location. If your comment is not addressed in the "considerations" column of each criterion, please include additional information in the "other" narrative section.

You can also comment using the Talking Points Collaborative Mapping Tool available at this website: <https://my.usgs.gov/ppgis/studio/launch/39829>. Please consider the evaluation criteria below when inputting comments on the online mapping tool.

Inventory Identification Number/Location:

D-4 - ADJ. 4 5733.9 acres Mountain District

Criterion 1- Apparent naturalness: The degree to which an area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.

Question 1a. What is the composition of plant and animal communities? The purpose of this question is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural.

Considerations	Narrative
How are concentrations of invasive plants and/or animals distributed across the land?	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Question 1b. What is the extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention?

Considerations	Narrative
Extent that current vegetation species composition and structure has changed from historical conditions (pre-EuroAmerican settlement). ¹	
Vegetation restoration treatments (e.g. thinning) or timber harvest areas and distribution across the land (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated). This also includes associated railroad beds, skid trails, and logging decks of timber harvest areas.	
Does the forest appear natural (consider elements, including but not limited to, vegetation, wildlife, soil, air, etc.)?	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

¹ Species composition is the number and proportion of species present. Structure refers to the size, density, and arrangement of plants.

Question 1c. What is the extent to which improvements² included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness?

Considerations

Narrative

Appearance of airstrips, heliports, and/or landing zones. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

Appearance and density of maintenance level 1 roads³ measured by road length per sq. mile, and spatial distribution (broadly interspersed vs. concentrated), occurrence of stream crossings, and proximity to streams channels.

Appearance and density of unauthorized routes (includes decommissioned, temporary, and user created routes per sq. mile) and distribution (broadly dispersed vs. concentrated, occurrence of stream crossings, and proximity to streams channels.

Miles of fencing or pipeline per square mile.

Appearance of areas of mining activity that were not eliminated in the Phase 2 inventory.⁴ Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation)

Appearance of range or wildlife improvements that were not eliminated in the Phase 2 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

Appearance of watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that were not eliminated in the Phase 2 inventory. Include size of area and description of disturbance (soils, vegetation).

² The use of the term "improvements" in this context is taken from the Forest Service Handbook, and means the evidence of past human activities in the area as a whole.

³ For a glossary of road terminology, please see the *Cibola National Forest Mountain Ranger Districts Assessment Report, Vol. II, page 258.*

⁴ See Appendix A for Substantially Noticeable criteria used in Phase 2 inventory, and Appendix B for results from the Phase 2 Inventory.

Extent to which the improvements cause the appearance to depart from apparent naturalness to the area as a whole (Consider improvements listed above as well as water tanks, aviation crash locations, wreckage sites, locations of cemeteries or gravesites, bombing or ordinance locations, and viewshed analysis for proposed developments)
 Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)

Criterion 2- Outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation: the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation.

Note: The word “or” means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

Question 2a. Consider impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor’s opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area.

Note: Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

Considerations	Narrative
Describe the general topography of the area in context of sight, sound, and screening. Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area? Is the area quiet and free from motorized noise?	
Proximity to area of recreation developments and high use areas, private lands and associated infrastructure, non- Forest Service roads, and/or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. Consider effects of the area’s adjacent, cherry-stemmed roads. ⁵	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

⁵ The term “cherry stemmed” road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase 1 Inventory process.

Question 2b. Consider the opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature.

Note: Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature. This question also relates to miles of fence information from Criterion 1, Question 1c, due to the potential for miles of fence to restrict unconfined recreation opportunities.

Considerations	Narrative
Describe the types of primitive recreation activities in the area.	
Percent of area with a primitive recreation opportunity spectrum class. ⁶	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Criterion 3- Stand-alone area of less than 5,000 acres that is not adjacent to existing wilderness or administratively recommended wilderness: evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

There are no stand-alone areas less than 5,000 acres on either the initial inventory or Phase 2 inventory maps. Those who offer such areas for evaluation please identify and describe how it is of sufficient size to make its preservation or use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

Criterion 4- Unique and outstanding qualities: the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Note: These values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System, but their presence should be identified and evaluated where they exist.

⁶ The Forest Service's Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) provides a framework which allows administration to manage and users to enjoy a variety of recreation environments. ROS is not a land classification system; it is a management objective, a way of describing and providing a variety of recreation opportunities. A "primitive" ROS class is one typically associated with a largely unmodified environment, a very high probability of solitude, self-reliance, little evidence of people, and no motorized use is permitted. The ROS Inventory Existing Condition maps have been completed for the Forest, and the existing condition of primitive ROS classes is being used as a measure. These maps are only existing condition, and are subject to change based on desired recreation opportunity spectrum classes developed during the interdisciplinary process of Forest Plan Revision. Please refer to the Recreation Opportunity Spectrum Handbook and Primer for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/edu/carrying_capacity/rosfieldguide/ros_primer_and_field_guide.htm

Question 4a. Does the area contain rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems?

Note: Rare in this context is defined as local or regional.

Considerations	Narrative
Average modeled species richness value from New Mexico Crucial Habitat Assessment Tool.	
Presence of threatened or endangered species and/or designated or proposed critical habitat (from National Heritage database and other data sets as available).	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Question 4b. Are there any outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features?

Considerations	Narrative
Description of any unique geologic features in the area.	
Presence of outstanding scenic features within the area or percent of area with distinctive scenic attractiveness class. ⁷	
Other (include any additional information related to the question above)	

⁷ The Forest Service's Scenery Management System (SMS) provides the framework to effectively inventory, assess, and manage scenic resources. Scenic Attractiveness is a component of the SMS inventory, and is the primary indicator of the intrinsic scenic beauty based on commonly held perceptions of preferred scenery and landscape features. The three scenic attractiveness classes are: Class A-distinctive; Class B-typical; Class C-indistinctive. To determine these classes, the landscape elements of landform, vegetation, rocks, cultural features and water features are mapped using General Terrestrial Ecosystem Survey (GTES) information for the Forest, with District personnel input on areas of the Forest that were not picked up at the GTES scale. The Scenic Attractiveness map is based largely on existing landscape features. Refer to the Forest Service Scenery Management Handbook for more information: http://www.fs.fed.us/cdt/carrying_capacity/landscape_aesthetics_handbook_701_no_append.pdf

Question 4c. Are there historic and cultural resource sites in the area?

Considerations	Narrative
Presence of structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area. Also consider potential historical railroad beds/berms associated with timber harvest areas from Criterion I, Question 1b.	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Note: (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

Question 4d. Are there any research natural areas?

Considerations	Narrative
Percent of area that is part of a research natural area.	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

Question 4e. Are there any high quality water resources or important watershed features?

Considerations	Narrative
Miles within the area of eligible Wild and Scenic Rivers	
Miles within the area of Outstanding Natural Resource Waters	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

this is an important water shed for the entire Estancia Basin.

Left untreated this with Conopyx and according to our monitoring data the moisture gets hung up in the trees and evaporates back into the atmosphere. also it has been proven that if we don't manage and treat the forest bed well that will affect the fire contaminate the water in miles around. please take this out of consideration

Criterion 5- Management: the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

Question 5a. Can the area be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics?

Considerations	Narrative
Shape and configuration of the area.	
Presence and extent of legally established rights or uses within the area.	
Presence and extent of any specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics.	
Presence and extent of non-Federal land in the area	
Describe management of adjacent lands.	
Describe presence and extent of cultural and traditional uses of the area (e.g. shrines, ceremonial use, etc.)	
Presence and extent of wildland urban interface in the area. Include acres if possible.	
Describe any other management activities or restrictions within in the area (e.g. upcoming management decisions).	
Describe existence and extent of motorized uses within the area (trails, routes, special activities).	
Presence and extent of special use permits and authorizations within the area.	
Presence and extent of "cherry stemmed" ⁸ roads or other linear features.	
Other (Include any additional information related to the question above)	

⁸ The term "cherry stemmed" road refers to a road removed from the inventory using the 30 meter (98.4 feet) road buffer screening from the Phase I Inventory process.