Table of Contents

70.1 – Authority 2
70.2 – Definitions 2
70.6 – Process 3
70.61 – Participation in the Wilderness Recommendation Process 4
70.62 – Wilderness Recommendation Process 4
71 – INVENTORY OF AREAS THAT MAY BE SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM 5
71.1 – Inventory Process 6
71.2 – Inventory Steps and Criteria 6
71.21 – Size Criteria 6
71.22 – Improvements Criteria 7
71.22a – Road Improvements 7
71.22b – Other Improvements 8
71.3 – Inventory Documentation 10
72 – EVALUATION 10
72.1 – Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics 11
72.2 – Documentation for Evaluated Areas 13
73 – ANALYSIS 13
74 – RECOMMENDATION 14
74.1 – Management of Recommended Areas 15

This chapter describes the process for identifying and evaluating lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and determining whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation.

70.1 – Authority

The purpose of wilderness and the broad direction for managing wilderness are in the Wilderness Act of 1964 (16 U.S.C. 1131–1136, 78 Stat 890) and the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975 (16 U.S.C. 1132 (Note)).

Land management planning process requirements are in FSM 1923 and in the Planning Rule as follows:

> **In developing a proposed new plan or proposed plan revision, the responsible official shall:**
>
> **…**
>
> **(v) Identify and evaluate lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and determine whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation. (36 CFR 219.7(c)(2)).**

70.2 – Definitions

Forest road. A road wholly or partly within or adjacent to and serving the National Forest System (NFS) that the Forest Service determines is necessary for the protection, administration, and utilization of the NFS and the use and development of its resources (36 CFR 212.1).

Maintenance levels. The level of service provided by, and maintenance required for, a specific road (FSH 7709.59, ch. 60, sec. 62.3).

1. Level 1. These are roads that have been placed in storage between intermittent uses. The period of storage must exceed 1 year. Basic custodial maintenance is performed to prevent damage to adjacent resources and to perpetuate the road for future resource management needs. Emphasis is normally given to maintaining drainage facilities and runoff patterns. Planned road deterioration may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are to “prohibit” and “eliminate” all traffic. These roads are not shown on motor vehicle use maps.

   Roads receiving level 1 maintenance may be of any type, class, or construction standard, and may be managed at any other maintenance level during the time they are open for traffic. However, while being maintained at level 1, they are closed to vehicular traffic but may be available and suitable for nonmotorized uses.

2. Level 2. This level is assigned to roads open for use by high-clearance vehicles. Passenger car traffic, user comfort, and user convenience are not considerations. Warning signs and traffic control devices are not provided with the exception that some signing, such as W-18-1 “No Traffic Signs,” may be posted at intersections. Motorists should have no expectations of being alerted to potential hazards while driving these roads. Traffic is normally minor, usually consisting of one or a combination of administrative, permitted, dispersed recreation, or other specialized uses. Log haul may occur at this level. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to “discourage” or “prohibit” passenger cars. “Accept” or “discourage” strategies may be employed for high clearance vehicles.

3. Level 3. This level is assigned to roads open and maintained for travel by a prudent driver in a standard passenger car. User comfort and convenience are not considered priorities. The manual on uniform traffic control devices is applicable. Warning signs and traffic control devices are provided to alert motorists of situations that may violate expectations.

Roads in this maintenance level are typically low speed with single lanes and turnouts. Appropriate traffic management strategies are either to “encourage” or “accept” passenger cars. “Discourage” or “prohibit” strategies may be employed for certain classes of vehicles or users.

4. Level 4. This level is assigned to roads that provide a moderate degree of user comfort and convenience at moderate travel speeds. Most roads are double lane and aggregate surfaced. However, some roads may be single lane. Some roads may be paved and/or dust abated. The manual on uniform traffic control devices is applicable. The most appropriate traffic management strategy is to “encourage” passenger cars. However, the “prohibit” strategy may apply to specific classes of vehicles or users at certain times.

5. Level 5. This level is assigned to roads that provide a high degree of user comfort and convenience. These roads are normally double lane, paved facilities. Some may be aggregate surfaced and dust abated. The manual on uniform traffic control devices is applicable. The appropriate traffic management strategy is to "encourage" passenger cars.

70.6 – Process

The intent of this section is to make the process by which lands are recommended during land management planning for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as a Wilderness Study Area transparent and consistent across the National Forest System.

The process occurs in four primary steps: inventory, evaluation, analysis, and recommendation. Each step requires public participation. All plan revisions or new plans must complete this process before the Responsible Official determines, in the plan decision document, whether to recommend lands within the plan area to Congress for wilderness designation (36 CFR 219.7 (c)(2)(v)).

Each step also requires documentation, as set out in this chapter. The required documentation must be made available to the public as required by 70.61 of this Handbook, and should also be consolidated in a "Wilderness Appendix" to the applicable NEPA documents.

70.61 – Participation in the Wilderness Recommendation Process

Early and during each step of the process identified in this chapter, the Responsible Official:

1. Shall provide opportunities for public participation and collaboration, intergovernmental coordination with State and local governments, and Tribal consultation, as required by the broader planning process (36 CFR 219.4 and FSH 1909.12, ch. 40). Through such opportunities, engage the public and other governments early and throughout the process to provide feedback and input on the inventory, evaluation, analysis, and recommendation steps identified in this chapter.

2. May provide additional participation opportunities specifically on this topic as necessary.

Maps, analysis, and other documentation developed through each step of the process must be made available timely to the public to increase transparency and enable feedback and input.

70.62 – Wilderness Recommendation Process

The Responsible Official shall use the following process to identify and evaluate lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System and to determine whether to recommend any such lands for wilderness designation, following the direction in FSM 1923.11.

The wilderness recommendation process has a sequence of steps: inventory, evaluation, analysis, and recommendation.

a. Inventory (sec. 71): The Responsible Official shall identify and create an inventory of all lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. To develop the inventory, the Responsible Official shall ensure the Interdisciplinary Team identifies lands based on information obtained during the

assessment or from public and governmental participation opportunities, and using the inventory criteria set out in section 71. Inclusion in the inventory is not a designation that conveys or requires a particular kind of management. Lands included in the inventory must be documented and identified on a map.

b. Evaluation (sec. 72): The Responsible Official shall evaluate the wilderness characteristics of lands in the inventory. To conduct the evaluation, the Responsible Official shall ensure the Interdisciplinary Team applies the criteria set out in section 72, based on the Wilderness Act of 1964 and informed by the Eastern Wilderness Act of 1975. The Responsible Official may vary the scope of the evaluation of specific areas or portions of areas as described in section 72 of this Handbook. The evaluation must be documented and included in the planning record.

c. Analysis (sec. 73). The Responsible Official shall consider the areas evaluated and determine which areas to further analyze for recommendation as part of one or more alternatives in the applicable National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) document if this process is done as part of an amendment, unless recommendations regarding wilderness are prohibited by law for amendments. Not all lands included in the inventory and subsequent evaluations are required to be analyzed for recommendation.

d. Recommendation (sec. 74): The Responsible Official shall decide, based upon the analysis and input from Tribal, State, and local governments and the public, which areas, if any, to recommend for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The Responsible Official shall identify any such lands in the final decision document for the plan.

71 – INVENTORY OF AREAS THAT MAY BE SUITABLE FOR INCLUSION IN THE NATIONAL WILDERNESS PRESERVATION SYSTEM

The primary function of the inventory step is to efficiently, effectively, and transparently identify all lands in the plan area that may have wilderness characteristics as defined in the Wilderness Act.

The inventory is intended to be reasonably broad and inclusive, based on the inventory criteria set out in this section and additional information provided to the Responsible Official through the required opportunities for public and government participation (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook). The intent is to identify lands that may be suitable, so that they can be evaluated and to allow for public input and feedback (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook). Lands included in the inventory will be carried forward for evaluation. Inclusion in the inventory is not a designation that conveys or requires a particular kind of management.

The Responsible Official shall ensure the Interdisciplinary Team documents the inventory in a report and creates a map of the lands included in the inventory. Both the inventory report and map must be available to the public and included in the applicable NEPA document.

71.1 – Inventory Process

The Interdisciplinary Team should start the inventory process by considering existing, relevant information identified during the assessment phase (FSH 1909.12, ch. 10), including information about designated areas (such as inventoried roadless areas), transportation infrastructure (such as road maintenance levels), and past or pending wilderness recommendation proposals. Building on this information and any additional public input (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook), the Interdisciplinary Team should apply the criteria and steps identified in section 71.2 of this Handbook to create the inventory.

71.2 – Inventory Steps and Criteria

Include an area in the inventory when:

1. The area meets the size criteria defined in section 71.21 and has no improvements; or

2. The area meets the size criteria defined in section 71.21 and is consistent with the improvements criteria defined in sections 71.22a and 71.22b.

After applying the size and improvements criteria, the Responsible Official shall also review the information provided through public participation during the assessment or as part of the wilderness recommendation process (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook), including areas that have been proposed for consideration as recommended wilderness through a previous planning process, collaborative effort, or in pending legislation. The Responsible Official may include in the inventory additional areas identified as part of that review that do not meet the criteria in sections 71.21 and 71.22 of this Handbook, for the purpose of carrying such areas forward to the evaluation step.

71.21 – Size Criteria

According to the Wilderness Act, a wilderness area "[h]as at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition" (16 U.S.C. 1131c).

Areas to be included in the inventory must be federal lands and must meet one of the following size criteria:

1. The area contains 5,000 acres or more.

2. The area contains less than 5,000 acres but is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition, including but not limited to areas contiguous to an existing wilderness, primitive areas, administratively recommended wilderness, or wilderness inventory of other Federal ownership.

71.22 – Improvements Criteria

Pursuant to the Wilderness Act, include in the inventory areas "where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean . . . an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; . . ." (16 U.S.C. 1131c).

Include areas in the inventory that meet size criteria in 71.21of this Handbook and both sets of improvements criteria described in the following sections.

71.22a – Road Improvements

When considering road-related criteria, the Responsible Official shall ensure the Interdisciplinary Team uses existing information contained in the assessment about roads and routes within the plan area and information gathered from public and governmental participation opportunities (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook) as follows:

1. Include in the inventory areas that contain the following road improvement attributes if the areas also meet the other inventory criteria (secs. 71.21 and 71.22b of this Handbook):

   a. Areas that contain forest roads maintained to level 1;

   b. Areas with any routes that are decommissioned, unauthorized or temporary, or forest roads that are identified for decommissioning in a previous decision document, or identified as likely unneeded in a travel management plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a travel analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));

   c. Areas with forest roads that will be reclassified to level 1 through a previous decision document, or as identified in a travel management plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a travel analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));

   d. Areas in Forests, Grasslands, Prairies, and other Administrative Units east of the 100th meridian with forest roads maintained to level 2 that are identified as closed to motor vehicles yearlong in a previous decision document, or as identified in a travel management plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a travel analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b));

   e. Areas with forest roads that have been proposed by the Forest Service for consideration as recommended wilderness as a result of a previous forest planning process; or areas with forest roads that the Responsible Official merits for inclusion in

the inventory that were proposed for consideration through public involvement during the assessment or other public or intergovernmental participation opportunity (sec. 70.61).

f. Areas with historical wagon routes, historical mining routes, or other settlement era transportation features considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area.

g. Areas with maintenance level 2 roads that do not meet the criteria for exclusion in subsection 2(c) below.

2. Except as provided in (1)(b), (c), (d) or (e) above, exclude from the inventory areas that contain:

a. Permanently authorized roads validated by a Federal court or the Department of the Interior for which a valid easement or interest has been properly recorded.

b. Forest roads maintained to levels 3, 4, or 5.

c. Level 2 roads, or level 3, 4, or 5 roads that will be reclassified to level 2 through a previous decision document, or as identified in a travel management plan (36 CFR 212.51) or a travel analysis (36 CFR 212.5(b)) that meet one or more of the following criteria and are not in proposed areas as provided in (1)(e) above:

(1) Have been improved and are maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continued use,

(2) Have cumulatively degraded wilderness character or precluded future preservation of the area as wilderness,

(3) Have been identified for continued public access and use in a project level or travel planning decision supported by NEPA analysis, or

(4) Otherwise preclude evaluation and consideration of the area during the public participation and intergovernmental outreach processes as potentially suitable for wilderness, based on assessment information or on-the-ground knowledge.

71.22b – Other Improvements

After identifying lands within the plan area that meet the size criteria (sec. 71.21 of this Handbook) and the road improvement criteria (sec. 71.22a of this Handbook), determine whether those lands contain other improvements. Include such lands in the inventory where the other

improvements or evidence of past human activities are not substantially noticeable in the area as a whole, including when the area contains the following, also recognizing the potential need to provide for passive or active restoration of wilderness character in previously modified areas, consistent with the intent of the Eastern Wilderness Act:

1. Airstrips and heliports.

2. Vegetation treatments that are not substantially noticeable.

3. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not substantially noticeable.

4. Permanently installed vertical structures, such as electronic installations that support television, radio, telephone, or cellular communications, provided their impacts, as well as their maintenance and access needs, are minimal.

5. Areas of mining activity where impacts are not substantially noticeable.

6. Range improvement areas (FSM 2240.5), involving minor structural improvements (for example, fences or water troughs) and nonstructural improvements (such as chaining, burning, spraying, potholing, and so forth) that are not substantially noticeable.

7. Recreation improvements, such as occupancy spots, or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, developed sites should not be included. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.

8. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines, and powerlines if a right-of-way has not been cleared. Powerlines with cleared rights-of-way, pipelines, and other permanently installed linear right-of-way structures should not be included.

9. Watershed treatment areas (such as contouring, diking, channeling) that are not substantially noticeable. Areas may include minor watershed treatments that have been accomplished manually such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.

10. Lands adjacent to development or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. The fact that nonwilderness activities or uses can be seen or heard from within any portion of the area, must not, of itself, preclude inclusion in the inventory. It is appropriate to extend boundaries to the edges of development for purposes of inclusion in the inventory.

11. Structures, dwellings, and other relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape of the area.

12. Areas with improvements that have been proposed by the Forest Service for consideration as recommended wilderness as a result of a previous Forest planning process or that the Responsible Official merits for inclusion in the inventory that were proposed for consideration through public or intergovernmental participation opportunities (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook).

71.3 – Inventory Documentation

The Responsible Official shall ensure the Interdisciplinary Team documents the process used to identify and inventory areas. The purpose is to present a transparent description of how the inventory process was conducted and the results of the inventory.

The Responsible Official should release the inventory documentation and the map(s) described below to the public before conducting the evaluation. The Responsible Official shall also include the documentation required by this section in the applicable NEPA documents.

The Interdisciplinary Team shall record all lands included in the inventory on a map of the planning area. In addition, the Team shall identify on the same map (or a series of maps), at a minimum, the following lands:

1. Existing designated wilderness and primitive areas.

2. Congressionally designated wilderness study areas, and any wilderness proposals pending before Congress. Indicate relevant statutory dates, if any.

3. Areas identified in the Forest Service Roadless Area Conservation Final Environmental Impact Statement (Volume 2, November 2000), or in a Forest Service State-specific roadless rule, or identified as undeveloped or for primitive nonmotorized management in the current land management plan.

4. National Forest System lands statutorily designated for management for nonwilderness purposes. Indicate effective dates, if any.

5. Other areas that the Responsible Official determines would be useful to show on the map to facilitate effective and transparent public participation and input on this topic.

72 – EVALUATION

The primary function of the evaluation step is to evaluate, pursuant to criteria set forth in the Wilderness Act of 1964, the wilderness characteristics of the lands included in the inventory. All lands included in the inventory must be evaluated. The Responsible Official may divide or consolidate lands identified in the inventory into grouped areas for the purpose of evaluation, and may vary the scope of the evaluation based on the specific characteristics of each area or portions thereof.

The Responsible Official should provide opportunities for public and governmental participation when evaluating lands identified in the inventory (sec. 70.61 of this Handbook). The Responsible Official should communicate the evaluation process to the public, and shall be able to clearly and efficiently describe and document the wilderness character associated with each area at the end of the evaluation step.

The Responsible Official is not required to carry all lands evaluated forward for further NEPA analysis as potential recommendations for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System (secs. 73 and 74 of this Handbook).

72.1 – Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics

The Interdisciplinary Team shall evaluate areas, which must include all lands identified in the inventory (sec. 71 of this Handbook), to determine potential suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System using criteria included in the Wilderness Act of 1964, section 2(c), as follows:

1. Evaluate the degree to which the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable (apparent naturalness). Consider such factors as:

   a. The composition of plant and animal communities. The purpose of this factor is to determine if plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural (for example, past management activities have created a plantation style forest with trees of a uniform species, age, and planted in rows);

   b. The extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention; and

   c. The extent to which improvements included in the area (sec. 71.22 of this Handbook) represent a departure from apparent naturalness.

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

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

b. 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. Examples of primitive-type recreation activities include observing wildlife, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, and enjoying nature.

3. Evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size to make its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition practicable.

4. Evaluate the degree to which the area may contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. 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. Such features or values may include:

a. Rare plant or animal communities or rare ecosystems. Rare can be determined locally, regionally, nationally, or within the system of protected designations.

b. Outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, waterbodies, or geologic features.

c. Historic and cultural resource sites. (Confidentiality requirements with respect to cultural resource sites must be respected (25 U.S.C 3056)).

d. Research natural areas.

e. High quality water resources or important watershed features.

5. Evaluate the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics. Consider such factors as:

a. Shape and configuration of the area;

b. Legally established rights or uses within the area;

c. 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;

d. The presence and amount of non-Federal land in the area; and

e. Management of adjacent lands.

72.2 – Documentation for Evaluated Areas

The Responsible Official shall ensure that the Interdisciplinary Team documents the evaluation and include this documentation, along with map(s) required by section 71.4 of this Handbook, in an appendix to the applicable NEPA document. The intent is to ensure that the process for inventory and evaluation is transparent and accessible to the public for input and feedback. This documentation will also be available for participation opportunities during the plan revision or development process.

73 – ANALYSIS

Based on the evaluation and input from public participation opportunities, the Responsible Official shall identify which specific areas, or portions thereof, from the evaluation to carry forward as recommended wilderness in one or more alternatives in the plan EIS (36 CFR 219, FSM 1920, and FSH 1909.15).

Not all lands included in the inventory and subsequent evaluations are required to be carried forward in an alternative.

For each evaluated area or portions thereof that are not included in an alternative in the applicable NEPA analysis, the Responsible Official shall document the reason for excluding it from further analysis.

For each area included in one or more alternative, the Responsible Official shall identify the:

1. Name of the area and number of acres in the area to be considered for recommendation.

2. Location and a summarized description of a recommended boundary for each area. To identify a clearly defined boundary for each area, evaluate how the location of the boundary will support management of the area for wilderness and other adjacent uses. Where possible, boundaries should be easy to identify and to locate on the ground. Potential boundaries may be identified as follows, listed in descending order of desirability:

   a. Use of natural features that are locatable both on the map and on the ground. Examples include, but are not limited to perennial streams, well-defined ridges, mountain peaks, and well-defined natural lake shorelines. If a stream is used, note whether the thread (centerline of a stream) or either bank (to mean high water line) has been used as the boundary.

   b. Use of human-made features that are locatable on the map and on the ground. Examples include, but are not limited to roads, trails, dams, powerlines, pipelines, and bridges. Where a human-made feature is used, note whether the feature itself forms

the boundary or whether the boundary has been set back from the feature, and by what distance. Setbacks should be used only where necessary for future maintenance of the human-made feature.

c. Use of previously surveyed lines or legally determined lines such as section and township lines, section subdivision lines, metes and bounds property lines, county or State boundaries, or National Park or Indian Reservation boundaries.

d. Use of a straight line from one locatable point to another. These points should normally be high points in the landscape as they must be visible to be effective.

e. Use of a series of bearings and distances between locatable points as in a metes and bounds survey. Use this technique when other methods are not available or practicable.

3. A brief description of the general geography, topography, and vegetation of the recommended area.

4. A brief description of the current uses and management of the area.

5. A description of the area's wilderness characteristics and the ability to protect and manage the area so as to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

6. A brief summary of the factors considered and the process used in evaluating the area and developing the alternative(s).

7. A brief summary of the ecological and social characteristics that would provide the basis for the area's suitability for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

74 – RECOMMENDATION

The Responsible Official shall document a decision on whether to recommend specific areas for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as a Wilderness Study Area east of the hundredth meridian, based on the analysis disclosed in the applicable NEPA document and input received during public participation opportunities (sec. 70.61). This decision must be included in the final decision document for the plan. The final decision document must identify the wilderness recommendation proposal as a "preliminary administrative recommendation" and qualify it by stating:

This recommendation is a preliminary administrative recommendation that will receive further review and possible modification by the Chief of the Forest Service, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the President of the United States. The Congress

has reserved the authority to make final decisions on wilderness designation. Plan implementation is not dependent upon subsequent action related recommendations for wilderness designation.

The decision must include a summary of the information required in steps 1 through 7 in section 73 of this Handbook for each area recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as a Wilderness Study Area. Furthermore, the decision document must affirm that the plan includes plan components that provide for managing areas recommended for wilderness designation to protect and maintain the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for each area's suitability for wilderness recommendation (36 CFR 219.10 (b) (iv) and chapter 20 of this Handbook).

For lands in the inventory and evaluation that were not recommended for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System or as a Wilderness Study Area, the decision document must briefly identify or describe what management direction is provided in the plan for those lands. Once a final decision has been made and documented, the Responsible Official, through the Regional Forester, shall notify the Chief of preliminary administrative recommendations for wilderness designation following the direction in FSM 1923.11.

74.1 – Management of Recommended Areas

When developing plan components for recommended wilderness areas, the Responsible Official has discretion to implement a range of management options. All plan components applicable to a recommended area must protect and maintain the social and ecological characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness recommendation. In addition, the plan may include one or more plan components for a recommended wilderness area that:

1. Enhance the ecological and social characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designations;

2. Continue existing uses, only if such uses do not prevent the protection and maintenance of the social and ecological characteristics that provide the basis for wilderness designation;

3. Alter existing uses, subject to valid existing rights; or

4. Eliminate existing uses, except those uses subject to valid existing rights.

The Responsible Official should strive to maintain consistency with the provisions of 16 USC 1133(d) and the content of FSM 1923.03(3) when developing plan components for the management of recommended wilderness areas.