

Forest Service Policy for the Air Resource in Wilderness

- *Selected sections of the Forest Service Manual: Wilderness and Air Resource Management*
- *Interagency policy guiding selection of air quality related values and sensitive receptors*

Forest Service Manual: 2320 Wilderness Management

[\(http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/fsm/2300/\)](http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/fsm/2300/)

(The following portions of wilderness management direction apply directly or indirectly to air resource management and monitoring activities.)

2320.1 - Authority

7. *The Clean Air Act, as amended August 7, 1977 (42 U.S.C. 7401, 7418, 7470, 7472, 7474, 7475, 7491, 7506, 7602) directs the Forest Service to protect class I air quality standards in certain wilderness areas and class II standards on the remaining wilderness areas.*

2320.2 - Objectives

2. *Maintain wilderness in such a manner that ecosystems are unaffected by human manipulation and influences so that plants and animals develop and respond to natural forces.*
5. *Gather information and carry out research in a manner compatible with preserving the wilderness environment to increase understanding of wilderness ecology, wilderness uses, management opportunities, and visitor behavior.*

2320.3 - Policies

8. *Gather necessary information and carry out research programs in a manner that is compatible with the preservation of the wilderness environment.*

2323.6 - Management of Air Resource

2323.61 - Objectives

1. *Protect air quality and related values, including visibility, on wilderness land designated class I by the Clean Air Act as amended in 1977 (FSM 2120).*
2. *Protect air quality in wilderness areas not qualifying as class I under the same objectives as those for other National Forest System lands (FSM 2120).*

2323.62 - Policy

1. *Define air quality related values (AQRV) and initiate action to protect those values.*
2. *For each air quality related value, select sensitive indicators, monitor, and establish the acceptable level of protection needed to prevent adverse impacts (FSM 2120).*
3. *Determine the potential impacts of proposed facilities in coordination with State air quality management agencies. Make appropriate recommendations in the permitting process following established Prevention of Significant Deterioration application review procedures for major emission sources. Requests to air quality management agencies for consideration of class II values in the permit process are appropriate (FSM 2120).*
4. *Manage smoke from management ignited prescribed fires occurring in or adjacent to class I wilderness areas in a manner that causes the least impact on air quality related values (FSM 2324).*

Forest Service Manual: 2580 Air Resource Management
(<http://fsweb.wo.fs.fed.us/directives/fsm/2500/>) (and select file 2580.rtf)

The following pieces of air resource management direction also pertain to wilderness area management.

2580.2 - Objectives. The objectives of air resource management include:

- 3. Cooperate with air regulatory authorities to prevent significant adverse effects of air pollutants and atmospheric deposition on forest and rangeland resources.*

2580.3 - Policy.

- 1. Integrate air resource management objectives into all resource planning and management activities.*

2580.43 Responsibility, Regional Foresters. Responsibilities include:

- 2. Protect current condition of air quality related values within class I areas.*
- 4. Monitor the effects of air pollution and atmospheric deposition on forest resources.*

Interagency policy guiding selection of air quality related values and sensitive receptors for class I wildernesses. This can also be applied to air quality values selection for class II wildernesses.

**GENERAL POLICY FOR MANAGING AIR QUALITY
RELATED VALUES IN CLASS I AREAS**

**Appendix C of FLAG: Federal Land Managers' Air Quality Related Values
Workgroup Phase I Report, December 2000
(http://www.fs.fed.us/r6/qa/natarm/Flag_final.pdf)**

Most Federal Land Manager (FLM) enabling legislation and regulations developed to implement Federal Laws do not directly address air quality, or air pollution effects on Parks or Wildernesses. They do, however, provide broad direction on what should be protected in Parks and Wildernesses (the earth and its community of life) and to what degree (preserve natural conditions or conserve resources unimpaired). Accordingly, FLMs have developed the following policies related to air quality and Class I areas:

- 1. Class I areas are not merely a commodity for human use and consumption. Park and Wilderness ecosystems have intrinsic values other than user/public concerns.*
- 2. A principle objective of FLM management is to offer a natural user experience, rather than strictly an enjoyable one. The amount of enjoyment is purely a personal matter for the individual user to decide.*
- 3. All Class I components are equally important; none is of lesser value than another.*
- 4. A Class I component is important even if users of the area are unaware of its existence.*
- 5. All life forms are equally important. For example, microorganisms are as essential as elk, wild flowers, or grizzly bears.*
- 6. The goal of Class I management is to protect not only resources with immediate aesthetic appeal (i.e., sparkling clean streams) but also unseen ecological processes (such as natural biodiversity and gene pools).*
- 7. The most sensitive Class I components are to be emphasized more than those of "average" or "normal" sensitivity. Sensitivity is generally determined by inertia (resistance to change), elasticity (how far the component can be stretched from its natural condition without being permanently modified), and resiliency (the number of times it can revert*

to its natural condition after experiencing human-caused change).

- 8. Each Class I component is important in itself; as well as in terms of how it interacts with other components of the ecosystem. That is, the individual parts of the Class I ecosystem are as significant as the sum of the parts.*
- 9. The physical components of the ecosystem (for instance, lake chemistry) are as essential as its biological constituents (i.e., salamanders). That is, the earth is as essential as the community of life.*
- 10. Class I components are to be protected from "human-caused change" rather than from "damage." Terms such as "damage" and "harm" are prejudicial, whereas "human-caused change" is value-neutral. (For example, deposits of nitrogen in a lake from nitrogen oxide, a common air pollutant, might result in more plant growth and larger fish. This would, however, be an unnatural - and therefore unacceptable - change in the aquatic ecosystem).*
- 11. The goal of Class I management is to protect natural conditions, rather than the conditions when first monitored. That is, if initial monitoring in a Class I area identifies human-caused changes, appropriate actions should be taken to remedy them, in order to move towards a more natural condition.*
- 12. The designation of a Park or Wilderness as Class I or II does not dictate the management goals for it; these are identified in the enabling legislation. The designation only determines which options are available to meet the goals. Class I Parks or Wildernesses, for instance, can be protected through AQRV analysis, whereas the protection of Class II Parks and Wildernesses can be achieved using BACT requirements.*
- 13. While it may not be possible to manage every Class I area in a natural or near-natural state, each should be managed in as pristine a condition as the specific (local) biophysical, legal, scientific, and social/political situation will allow. That is, FLMs will do the best job possible of Park and Wilderness management, based on local constraints and opportunities. The extent of actual protection, therefore, may vary.*
- 14. Although monitoring is critical to many air resource management decisions, it must not interfere needlessly with Park or Wilderness. Where possible, the most intrusive monitoring and instrumentation should be conducted adjacent to the Class I area - if such areas adequately represent the area of concern.*