

Determining the Need and Extent Necessary and Allocating Use for Commercial Services in Wilderness

Capacity Determination, the Extent Necessary, and Allocation of Use

Capacity Determination -

The amount of commercial use in wilderness is part of the overall visitor use carrying capacity. If desired conditions have been identified and a wilderness can accommodate all current and projected visitor use within established standards or guidelines without degrading wilderness character, it may be unnecessary to establish a numerical capacity before allocating use. In some cases, commercial service operations could be expanded or new uses permitted without a capacity analysis if the use can be accommodated without exceeding the established standards or guidelines.

If, however, there are increasing use trends, resource impacts, user conflicts and demand for new or expanded commercial service operations a capacity determination may be needed before commercial services use can be allocated.

For additional information see the [Capacity Determination for Visitor Use in Wilderness](http://www.wilderness.net/toolboxes/) section in the Visitor Use management Toolbox at: <http://www.wilderness.net/toolboxes/>.

The Extent Necessary -

Determining the extent to which commercial services are necessary in wilderness and allocating use is a combination of assessing the public need and management objectives and matching it to wilderness resource capabilities. A typical approach may include the following components:

1. Assess the need for the type and amount of commercial services that could be provided.
2. Estimate the capacity of the area to accommodate commercial and non-commercial visitor use without impairment of wilderness character.
3. Determine the amount of total use that is to be allocated to visitors utilizing commercial services vs. non-commercial visitors.
4. Express the extent of commercial services necessary in terms of amount, type, location, and timing.

The decisions related to determining the 'extent necessary' and allocation of a portion of overall visitor use to commercial services are ultimately a combination of art and science and based on sound professional judgment. There are no magic formulas but use of a thoughtful, visible, and inclusive process helps insure a reasoned and defensible decision. Monitoring allows for adaptive management and adjustments as needed to meet public need and preserve wilderness character.

Allocation of Use -

The following is a list of some of the potential considerations that can be used to determine the appropriate allocation of use:

- Effects on the biophysical resource; how much use can be allowed without exceeding standards or limits?
- Effects on the social resource; visitors who do not utilize commercial services – how much is too much and will visitors be displaced?
- Effects on visitors who cannot visit wilderness without the assistance of commercial service providers due to accessibility or other issues – what is the need?
- Traditional and cultural uses of wilderness – are there tribal traditions or treaty access rights?
- Unit (area, forest, park, or refuge) and wilderness management objectives:
 - how can the commercial operators help achieve wilderness management objectives?
 - what is the capability of the unit to administer the commercial services permits?
 - what is the feasibility of adjusting the current type or amount of permitted use?