

Definitions of Wilderness Characteristics for the Purpose of Land Use Planning and Management Considerations to Accomplish Plan Goals and Objectives

Definitions:

Wilderness Characteristics. Features of the land associated with the concept of wilderness that may be considered in land use planning when BLM determines that those characteristics are reasonably present, of sufficient value (condition, uniqueness, relevance, importance) and need (trend, risk), and are practical to manage.

Naturalness. Lands and resources exhibit a high degree of naturalness when affected primarily by the forces of nature and where the imprint of human activity is substantially unnoticeable. BLM has authority to inventory, assess, and/or monitor the attributes of the lands and resources on public lands, which, taken together, are an indication of an area's naturalness. These attributes may include the presence or absence of roads and trails, fences and other improvements; the nature and extent of landscape modifications; the presence of native vegetation communities; and the connectivity of habitats.

Solitude and Primitive/Unconfined Recreation. Visitors may have outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation when the sights, sounds, and evidence of other people are rare or infrequent, where visitors can be isolated, alone or secluded from others, where the use of the area is through non-motorized, non-mechanical means, and where no or minimal developed recreation facilities are encountered.

Management Considerations:

A decision to protect or preserve certain lands in their natural condition, if appropriate, or provide outstanding opportunities for solitude, or primitive and unconfined types of recreation may be made at the conclusion of the land use planning process. Land use plan decisions may include establishing goals and objectives that describe the desired future condition of the land and resources, desired outcome of the recreation experience, and allowable uses. BLM may also identify the management actions necessary to achieve the intended goals and objectives, including the conditions of use that would be attached to permits, leases, and other authorizations to avoid or minimize impacts to the affected natural, biological, and cultural resources and other land uses. In some cases, when BLM determines that certain uses of the land could be incompatible with the achievement of other desired goals and objectives, those uses could be conditioned to the extent necessary to reach the necessary level of resource protection.