



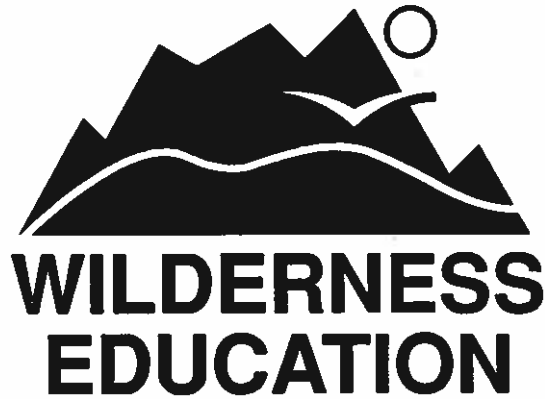
United States
Department of
Agriculture

Forest Service

Recreation Staff



Strategic Plan:



Global Perspective	Public Involvement
Political Arena	Delivery Systems
Partnerships	Evaluation
Programs	Networks
Budget	Training
Personnel	Reserach
Interpretation	Target Audiences
Management Commitment	

Wilderness
Education
Components

Wilderness is a National treasure.... its' global value increases with time.

"We cannot protect these irreplaceable areas simply by leaving them alone... management is our hope for the future, our hope for leaving wilderness unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness."

Jim Overbay, Deputy Chief for National Forest Systems, 1990

Education is the vehicle.

WILDERNESS EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

APRIL 1991

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FORWARD

What is Wilderness Education?

Wilderness education is a management tool used to influence the attitudes and behavior of publics. It teaches people how and why to value wilderness...to understand the fragility of wilderness ecosystems...to understand how their actions affect these ecosystems. Wilderness education strives to enlist the support of publics in caring for our wilderness areas. This is essential for accomplishing our mandate, "to perpetuate for present and future generations, a long-lasting system of high-quality wilderness that represents natural ecosystems".

The foundation of wilderness education lies in the mandates of the 1964 Wilderness Act, which we are charged with enacting. The Act states:

"... there is hereby established a National Wilderness Preservation System to be composed of federally owned areas designated by Congress as "wilderness areas", and these shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness and so to provide for the protection of these areas, the preservation of their wilderness character; and for the gathering and dissemination of information regarding their use and enjoyment as wilderness..."

Ethics and Commitment

Essential in a discussion of wilderness education is an understanding of the concepts "land ethic," "wilderness ethic" and "commitment."

A **land ethic** refers to a set of values and attitudes that together cause an individual or a group to act responsibly toward the land. As Aldo Leopold said in his essay "The Land Ethic" (1949) "...a land ethic changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land community, to plain member and citizen of it." And "We can be ethical only in relation to something we can see, feel, understand, love or otherwise have faith in."

A **wilderness ethic** is a special class of land ethic. Rooted in an understanding of the unique values of wilderness, it nurtures the desire to act in ways that will be good for the living wilderness community.

Commitment goes beyond tacit support. Arising from a basic belief in the value of wilderness, commitment takes the desire of an ethical person to do the right thing, and makes sure the right thing gets done.

Can we detect the presence of something as abstract as an ethic? Aldo Leopold suggested a way when he said "A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise." Each action taken by an individual or by an agency can be measured against this standard. If we are to nurture a wilderness ethic in our publics, we must be able to convey our feelings, our own love of wild places, for this is what people understand.

Can we assess something as intangible as commitment? A person's or an agency's actions demonstrate commitment -- or its absence. For information on assessing commitment, refer to Appendix C.

Strategic Plan and Implementation

The Wilderness Education Task Force was formed to develop a national approach to wilderness education. The charge to improve the wilderness education program can be found in Chapter 5 "Contemporary Resource Issues: Responses Contributing to Resolution" of the 1990 Forest Service RPA "Strategic Plan" for Forest and Rangeland Resources, which states "Education is the most important tool for increasing public awareness about wilderness policy because it affects attitudes, changes behavior, and helps develop outdoor ethics. In partnership with user groups, the Forest Service teaches wilderness ethics and 'no trace' camping practices to wilderness users. If wilderness education succeeds, wilderness managers will be able to rely less and less on regulations and laws to manage wilderness."

The March "Report of the Field Advisory Group on Wilderness Management Effectiveness" recommended "a national wilderness education program to support local wilderness education efforts." It said "...Wilderness belongs to the public and wilderness managers cannot take care of it without the public's help. Wilderness education programs must be delivered at both the local and national levels; use contemporary communications techniques; and include wilderness philosophy, 'leave no trace' messages, and current wilderness management issues. Investments in working with user groups, National organizations, and the media will pay off in greatly reduced needs for Forest Service employees to deliver messages personally to wilderness visitors and the general public."

"The "Leave No Trace" program has been widely used as a management tool, to educate publics about appropriate wilderness etiquette. However, wilderness education also needs to encompass the values which are unique to wilderness and the commitment and ethics which will preserve them. Some wilderness managers are planning and implementing wilderness education programs around such values, but a consistent, service-wide effort needs to be in place. The Field Advisory Group's report also stated "...Successful wilderness management includes educating current and future visitors and agency resource managers about wilderness. It should also provide opportunities for individuals to get personally involved in ensuring that wilderness values will be available to future generations. Education offers the best opportunity to work with all our publics at one time..."

This strategic plan provides national direction for wilderness education, but a combination of actions at all levels of the Forest Service will be necessary to meet its goals and objectives. The plan is not static; the wilderness education program is intended to grow and change based on the needs and values of the Forest Service and society.

The goals and actions in this plan will be initiated or coordinated by the Washington Office; some actions which need to occur throughout the Agency have also been included to indicate areas of particular national importance. The national program is intended to **facilitate** wilderness education on Districts and Forests.

Coordination with the Forest Service's Natural Resource Conservation Education (NRCE) effort is an important component of the strategic plan. The Forest Service has been identified as a key player in environmental education efforts; its effective implementation of a wilderness education program could serve as a model for other programs within and outside the agency. The wilderness education goals put forth in this plan complement NRCE goals (which can be found in Appendix B).

WILDERNESS EDUCATION STRATEGIC PLAN

VISION FOR WILDERNESS EDUCATION

THE FOREST SERVICE IS AT THE FOREFRONT OF THE WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT AND USES EDUCATION AS A PRIMARY MANAGEMENT TOOL.

The wilderness education program exemplifies the Agencies role as a wise steward of wild lands and will fulfill the Forest Service's mandate to preserve wilderness quality.

A high quality, fully-supported wilderness education program, targeted both within the agency and at our publics, will:

- o Foster knowledge and understanding of wilderness values.
- o Influence behavioral changes that promote the preservation of wilderness quality.
- o Instill and strengthen a wilderness ethic that results in informed decision making.
- o Carry wilderness values to those who do not experience wilderness through visitation.
- o Create a constituency which supports Forest Service wilderness management.

WILDERNESS EDUCATION GOALS

1. **EFFECTIVE PROGRAM:** AN EFFECTIVE WILDERNESS EDUCATION PROGRAM IS IN PLACE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE ORGANIZATION.
2. **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION:** INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FOREST SERVICE SUPPORT THE WILDERNESS EDUCATION PROGRAM.
3. **MONITORING AND EVALUATION:** CONTINUOUS MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ADJUSTMENT OCCURS AT ALL LEVELS OF THE AGENCY TO MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM AND A LEADERSHIP PROFILE IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION.
4. **WORKFORCE:** THE WILDERNESS WORK FORCE IS KNOWLEDGEABLE, CREDIBLE, AND SKILLED IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION.
5. **RESOURCES TO THE FIELD:** RESOURCES (People, Funding, Materials,) FOR WILDERNESS EDUCATION ARE CONCENTRATED AT THE FIELD LEVEL.

GOAL 1. EFFECTIVE PROGRAM: AN EFFECTIVE WILDERNESS EDUCATION PROGRAM IS IN PLACE AT ALL LEVELS OF THE WILDERNESS MANAGEMENT ORGANIZATION.

Objectives:

- A. Wilderness education plans are written and implemented for each unit with wilderness responsibilities.
- B. Elements of wilderness education programs and activities include: 1) content and intent of the Wilderness Act; 2) values of wilderness; 3) wilderness ethics; and 4) leave no trace skills.
- C. Delivery systems that enable educators to present diverse programs are identified and created.
- D. Education programs and activities include personal experience and a hands-on approach.
- E. Wilderness education "Center of Excellence" concept is recognized, showcased, and supported, especially those centers that are directly responsive to and support field needs.
- F. Wilderness management concepts are woven into all natural resource education programs.
- G. Increased emphasis on wilderness values and resources is incorporated in National and Regional Interpretation programs.

Actions:

- 1. Seek additional FY 91 and FY 92 funds to aligning current wilderness education materials and programs into a well-coordinated, national effort. Coordinate the Forest Service's national wilderness education program with other NRCE programs.
- 2. Develop a set of sequential (early elementary through adult) goals and objectives for wilderness education. Reference existing national and state goals for environmental education.
- 3. Compile an inventory of existing wilderness education materials and analyze to determine effectiveness, applicability to wilderness goals, and needs. Develop materials, programs and partnerships to fill unmet needs. Consider the use of NineMile Wildlands Training Center and establishing a coordinator for such efforts.
- 4. Inventory and compile existing information and materials that outline the wilderness education process as well as content and product. Include current and future needs, internal and external programs, existing and potential partnerships, and a global perspective. This can be accomplished through existing networks such as NineMile Wildlands Training Center, a research station or university.
- 5. Work to blend the existing "Leave No Trace" program with additional wilderness education materials and processes.

6. Establish a method for wilderness education program evaluation needs. Reference the project by Kristin Meyer and Chico State University in conjunction with NRCE.

GOAL 2. INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION: INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION CHANNELS WITHIN AND OUTSIDE THE FOREST SERVICE SUPPORT THE EDUCATION PROGRAM.

Objectives:

- A. People throughout the agency are familiar with the national strategic plan for wilderness education.
- B. A network and a clearinghouse for wilderness educators and managers is developed. Its services include providing access to an up-to-date inventory of education programs and activities that focus on wilderness principles and a catalog of training opportunities.
- C. Other disciplines within the agency, including silviculture, fire, wildlife, interpretive services and others, are included in wilderness education communications channels.

Actions:

1. Build a model for wilderness education training, coordination and communication networks. Use "Masters Performers" and "Centers of Excellence" concepts (See Appendix E for description of Region 6 "Master Performer"). Coordinate efforts with NRCE.
2. Establish a wilderness education network to transmit information and materials on training sessions and programs. Use existing networks and key contacts or Centers of Excellence to coordinate networks and information. Examples of existing information sources include Earth Education Institute, Student Conservation Association, Recreation Short Courses, regional "Recreation University" activities, partnerships, and research.
3. Sponsor a wilderness education workshop in fall 1991 for experienced program developers to share their knowledge with other units as "Master Performers" in wilderness education. This would take the "train the trainers" approach similar to that used with the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process. Identify a "Master Performer" to coordinate the workshop and provide support to this person through the Ninemile Wildlands Training Center. Coordinate with NRCE
4. Complete wilderness exhibits which will be tools for conveying the full range of wilderness values to viewing publics. One exhibit, designed as a free-standing nomadic structure, will be easily assembled, inflexible, and "elephant proof". The other will be a set of photos and captions that can be mounted on display boards that units already own and may be supplemented with local photos. These can be purchased through the Washington Office by ROs and other units and will be available for use at conferences, public meetings, fairs, and other special events.

GOAL 3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION: CONTINUOUS MONITORING, EVALUATION AND ADJUSTMENT OCCURS AT ALL LEVELS TO MAINTAIN AN EFFECTIVE PROGRAM AND A LEADERSHIP PROFILE IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION.

Objectives:

- A. Wilderness education is included in all existing, wilderness annual reports, at all levels of the agency.
- B. Measurable objectives are included in wilderness education action plans and specific components. Continuous evaluation is employed in meeting these objectives. Programs are adjusted as needed.
- C. Existing research findings related to education monitoring and evaluation are translated and disseminated.
- D. Wilderness education goals and objectives are part of the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process.

Actions:

- 1. Include wilderness education action items in the Annual Wilderness Report. Ensure format is consistent, relevant and useful to field personnel. Provide format for written documentation of wilderness education from other disciplines within the Agency. This could be accomplished by WO detailers and/or as a Recreation Short Course project.
- 2. Develop guidance to indicate how wilderness education needs and programs can be addressed in the Plan of Operation for each wilderness area, including evaluation processes. Guidance to be part of the work assigned to the Taskforce on Wilderness Planning in mid- to late 1991. Encourage units to apply "Designing Your Wilderness Education Action Plan" process developed by the Forest Service and Wilderness Watch (distributed with this plan).
- 3. Develop a reporting format for seasonal staff ("end-of-season report"), which includes wilderness education as a component of the report. Portions would be used as sections of the Annual Wilderness Report. This could be initiated as a pilot effort on several field units, directed by "Master Performers."
- 4. Determine methods and guidelines to train employees on the development of measurable and observable goals and objectives for education materials and programs. Encourage managers to collect and evaluate baseline data to effectively target wilderness education efforts. Information can be found in "Designing Your Wilderness Education Action Plan" (distributed with this plan).
- 5. Compile, translate and distribute evaluation research which already exists to wilderness manager at all levels. This is an ongoing project of Kristen Meyer, Chico State University; another contact is David Lime, University of Minnesota. Coordinate with NRCE.
- 6. Include discussions of wilderness education in the Limits of Acceptable Change (LAC) process. The LAC Workshop in Jackson, WY, May 6-8, 1991, will begin this dialogue. **New Ideas for Limits of Acceptable Change Process** publication will include wilderness education guidance.

GOAL 4. WORKFORCE: THE WILDERNESS WORK FORCE IS KNOWLEDGEABLE, CREDIBLE, AND SKILLED IN WILDERNESS EDUCATION.

Objectives:

- A. Career ladders exist for employees with wilderness responsibilities.
- B. People qualified as wilderness educators are selected for wilderness management positions at all levels. Managers are accountable for quality wilderness education programs within their areas of responsibility, which includes selecting candidates based, in part, on oral and written communication abilities and interpretation skills.
- C. Training opportunities in wilderness education from within and outside the agency are included in the training guide. Training plans reflect skills essential for wilderness education.
- D. Progressive contributions to wilderness education are recognized and rewarded.
- E. Appropriate wilderness education training for non-wilderness specialists and Forest Service staff who work with recreation visitors is provided.
- F. Colleges and universities are encouraged to develop appropriate training for wilderness educators/managers.

Actions:

- 1. Develop an Emphasis Item for Regional Foresters to encourage the identification and conversion of skilled, temporary employees to permanent seasonal or full-time positions to help retain critical wilderness education skills to eliminate the problem of developing skills and obtaining training for effective presentations and in overall program management. Better trained employees, working longer tours will result in fewer dollars spent on retraining and increase effectiveness in wilderness education.
- 2. Include wilderness managers and educators in the technical and professional job series. Standard position descriptions for wilderness technicians will be available for field use in Spring, 1991. Similar standard position descriptions will be developed for professionals. All will include wilderness education responsibilities.
- 3. Review job descriptions to ensure that they include wilderness education responsibilities. Define knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSA's) essential to positions with wilderness responsibilities. Write sample performance standards for the different positions involved in wilderness management (line and staff in recreation and other resource functions).
- 4. Encourage "home projects" on wilderness education in the Recreation Short Courses offered at Utah State and Clemson; actions identified in this plan could be some of the first projects submitted for consideration by shortcourse participants.
- 5. Emphasize wilderness education in training for Line Officers. Include components on wilderness education in the National Wilderness Training and regional training sessions for Line Officers.

6. Continue National Wilderness Education Awards. Add recognition of Line Officers who provide wilderness education leadership.
7. Develop a basic wilderness education "primer" for employees newly assigned to wilderness positions. A small booklet of basic ideas and information will help wilderness employees get started, since many will be expected to speak intelligently and prepare educational materials or presentations from their first day on the job. Employees re-assigned from other staff areas and employees new to the Forest Service can benefit from such a primer while they wait for more formal training, coaching and on-the-job experience.
8. Ensure that wilderness education is included in any work done with colleges and universities on developing wilderness management coursework. Coordinate with Bev Driver.

GOAL 5. RESOURCES TO THE FIELD: RESOURCES (people, funding, and materials) FOR WILDERNESS EDUCATION ARE CONCENTRATED AT THE FIELD LEVEL.

Objectives:

- A. Existing temporary workforce is brought into the permanent workforce.
- B. Wilderness education needs and accountability are addressed in Forest Plans and Plans of Operation for all wilderness areas.
- C. All districts with wilderness management responsibilities develop and implement an education action plan.
- D. Budget and staffing components for wilderness education, including personnel and equipment needs, are developed at the district level; at a minimum, Interpretive Specialists and Public Affairs staff are involved.

Actions:

1. Work with regional Wilderness Specialists as they coordinate the development of Forest Wilderness education plans that tier to national program.
2. Define the role of regional Public Affairs managers, Interpretive Specialists and Wilderness Specialists in supporting wilderness education.
3. Address the need for district education action plans in the Plan for Operation for each wilderness by supplying a copy of "Designing Your Wilderness Education Action Plan" to all ranger districts (a copy is included with this plan). All Districts need not have a plan if a for-wide or wilderness-wide action plan exists.
4. Include wilderness education program in future activity reviews.

APPENDIX A: WILDERNESS EDUCATION TASK FORCE MEMBERS

Rachel Schneider, Public Affairs Spec., Chattahoochee-Oconee National Forest
Susan Thomas, Wilderness Education Specialist, Wilderness Watch
Kristen Meyer, Wilderness Education Specialist, Wilderness Watch
Nancy Krebs, Wilderness Ranger, Wasatch-Cache National Forest
Michael Wilson, Wilderness Ranger, Bitterroot National Forest
Susan Odell, Recreation Assistant, Washington Office
Ellen Hawkins, Wilderness Ranger, Superior National Forest

APPENDIX B: NATURAL RESOURCE CONSERVATION EDUCATION PROGRAM GOALS

1. Increase awareness, knowledge and appreciation of natural resources;
2. Promote critical thinking skills that enable people to recognize the complexity of resource issues and to make choices within social, political, scientific, and economic realities; and
3. Foster the individual's responsibilities to conserve, preserve, and wisely use natural resources.

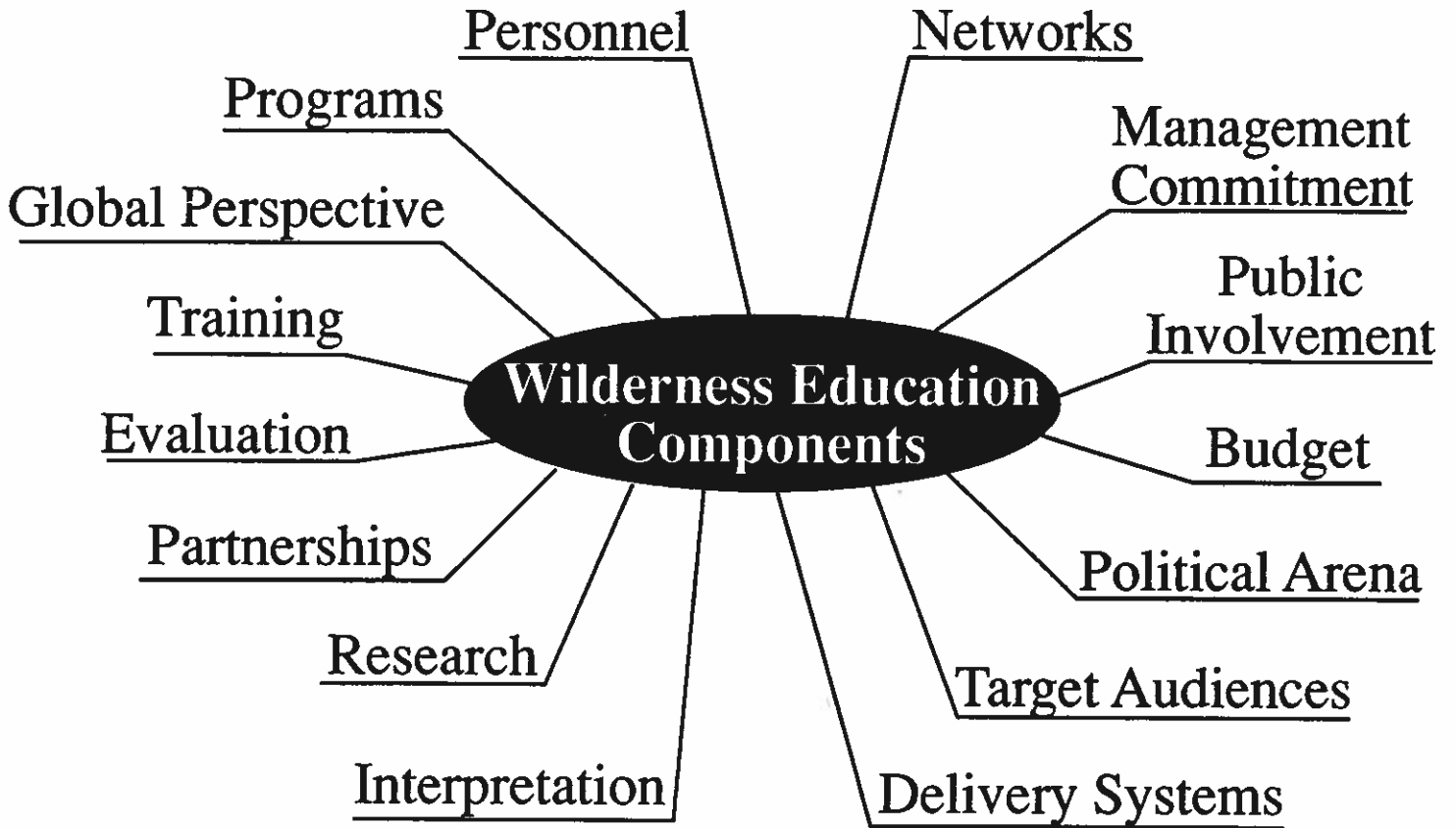
APPENDIX C: ASSESSING COMMITMENT TO WILDERNESS EDUCATION

An effective wilderness education program depends on the support and commitment of employees throughout the National forest system. Line officer support is particularly important. People must hold at least a basic belief in the value of wilderness -- commitment -- if the Forest Service is to be the leader in wilderness education and management.

The following are examples of actions which would demonstrate commitment.

1. All levels of management are involved with, and in touch with, what happens on the ground.
2. Managers make a long term commitment of dollars and people, recognizing that this is an essential component of an effective education program.
3. Managers recognize wilderness as a multiple use on equal footing with other uses of National Forest lands; they recognize and use education as a tool in managing this use.
4. Emphasis is placed on all values of wilderness, not just on traditional recreational uses.
5. The organization is involved with other conservation- and education-oriented organizations. Forest Service managers are respected and consulted by members of the conservation and education communities.
6. A direct connection with wilderness on a personal and professional level is maintained, thereby reinforcing and recharging commitment.

APPENDIX D: WILDERNESS EDUCATION COMPONENTS



APPENDIX E: REGION 6 "MASTER PERFORMER" PROGRAM

The Master Performer program is a systematic way of recognizing people with **master's** level skills who are **performing** specialized tasks and then making those skills available to other Units on a consulting basis. The ultimate goal is to use these skills to produce the highest possible quality product to the public.

Product: The role of the Master Performer is to provide advice, critique, support, etc., for a time period generally less than a week. If a Master Performer is desired for a long-term detail that arrangement is outside the scope of this program. The actual product will be a verbal or written report as required by the requesting Unit.

Time Required: Master Performers will be expected to spend approximately 10-15% of their time in the program. Some may want to spend more time, some less. The actual time availability will be arranged between the RO program managers and the unit making the Master Performer available.

Funding Assistance: Funds will be provided by the RO at the start of the fiscal year to pay for the estimated time the Master Performer will be performing consulting services to other units. Additional funding needs over those initially provided will have to be negotiated with the RO program manager and/or the requesting unit.

Critique: The receiving unit will be expected to provide a formal critique of the services rendered by the Master Performer.

Rewards: The inclusion of the Master Performer duties in a job description may qualify the person for a higher grade. The person will also receive recognition in the form of a special pin, identification at training sessions, and in publications describing the program and through the recognition that comes with additional exposure and the production of a high quality project.

Program Management: Overall guidance is being provided in Recreation by a steering committee consisting of the group leaders of Dispersed Recreation and Wilderness, Developed Recreation and Special Uses and Interpretive Services. Further direct management will be provided by the individual program managers.

Eligibility: Any person who is highly skilled and is still performing a job identified as needing a Master Performer on the Regional list may apply by submitting an application to the Regional Office. The application must list the training and experience that qualify the person as a master performer and include a recommendation by the person's immediate supervisor supporting the application. Part-time employees and volunteers may qualify as long as they are available when the skills are needed.

Nominations: The application process for Master Performers will consider recognized skills, knowledge, experience, and supervisory approval.

Supervisory Approval: In addition to the recommendation of the immediate supervisor approval by the appropriate unit leader (Ranger, Forest Supervisor, Director, etc.) is required.

Acceptance to the Program: The steering committee plus the applicable RO program managers will decide on the individuals included in the Master Performer program. This decision will be guided by (1) the demand for the skill, (2) the availability of the skill, (3) the actual skills of the person nominated, (4) the time the person has available, and (5) performance as a Master Performer.