Minimum Requirement Analysis Worksheet Instructions

The following are instructions for completing the Minimum Requirement Analysis Worksheet. Answer the questions asked on the worksheet in the spaces provided. Once completed and a decision is made, a copy of the worksheet will be kept on file with other action documents.

Proposed Action: List the proposed action

Lead Person(s): List the person or persons proposing and responsible for the action.

Work Unit(s): List the work unit or units who will be conducting the action.

Part A: Minimum Requirement *(Is this action necessary to manage the area?)*

Step 1: Is this an Emergency?
The definition of an emergency is outlined in the Emergency Operations Plan, the Emergency Medical Services Plan and the Fire Management Plan. If yes, act according to approved emergency minimum tool criteria in the appropriate plan. Note that the above plans should contain a Minimum Requirement Analysis. If no, go to Step 2.

Step 2: Is the proposed action allowed by legislation, policy, or an approved management plan?
Determine if the proposed action is mandated by legislation or essential to achieve planned wilderness objectives. These objectives are presented in approved plans (e.g., Wilderness/ Backcountry Management Plan, River Management Plan, Fire Management Plan, General Management Plan, Resource Management Plan, etc.). If yes, do the action according to approved criteria. If no, or it no criteria have been developed, go to Step 3.

Step 3: Can the objectives be accomplished through an action outside of the wilderness?
If yes, conduct action or place facilities determined "essential" (e.g., visitor orientation, information sign, training, radio repeater station, and research) outside wilderness. If no, got to Step 4.

Step 4: *Does this action conflict with long-term wilderness planning goals, objectives or desired future resource conditions?*
Park staff and managers must be familiar with planned wilderness goals, objectives, and future desired conditions. If yes, then do not do the action. If no, go to Step 5.

Step 5: Can the objectives be accomplished through an action that does not involve prohibited activities or uses?
Explore less intrusive actions such as visitor education, staff training, signing, information media, regulations, use limits, law enforcement, area or trail closures, etc. If yes, implement action using the appropriate process. If no, go to Part B.

Part B: Minimum Tool *(how the action should be done in wilderness)*

Step 6: Describe, in detail, alternative ways to accomplish the proposed action.
For the Minimum Requirement Concept to work, it is important to develop and seriously consider a range of realistic alternatives to help determine the appropriate minimum tool needed to accomplish the action. This process involves a tiered analysis beginning with the proposed alternative and including at least one less-intrusive alternative using minimally obtrusive, primitive/traditional skills.

Primitive skills involve the proficient use of tools and skills of the pre-motorized or pioneering era (e.g., the double-bit axe, the crosscut saw, and the pack string). The working understanding of primitive skills is important to appropriately plan for their use.

Managers must take the lead in demonstrating that tasks can be performed well by primitive or traditional, non-motorized methods. Field staff requires adequate training in primitive-tool selection, use, and care to efficiently accomplish planned work. While agency staff should constantly stress the importance of using primitive skills in accomplishing management objectives, they should also understand that minimum requirement analysis might not always lead to the use of a primitive tool.

The use of motorized equipment is prohibited when other reasonable alternatives are available to protect wilderness values. While Congress mandated a ban on motors and mechanized equipment, it also recognized that managers might occasionally need those sorts of tools. While this provision complicates the decision-making process, it remains an exception to be exercised very sparingly and only when it meets the test of being the minimum necessary for wilderness purposes. If some compromise of wilderness resources or character is unavoidable, only those actions that have localized, short-term adverse impacts will be acceptable (NPS Reference Manual 41).

The minimum questions that should be answered for each alternative are:
What is proposed?
Where will the action take place? (location)
When will the action take place? (dates/use periods)
How often will the action take place? (frequency)
How long will it take to complete the activity? (duration)
What design and standards will apply? (compliance?)
What methods and techniques will be used? (tools and equipment needed)
How many people are needed to complete the action? (size of field crew)
Why is it being proposed in this manner?
If there are adverse impacts, how long will they persist?
What mitigation will take place to minimize action impacts?

Step 7: Evaluate which alternative would have the least overall impact on wilderness resources, character and visitor experience while achieving the objective.

The manager must determine how to effectively and safely accomplish the action with the least impact on the wilderness resource and visitor experience. To assist with this determination, managers should use the following five criteria to evaluate each alternative. Discuss the duration, magnitude, and frequency of the effect where applicable. A brief statement about each should suffice. Include both negative and positive effects, as appropriate. If one or more criteria are not applicable, or if the proposed action will have no apparent effect, include a statement that explains this.

1) Biophysical effects:
   Describe the environmental resource issues that would be affected by the action. Describe any effects this action will have on preserving natural or cultural resources.

2) Social/Recreation/Experiential effects:
   Describe how the wilderness experience may be affected by the proposed action. Consider effects to recreation use and wilderness character, including opportunities for visitor discoveries, surprise and self-discovery.

3) Societal/Political effects
   Describe any political considerations, such as MOU's, agency agreements, and local positions that may be affected by the proposed action.
   Describe relationship of method to applicable laws.

4) Health/Safety concerns

Describe and consider any health and safety concerns associated with the proposed action. Consider types of tools used, training, certifications and other administrative needs to ensure a safe work environment for staff. Also consider the effect that each of the proposed alternatives may have on the health and safety of the public.

5) Economic/Timing considerations

Describe the costs and timing associated with implementing each alternative. Assess the urgency and potential cumulative effect from this proposal and similar actions. The potential disruption of wilderness character and resources and applicable safety concerns will be considered before, and given significantly more weight than, economic efficiency.

Step 8: Select an appropriate preferred alternative.

Consult with appropriate park staff and/or the Wilderness Steering Committee as to which of the alternatives will cause the least overall impact to the wilderness resources and character while still accomplishing the objective or purpose. Select that alternative, give the justification as to why this alternative was selected and list who was involved in the decision.

The net result of a minimum requirement analysis is a carefully weighed project or action that is found to be the most effective way of meeting wilderness objectives and the minimum necessary for Wilderness Act purposes.

Step 9: Attach to appropriate project proposal/clearance form for review and approval/disapproval signature.

If the scope of the action requires a higher level of approval, attach the Minimum Requirement Analysis Worksheet to the appropriate proposal/clearance form prepared under NEPA guidance.