

Wilderness Awareness Workshop

# Case Study Discussion Form

**1. Issue:** Standing dead trees along trails created by a wildfire.

**2. Situation:** This fire burned almost 85,000 total national forest acres. Twenty five miles of mainline, system wilderness trail are within the burned area. This portion of the burned area is currently closed to public use to prevent resource damage because fallen trees have not been cleared. A decision has been made to ‘log-out’ or clear the fallen trees using cross-cut saws.

Wilderness managers are also concerned about the safety of the public relative to the existence of the standing dead trees. The proposed action is to cut all standing dead trees within a tree-length of the trails.

**3. Management Question(s):**

1. Should the standing dead trees be dropped?

b) IF management action is necessary, what is the minimum necessary method and tool?

- OR -

What method or tool should be used to minimize impairment or degradation of the wilderness resource, character and values?

**4. Direction/Guidance:**

**a. What does the Wilderness Act and subsequent legislation say?**

Section 2(a) . Purpose of wilderness:

* to insure that a growing population and increasing mechanization does not occupy and modify all areas leaving no lands in their natural condition
* to secure for the American people of present and future generations the benefits of an enduring resource of wilderness

Wilderness shall be administered :

* + in such manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness to provide for the protection of these areas
  + for preservation of their wilderness character
  + for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness;

Section 2(c) Definition of wilderness:

* an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.
* 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 generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man's work substantially unnoticeable
* has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation
* is to be preserved in an unimpaired condition
* may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.

Section 4(b) Purpose of wilderness

“wilderness shall be devoted to the public purposes of recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.”

Section 4 (c) Prohibition of certain uses

“except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act ….there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.”

**b.What is your agency policy?**

See Agency Policy Handout for direction regarding minimum requirements and the use of motorized equipment, landing of aircraft, etc. in wilderness.

2320.3 – #10 – Inform wilderness visitors that they face inherent risks of adverse weather conditions, isolation, physical hazards….

2323.13f - Transportation System. Design, construct, and maintain the transportation system in wilderness to provide access to and within a wilderness, that meets the wilderness objectives described in the forest plan.

1. Trails. Trails are an acceptable improvement. Construct and maintain trails to standards described in FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook. National Recreation Trails are generally not designated within wilderness (FSM 2350).

a. Design and locate trails so that nonmotorized and nonmechanical equipment can be used for construction and management.

b. Design and locate trails to fit into the natural landscape as unobtrusively as possible.

c. Maintain trails by nonmotorized methods except for situations described in section 2326.

2323.14 – Plan and manage public use of wilderness in such a manner that preserves the wilderness character of the area.

2326.02 – Objectives – Accomplish management activities with nonmotorized equipment and nonmechanical transport of supplies and personnel.

2326.03 – Policy – Do not approve the use of motorized equipment unless justified in 2326.1

2326.04b – The Regional Forester is responsible for approving hand-portable motorized equipment….

2326.1 – Conditions under which use may be approved.

#5 – To meet minimum needs for protection and administration of the area as wilderness only as follows:

b. An essential activity is impossible to accomplish by nonmotorized means because of such factors as time or season limitations, safety, or other material restrictions.

The line officer approving the use of motorized equipment…shall specify what uses of that equipment are suitable and will have the least lasting impact to the wilderness resource.

**c. What does your unit plan or wilderness plan say?**

1. **What are your management options?**

Remember to split this minimum requirements decision making process into two parts:

Step 1 – Is any administrative action necessary?

Step 2 – If action is necessary, what is the minimum tool/method that will cause the least

Impairment or degradation of the wilderness resource and character?

**Step 1**: Is administrative action necessary in wilderness to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_?

***Use the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG)handout and the***

***questions listed for Step 1 to assess the issue presented in this case study.***

Based on an analysis of law, agency policy, other valid rights, and possible other non-wilderness mitigations of the problem, is it necessary to take **any** management action in wilderness to address the issue and resolve the problem?

\_\_\_\_ YES \_\_\_\_\_ NO Why?

If the answer is NO, stop the minimum requirements analysis here.

If the answer is YES, summarize the rationale and proceed to Step 2 of the MRDG.

**Step 2:**If action is necessary, what is the minimum tool/method that will cause the least degradation

or impairment of the wilderness resource, character, and values?

***Use the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) handout and the***

***questions listed for Step 1 to assess the issue presented in this case study.***

Identify possible alternatives which include both methods and tools. Can you think of additional, less intrusive methods or tools that should be considered?

***Note – possible or real alternatives for the case study can be listed here or the participants can be***

***prompted to develop them.***

A. No action

B.

C.

D.

Are any other alternatives feasible?

**6. What is your decision?**

Include necessary mitigation measures here.

**7. What is the rationale for your decision?**

The rationale should link the decision made to wilderness management objectives, law, policy, unit plan standards and guidelines, etc. and exlain how this decision best protects the wilderness character while addressing the problem in a feasible manner.

1. Was it necessary to take any action?
2. If so, was the action chosen the minimum necessary to meet stewardship goals?

c) If so, were the tools used the “minimum necessary to accomplish the chosen action

**8. What additional constraints are necessary to minimize disturbance to the wilderness resource and character?**

Timing, location, or frequency of activity?

Maintenance requirements?

Standards or design requirements?

Monitoring?