

Wilderness Eligibility Determinations and Wilderness Studies

Park lands are reviewed for possible inclusion in the National Wilderness Preservation System. This internal eligibility assessment has two Federal Register public notification requirements.

- The first notification is an intention to conduct the eligibility assessment.
- The second notification is the Director's approval of the findings and determination of eligibility, or ineligibility, in the park's assessment.

Eligible lands are managed to preserve Wilderness character.

After the Eligibility Determination, the next step is the Wilderness Study. This Study involves the preparation of an Environmental Impact Statement, public involvement and a Record of Decision.

At the beginning of this process the Park shares the Eligibility Determination with the public and requests review and comment.

The Park may choose, at that time, to update the Eligibility Determination, based on new or more accurate information received during the public involvement.

The Eligibility Determination, initial or updated version, is used during the Wilderness Study to create alternatives, assess effects and consider preparation of a Wilderness Proposal.

The final outcome:

- Lands considered eligible, and proposed by the Director for wilderness designation, become proposed wilderness, and are managed to preserve wilderness character.
- The Secretary prepares a recommendation for the President on which lands should be considered for designation as Wilderness.
- Lands considered eligible, but not proposed by the Director, are managed to preserve their wilderness character.
- Lands determined ineligible through the wilderness study will be managed according to the NPS Organic Act.

Wilderness Eligibility Determination Templates:

1. [Intent to Assess, Federal Register Notice Template](#) (*download Word document*)
2. [Eligibility Determination, Memorandum Template](#) (*download Word document*)
3. [Eligibility Determination, Federal Register Notice Template](#) (*download Word document*)

---End of Guidance---