Forest Service
Pacific Southwest Region

Summary:
The Wilderness Evaluation Process
and
Process for Identifying Areas for Potential Wilderness Recommendation during Environmental Analysis

The Forest Service is revising the Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra National Forests' land and resource management plans as directed by the 2012 Planning Rule. This rule requires us to identify and evaluate lands that may be suitable for inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. There are four steps in this process: inventory, evaluation, analysis and recommendation. The process outlined below explains our approach to the second step: wilderness evaluation. This process follows guidance outlined in the 2012 Planning Rule Directives, Forest Service Handbook 1909.12 Chapter 70, and the Wilderness Act of 1964.

Below we provide a summary of the wilderness evaluation step (section I) as well as the criteria we use for identifying areas during environmental analysis (also known as National Environmental Policy Act or NEPA analysis) for potential wilderness recommendation (section II). We also provide two supporting documents to explain how we evaluated wilderness characteristics (Attachment A), and to share the guidance we use for considering whether to bring areas forward for environmental analysis (Attachment B).

I. Wilderness Evaluation Process

A. Inventory dataset and map

1. **Creation of an evaluation dataset and map based on the final inventory.** To begin the evaluation phase an evaluation dataset and map were prepared using the final inventory map and data. The evaluation map and dataset included all the areas that met the inventory criteria in the final inventory and excluded those areas that were excluded from the final inventory. The set of areas in the final inventory were referred to as the evaluation dataset and the map as the evaluation map. The intent of this first step was to create a clean dataset with which to begin the evaluation phase that no longer included areas considered but not included in the final inventory.

B. Consideration of motorized trails

1. **Mapping and creation of subpolygons:**

   a. Staff at each national forest mapped designated motorized trails and overlaid those maps on the evaluation maps, which contain all the polygons identified in the inventory process.

b. The staffs then created subpolygons within the inventory polygons that encompass authorized motor vehicle trails in order to separate those motor vehicle trails from the rest of the polygon.

2. **Assessment of subpolygons:**

a. The staffs evaluated the subpolygons containing designated motorized trails to determine the impact of those trails on the wilderness characteristics of the area. This entailed examining:

(i) The prevalence of motorized trails, and

(ii) The level of commitment to these trails (that is, is there strong commitment to maintaining them as evidenced by the Travel Management Subpart B decision-making process).

b. This step was based on the assumption that areas networked with motorized trails may not have high potential for wilderness recommendation because they will likely lack wilderness character due to the authorized motorized activity. The Forest Service recognized there may be exceptions to this, but it was a starting assumption.

3. **Public input on subpolygons approach and change in direction:**

a. The public provided input on the evaluation step through two avenues: input on the evaluation map showing the motorized and non-motorized subpolygons through the Web-based "Talking Points" system, and scoping comments on the Federal Register notice of intent and proposed action.

b. Public input received on the maps resulted in the decision to retain all the subpolygons for evaluation, including those that contained designated motor vehicle trails. There was concern the Forest Service was automatically excluding the areas with motorized trails identified on the "Talking Points" map from being evaluated for wilderness characteristics and a belief that despite the current authorized motorized use, wilderness characteristics may be present in some areas. As a result, all polygons identified in the final inventory dataset were brought forward in their entirety for evaluation, as described below.

C. Evaluation of wilderness characteristics based on Chapter 70 of the Forest Service Directives

Each of the three forests has assembled an interdisciplinary team which is conducting a thorough review of each evaluation polygon using the best information available and focused on a set of questions derived from guidance in chapter 70 of the directives.

An initial spreadsheet assessing the wilderness characteristics was created by the teams on each national forest for each polygon and any available information relevant to those characteristics has been documented in the spreadsheet. The list of questions based on chapter 70 is contained in Attachment A: Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics.

D. Narrative summaries of evaluations

1. **Draft evaluation narratives.** The wilderness evaluation narrative spreadsheets populated by the national forest staffs are being used to write a draft summary of the wilderness characteristics for each evaluation polygon in the inventory. These preliminary wilderness evaluation narratives include:

a. A general description of the area, including the ecological groups present in the area that may be underrepresented in the wilderness system;

b. A description of the factors relevant to the wilderness characteristics of the area including the degree the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature; opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation; and other features of value;

c. A discussion of the ecosystems present in the evaluation polygon and their representation in the National Wilderness Preservation System. The forests used existing information and data provided by The Wilderness Society, which was reviewed and verified, to develop these descriptions;

d. A description of issues related to manageability;

e. A summary of all the factors relevant to the potential suitability for the area's inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

E. Public input

Public input has been gathered to date in a number of ways and is being considered in the development of the evaluation narratives in an iterative process. Further public input will be collected on the evaluation narratives themselves following publication of the evaluation narratives in the draft environmental impact statement (DEIS), as noted below.

1. **Evaluation maps and Web-based "Talking Points."** The Forest Service notified stakeholders that the final inventory maps with the areas affected by motorized trails identified would be posted to the "Talking Points" system on the Pacific Southwest Region's Web site. Stakeholders were notified that the national forests were in the process of evaluating these areas and they were asked to provide any information about the areas that would help document the wilderness characteristics of the areas. Information provided by stakeholders was given via the Web site as both written comments and specific points or areas highlighted geographically on the map. These comments were systematically reviewed and if new information was brought forward about specific areas the forests reviewed, verified, and incorporated the information in to the evaluation spreadsheets and draft narratives.

2. **Scoping comments.** The Forest Service systematically reviewed scoping comments. If a comment had information that could potentially be new information about the wilderness characteristics or manageability of specific evaluation polygons then that information was highlighted and matched to the evaluation polygon number. The national forest staffs were then asked to go through all of those comments and if that information had not already been identified by the staff then they verified the information and incorporated it into the spreadsheet and draft narratives where applicable. Scoping comments that were more general in nature were categorized, summarized and provided to the forest supervisor for consideration as they were making decisions about what to bring forward into the draft environmental impact statement. This summary presented the full range of opinions expressed through scoping comments regarding the wilderness evaluation.

3. **Reports summarizing ecosystem representation information.** As noted above, in addition to the other public and stakeholder comments the Forest Service received, the Wilderness Society submitted substantial and detailed information regarding ecosystem representation (four large tables and 9 maps). The Forest Service reviewed and synthesized this information into one cohesive document for each forest. These detailed reports were provided to each

forest interdisciplinary team and are being considered during the evaluation process. The information will be summarized in the wilderness evaluation narratives.

4. **Future DEIS Appendix.** The evaluation narratives will be included in an appendix to the DEIS as provided by the directives (chapter 72.2) and available for comment.

II. Process for identifying areas brought forward for environmental analysis

A. Information sources

1. **Draft wilderness evaluation narratives.**

2. **Scoping comments.**

3. **Other public input.**

4. **"Guidance for Consideration of Evaluated Areas for Recommendation in an Alternative."** (Attachment B)

B. Process

1. **Initial recommendations.** Forest supervisors met with staff to review the draft wilderness evaluation narratives and to make initial recommendations regarding areas to be brought forward for environmental analysis.

   a. Considerations. The draft evaluation narratives provided the primary foundation for the initial identification of potential recommended wilderness areas. The starting point was identifying areas with the highest quality of wilderness character based on the narrative and the location. (For example, areas with high characteristics adjacent to existing wilderness). After the initial round of high quality characteristics was determined, considerations for inclusion involved the extent of development both within and adjacent to the polygon, consideration for the feasibility of management as wilderness, such as the need to maintain the ability to undertake vegetation management to protect infrastructure and communities from wildfire. As the quality of wilderness characteristics diminished, polygons were assessed for the presence of infrastructure (motorized trails, mountain bike trails), or established activities that are incompatible with wilderness (groomed snowmobile trails, existing land uses requiring motorized access). These polygons were assessed carefully and if the existing uses were of a limited extent a determination was made on inclusion. Additional reviews between the three forests (Inyo, Sequoia, and Sierra), were done to ensure consistency in applying the process and as a result additional polygons went through the same process of consideration for inclusion.

   b. Preparation of maps and narratives for initial recommended wilderness areas. The forests refined the boundary for each of the initial recommended wilderness areas based on the criteria in chapter. 70. Each narrative description of the area was based on the direction in chapter 70 and included the following:

      (i) Name of potential recommended wilderness area

      (ii) Number of acres

      (iii) A description of the location and of the recommended boundary

      (iv) A description of the general geography, topography, and vegetation

(v) A description of current uses

(vi) A description of the wilderness characteristics of the area and the ability to protect and manage the area so as to preserve wilderness characteristics.

2. **Evaluation and identification of initial recommendations.** The forests started drafting summaries of the evaluation narratives aimed at addressing the question of whether the individual polygons, or portions of those polygons, would be suitable as recommended wilderness or not. The forests considered the following criteria for drafting these initial summaries (see also Attachment B). This criteria was based on direction found in the Forest Service Directives 1909.12:

a. Describe element in terms of the degree the area appears to be affected by the forces of nature, its apparent naturalness, i.e., whether or not human impacts are substantially noticeable.

(i) Whether or not the composition of plant and animal communities appear substantially unnatural (for example, past management activities have created a plantation style forest with trees of a uniform species, age, and planted in rows).

(ii) Extent to which the area appears to reflect ecological conditions that would normally be associated with the area without human intervention.

(iii) Extend to which improvements included in the area represent a departure from apparent naturalness.

b. Describe the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The word "or" means that an area only has to possess one or the other. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have outstanding opportunities on every acre.

(i) Describe impacts that are pervasive and influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude within the evaluated area. Factors to consider may include topography, presence of screening, distance from impacts, degree of permanent intrusions, and pervasive sights and sounds from outside the area.

(ii) Describe the relative opportunity to engage in primitive-type or unconfined recreation.

c. Describe the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics. Consider such factors as:

(i) Shape and configuration of the area;

(ii) Legally established rights or uses within the area;

(iii) Specific Federal or State laws that may be relevant to the availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage the area to protect wilderness characteristics;

(iv) The presence and amount of non-Federal land in the area; and;

(v) Management of adjacent lands.

3. **Release of Initial Recommendations.** The Forest Service posted to its public website the maps and narratives of each initially selected area on the Pacific Southwest Regional planning Web site.

4. **Review of scoping comments and additional public input.** The forests have undertaken additional review of public comments, including comments that were received after the

formal scoping period closed, and compared the public's recommendations with the draft evaluation narratives. The careful review of public comments has fostered additional review of the inventoried polygons and development of the evaluation narratives in an iterative and ongoing process that involves: (1) reviewing public comments for any new information not considered in the narratives; (2) reviewing the narratives for consistency and clarity; (3) ensuring that statements regarding wilderness characteristics in the narratives are supported.

5. **Identification of additional areas to bring forward for environmental analysis as recommended wilderness.** The Forest Supervisors continue to meet with staff to determine which additional areas could be brought forward as recommended wilderness under one or more alternatives in the EIS. The following are the basic steps that the Forest Supervisors use in evaluating areas to include as recommended wilderness under one or more of the alternatives in the environmental analysis:

   a. **First screen:** Appearance of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude OR primitive recreation.

      (i) Consideration is given as to whether human modifications to the area are substantially noticeable or not. Polygons where human modifications, such as mining operations, extensive range developments, plantations, etc., are substantially noticeable and adversely affect the appearance of naturalness are not brought forward.

      (ii) Polygons are evaluated to determine the degree to which they offer opportunities for solitude or a primitive recreation experience. Where external factors adversely affect opportunities for solitude or a primitive experience, consideration is given to how extensive the adverse effect is within the polygon under consideration. Polygons where these opportunities are low due to various factors such as the presence and/or adjacency of motorized roads and trails, groomed snowmobile trails, recreation sites, and infrastructure, among others, are typically removed from further evaluation.

      (iii) All polygons are evaluated to determine whether they could be redrawn to exclude the activities that adversely affect the appearance of naturalness or opportunities for solitude or a primitive experience and whether the remaining area retains an appearance of naturalness and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.

   b. **Second screen:** Manageability

      (i) Consideration is given to whether existing management activities and potential future management needs conflict with preserving the area's wilderness characteristics. This includes, but is not limited to, fuels and vegetation management activities needed to protect adjacent high value areas and communities, management of existing special use permits and facilities, the need for habitat restoration activities for sage-grouse, and the ability to define polygon boundaries and keep incompatible uses out of the recommended wilderness area.

   c. **Third screen:** Ecosystem representation. Consideration is given to whether the area presents an opportunity to protect an ecosystem that is underrepresented.

   d. **General principle:** Although the considerations above represent primary decision considerations, in very few cases is an area eliminated or brought forward based on one factor alone. Instead, each area is evaluated holistically, and those with the wilderness

characteristics and manageability needed to support their recommendation as wilderness brought forward, taking full account of the level of public interest that was expressed for and against additional wilderness areas on each forest.

III. Work in progress

Boundaries, maps, and narratives for the additional potential recommended wilderness areas are currently being developed and finalized. In addition, evaluation narratives and rationales for areas not being brought forward are being completed. All of this information will appear in either an appendix in the DEIS or in the project record.

Attachment A: Evaluation of Wilderness Characteristics[1]

1. **Evaluate the degree to which the area generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable.** Consider such factors as:

   a. **The composition of plant and animal communities.** The purpose of this factor is to determine if plant and animal communities have been substantially impacted by man.

      (i) What human impact is there to the plant communities?

         1) Are invasive species present? If so which ones and how prevalent are they? Are they increasing or decreasing?

         2) Is fire occurring within its range of natural variability?

         3) Describe the past and current vegetation management.

         4) Describe past and current grazing activities.

      (ii) What human impact is there to wildlife, fish, amphibians, and invertebrates?

         1) Are there feral species present? If so, please describe the situation.

         2) Are there invasive species present? If so please describe the situation.

         3) Does fish stocking occur in this area? If so, please describe whether native species are stocked or not. Are the lakes or streams where stocking is occurring self-sustaining? What frequency does stocking occur? Are any motorized or mechanized transportation or equipment used?

         4) Are there any overpopulation issues? Please describe.

         5) Does the area provide contiguous habitat or connectivity for fish and wildlife? Please describe.

   b. **To what extent does the area reflect conditions that would normally be associated with the area absent human intervention?**

      (i) Does the area have ecological integrity?

         1) Is species composition/succession generally the result of natural processes or have they been manipulated by humans?

      (ii) What are the hydrologic conditions of the area?

      (iii) What is the air quality of the area?

      (iv) What are the soil conditions of the area?

      (v) What is the condition of meadow and riparian areas within the area?

   c. **What improvements, if any, are in the area and what is their impact on the naturalness of the area?**

      (i) Are there any airstrips or heliports? If so, what affects do they have to the naturalness of the surrounding area?

      (ii) Have there been vegetation treatments in the area? Please describe. Are they substantially noticeable?

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[1] Evaluation Criteria Based on FSH 1909.12 Chapter 70

(iii) Does the area contain timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction had occurred? Please describe. Are they substantially noticeable?

(iv) Are there permanently installed vertical structures within the area, such as electronic installations including cell towers, television and radio repeaters, etc.? Please describe.

    1) What is the frequency of access and type of access required for maintenance and administration of any vertical structures in the areas?

(v) Does the area contain historic mining sites? Please describe. Are they substantially noticeable?

(vi) Does the area contain current mining activity? Please describe. Are the impacts substantially noticeable? What is the frequency of access and type of access required?

(vii) What type and amount of structural (fences, water troughs, etc.) and non-structural (chaining, burning, spraying, potholing, etc.) range improvements, if any, are present in the area?

(viii) Are there any recreation improvements within the area? Please describe. How easily could these be removed?

(ix) Are there any ground return telephone lines, electric lines, power lines, or other similar permanently installed linear right-of-way structures present where the right-of-way has not been cleared? Please describe.

(x) Does the area contain any watershed treatment areas (contouring, diking, channeling, hand constructed gully plugs, etc.). Please describe. If so, are they substantially noticeable?

(xi) Are there developments or activities immediately adjacent to the area? Please describe. Do they impact opportunities for solitude?

(xii) Are there any structures, dwellings or other relics of past occupation present? If so, please describe them and if/how they are being maintained?

2. **Evaluate the degree to which the area has outstanding opportunities for solitude or for primitive and unconfined type of recreation.** Does the area provide a feeling of isolation or a sense that civilization has been left behind?

    a. What opportunities are there to engage in primitive type or unconfined recreation activities that lead to a visitor's ability to feel a part of nature?

        (i) What are the types of primitive-type recreation activities, current and potential, in the area? Please describe what opportunities there are for the following types of activities: wildlife observation, hiking, backpacking, horseback riding, fishing, hunting, floating, kayaking, cross-country skiing, camping, climbing, photography, and enjoying nature.

        (ii) Does the area provide visitors with a degree of challenge or risk while using outdoor skills? Please describe the degree to which the area offers visitors the opportunity to experience adventure, excitement, challenge, initiative, or self-reliance, the unusual or typical.

    b. Consider impacts that are pervasive and that influence a visitor's opportunity for solitude.

        (i) What is the topography of the area?

        (ii) Is screening present due to topography and vegetation?

        (iii) How much distance is there from impacts from developments and activities on adjacent lands?

        (iv) What is the degree of permanent intrusions in the area due to existing infrastructure?

        (v) Are sights and sounds from outside the area present? Please describe.

            1) Can a traveler see or hear evidence of civilization from within the area?

            2) Is the area a quiet place free from motorized noise?

            3) Are motorized trails present in the area? If so, how prevalent are they?

        (vi) What is the potential for encounters with other visitors (high, medium, low)?

            1) Are there seasonal differences?

            2) How is use distributed in the area?

3. Evaluate how an area less than 5,000 acres is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition.

    a. Is the area less than 5,000 acres?

    b. Is the area contiguous to existing wilderness, recommended wilderness or similar classifications on adjacent lands of other agencies?

    c. Does the size of the area allow for its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition? Explain.

4. Evaluate the degree to which an area may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, or historical value.

    a. Does the area contain any rare plants, animals or ecosystems? Please describe.

    b. Does the area contain outstanding landscape features such as waterfalls, mountains, viewpoints, water bodies or geologic features? Please describe.

    c. Does the area contain any historic or cultural sites? (Confidentiality requirements will be respected) Please describe.

    d. Does the area contain any Research Natural Areas or other special designations? Please describe.

    e. Does the area contain high quality water resources or important watershed features? Please describe.

    f. Are there other unique or exceptional features of value? Please describe.

5. Evaluate the degree to which the area may be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics.

    a. What is the shape and configuration of the area?

    (i) Does it have a narrow, elongated or gerrymandered type of shape? If so, How easily could this shape be managed?

    (ii) Are there any cherry stemmed roads running into the roadless area? If yes, describe the extent, current access, uses and level of activity.

    (iii) Does the existing boundary provide for easy management of the area?

b. Are there any legally established uses in the area?

    (i) Are there any legal easements? Please describe.

    (ii) Are there any mining claims in the area? Please describe.

    (iii) Is there any established access to private inholdings? If yes, describe the extent, current access, uses and level of activity.

    (iv) Do any military training activities occur in the area? Please describe.

    (v) Is there active tribal use of the area for ceremonies or traditional uses? Please describe.

    (vi) Are there any water impoundments? Please describe the extent, current access, maintenance and administrative needs.

    (vii) Are there any existing water rights within the area? Please describe.

    (viii) Is grazing permitted within the area? If so, what is specifically permitted?

    (ix) Are there any lands special uses permits issued within this area. If yes, please describe.

c. Are there any specific federal or state laws that may be relevant to the availability of the area for wilderness or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Please list the laws and their effect on the area. (For Example: ESA and the management activities in an area necessary for SN Bighorn Sheep management.)

d. Is non-federal land present within the area?

    (i) Describe the amount and ownership.

    (ii) Describe the uses and activities.

    (iii) Is it an inholding or an edgeholding? If an inholding, what is access across NFS land.

e. What type of management is occurring on adjacent lands?

    (i) What is the ownership of adjacent lands?

    (ii) What are the current uses of adjacent lands?

    (iii) Is there a potential for existing or potential public uses and activities on adjacent lands to increase that might result in demands to allow nonconforming structures/activities in wilderness? Please describe the situation.

f. Are there any other designations overlying the area?

    (i) Are there Wild and Scenic Rivers? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(ii) Are there Pacific Crest Trail segments? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(iii) Are there other designated trails? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(iv) Are there National Monuments? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(v) Are there National Recreation Areas? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(vi) Are there Special Management Areas? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

(vii) Are there Research Natural Areas? Are there provisions of the designation that could potentially affect wilderness character or the ability to manage and protect wilderness? Could multiple designations enhance the wilderness protections?

6. **Describe any other information that might be relevant to determining the wilderness character of this area based on public feedback.**

Attachment B: Guidance for Consideration of Evaluated Areas for Recommendation in an Alternative

- **The recommended areas should have suitable wilderness characteristics:**

  ♦ Generally appears to be affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprints of man's work substantially unnoticeable (naturalness)

  ♦ The area should have outstanding opportunities for solitude or for a primitive and unconfined type of recreation. The area does not have to possess outstanding opportunities for both elements, nor does it need to have opportunities on every acre

  ♦ May contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value, but these values are not required to be present in an area for the area to be recommended for inclusion in the NWPS.

- **The area must be one that can be managed to preserve its wilderness characteristics**

- **An area does not have to be pristine or untouched to be suitable for the NWPS.** Congress has recognized the need to provide for passive or active restoration in previously modified areas that have wilderness characteristics. A recommended area may contain:

  ♦ Vegetation treatments that are not substantially noticeable.

  ♦ Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not substantially noticeable.

  ♦ Permanently installed vertical structures provided their impact, as well as their maintenance and access needs, is minimal.

  ♦ Areas of historic mining where impacts are not substantially noticeable.

  ♦ Range improvement areas with minor structural improvements and nonstructural improvements that are not substantially noticeable.

  ♦ Minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included, but generally not developed sites.

  ♦ Ground return utility lines if a right-of-way has not been cleared.

  ♦ Watershed treatment areas that are not substantially noticeable, or if wilderness character can be maintained or restored through appropriate management actions.

  ♦ Lands that are adjacent to development or activities that impact opportunities for solitude. The fact that non-wilderness activities can be seen or heard from within any portion of the area does not, of itself, preclude consideration.

  ♦ Structures, dwellings and relics of past occupation when they are considered part of the historical and cultural landscape.

  ♦ Level 1, decommissioned, unauthorized or temporary roads, or has previous decision to reclassify to a Level 1 or decommission.

- **A polygon may be moved forward in whole or in part into one or more of the alternatives in the analysis.**

  ♦ A recommendation can be a portion of the parent polygon that has been analyzed.

  ♦ The area moved forward can be reshaped to remove or exclude things that would make it an otherwise suitable areas difficult to manage in such a way as to protect it wilderness characteristics.

- For areas that are recommended in the DEIS document we will need to provide for the public, at a minimum:
  - Name and number of acres include in the area to be considered for recommendation
  - Location and a description of a recommended boundary for each area.
    - The boundary must be clearly defined and support management of the area as wilderness and other adjacent uses. There is good guidance in Ch. 70 on how to develop the boundary. Once an area is identified to be moved forward as a recommendation in the analysis the RO will assist the forest in creating boundaries that meet the requirements in Ch. 70.
  - A brief description of the general geography, topography and vegetation of the recommended area.
  - A brief description of the current uses of the area
  - A description of the area's wilderness characteristics and the ability to protect and manage the area so as to preserve its wilderness characteristics.
  - A brief summary of the factors considered and the process used in evaluating the area and developing alternatives.
    - This will need to include a discussion articulating why polygons with wilderness characteristics are not moved forward into the analysis.

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