



# U.S. Forest Service National Forest System Briefing Paper

**Date:** October 22, 2014

**Topic:** Building on the Success of the 10-Year Wilderness Stewardship Challenge (10YWSC)

**Issue:** The wilderness program wants to build upon the success of the 10YWSC. A new performance measure that is closely tied to wilderness character monitoring has been developed, but implementation will require agency leadership support and funding.

## **Summary/Key Points:**

- Over the past three years, the Wilderness Advisory Group (WAG), the Wilderness Information Management Steering Team and the Regional Wilderness Program Managers (RPMs) have drafted a new performance measure to replace the 10YWSC entitled *Wildernesses Meeting Baseline Performance for Preserving Wilderness Character*, or *Wilderness Stewardship Performance* (WSP) for short.
- WSP is based on lessons learned from the 10YWSC as well as responses to three employee surveys conducted by WAG over the last three years.
- WSP is closely linked to wilderness character monitoring and will allow the wilderness program to meet its interagency commitment to monitor wilderness character consistent the other federal agencies that manage wilderness.
- Funding requests are being submitted to support the transition from the 10YWSC to WSP and for the completion of the Forest Service technical guide and agency-wide protocols for wilderness character monitoring.

## **Background:**

*Wilderness Stewardship Performance (WSP):* The new performance measure improves upon the existing measure through linkages to wilderness character monitoring by allowing flexibility in the selection of individual elements to reflect local wilderness stewardship priorities, while also correcting other long-acknowledged short-comings of the current measure. The measure has received extensive field input at different points in the development process, generating over 400 responses from wilderness managers, other resource program staff, and line officers from every level of the agency. A three-year proposal for Strategic Investment funds has been developed to support the transition from the 10YWSC to WSP (\$384,472 in FY 2015) and to support progress on individual elements in FY 2016 and FY 2017.

*Wilderness Character Monitoring (WCM):* The framework for WCM is woven into the overall format of the new performance measure and is also included as a stand-alone required element. The Forest Service first completed a draft technical guide for monitoring wilderness character in 2006. The four federal wilderness management agencies completed an implementation strategy in 2008, and since that time the NPS, BLM and FWS have moved forward with implementing WCM. The Forest Service needs to revise the existing technical guide to make it consistent with the approach used by the other agencies and the wilderness program is seeking funding to begin work on this important task in FY 2015.

## **Wilderness Stewardship Performance**

| <b>Category</b>   | <b>Element Title</b>  | <b>Selection*</b> |
|---|---|-------------------|
| Natural Quality of Wilderness Character   | Invasive Species  | Select 1-3        |
|   | Air Quality Values  |                   |
|   | Natural Role of Fire  |                   |
|   | Water   |                   |
|   | Fish & Wildlife   |                   |
| Undeveloped Quality of Wilderness Character   | Recreation Sites  | Select 1-2        |
|   | Trails  |                   |
|   | Non-Compliant Infrastructure                                  |                   |
|   | Motorized Equipment / Mechanical Transport Use Authorizations |                   |
| Untrammelled Quality of Wilderness Character  | Agency Management Actions                                     | Must Select       |
| Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude or Primitive and Unconfined Recreation Quality of Wilderness Character | Opportunities for Solitude                                    | Select 1-2        |
|   | Opportunities for Primitive and Unconfined Recreation         |                   |
| Other Features of Value Quality of Wilderness Character   | Cultural Resources  | Select 0-1        |
| Special Provisions  | Livestock Grazing   | Select 0-2        |
|   | Outfitters & Guides   |                   |
|   | Other Special Provisions (e.g., dams, airstrips, mines)       |                   |
| Administration  | Workforce Capacity  | Must Select       |
|   | Education   | Must Select       |
|   | Wilderness Character Baseline                                 | Must Select       |

\* Note: A total of 10 elements must be selected plus two additional reporting checkboxes (Wilderness Boundaries and Upward Reporting)