

# APPENDIX R

## WILDERNESS STUDY POLICY AND PLANNING CRITERIA

The primary goal of the BLM wilderness study process is to recommend for wilderness designation those areas for which it has been determined, through the multiple resource planning process and public involvement, that wilderness is the most appropriate alternative use of the land and its resources. The two planning criteria and six quality standards described below will be used in making the analysis on which that determination will be based. These criteria and quality standards will be applied to BLM study areas through the planning process, and each criterion and quality standard will be fully considered and documented in determining whether an area is more suitable for wilderness or for other uses, and in making all BLM wilderness recommendations—both "suitable for preservation as wilderness" and "nonsuitable". The criteria are taken from the BLM's *Wilderness Study Policy; Policies, Criteria, and Guidelines for Conducting Wilderness Studies on Public Lands*.

### **Criterion 1. Evaluation of Wilderness Values**

Consider the extent to which each of the following components contributes to the overall value of an area for wilderness purposes.

- a. **Mandatory wilderness characteristics:** The quality of the area's wilderness characteristics—size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation.
- b. **Special features:** The presence or absence, and the quality of the optional wilderness characteristics—ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.
- c. **Multiple resource benefits:** The benefits to other multiple resource values and uses which only wilderness designation could ensure.
- d. **Diversity in the National Wilderness Preservation System:** Consider the extent to which wilderness designation of the area under study would contribute to expanding the diversity of the National Wilderness Preservation System from the standpoint of each of the factors listed below:
  - (1) Expanding the diversity of natural systems and features, as represented by ecosystems and landforms.

- (2) Assessing the opportunities for solitude or primitive recreation within one day's driving time (five hours) of major population centers.

- (3) Balancing the geographic distribution of wilderness.

### **Criterion 2. Manageability**

The area must be capable of being effectively managed to preserve its wilderness character.

#### **Quality Standard 1. Energy and Mineral Resource Values**

Recommendations as to an area's suitability or nonsuitability for wilderness designation will reflect a thorough consideration of any identified or potential energy and mineral resource values.

#### **Quality Standard 2. Impacts on Other Resources**

Consider the extent to which other resource values or uses of the area would be forgone or adversely affected as a result of wilderness designation.

#### **Quality Standard 3. Impact of Nondesignation on Wilderness Values**

Consider the alternative use of land under study if the area is not designated as wilderness, and the extent to which wilderness values of the area would be forgone or adversely affected as a result of this use.

#### **Quality Standard 4. Public Comment**

In determining whether an area is suitable or nonsuitable for wilderness designation, the BLM wilderness study process will consider comments received from interested and affected publics at all levels—local, state, regional, and national. Wilderness recommendations will not be based exclusively on a vote-counting, majority-rule system. The BLM will develop its recommendations by considering public comment in conjunction with its analysis of an area's multiple resource and social and economic values and uses.

**Quality Standard 5. Local Social and Economic Effects**

In determining whether an area is suitable or non-suitable for wilderness designation, the BLM will give special attention to the adverse or favorable social and economic effects, as identified through the wilderness study process, which designation would have on local areas.

**Quality Standard 6. Consistency with Other Plans**

In determining whether an area is suitable or non-suitable for wilderness designation, the BLM will consider and document the extent to which the recommendation is consistent with officially approved and adopted resource-related plans of other federal agencies, state and local governments, and Indian tribes (and the policies and programs contained in such plans), as required by FLPMA and the BLM planning regulations.