



- I. **PURPOSE:** The purpose of the National Wilderness Leadership Council (NWLC) of the National Park
- II. Service (NPS) isto:
 1. Serve as an advisory body to the Visitor and Resource Protection (VRP) Directorate and Wilderness Stewardship Division (WSD) on all matters pertaining to wilderness in the National Park System and enhance the ability of the agency to address critical wilderness stewardship issues.
 2. Facilitate the preservation and protection of wilderness resources and character of National Park System wilderness in keeping with guidance established in NPS management policies, director's orders and reference manuals, the letter and spirit of the 1964 Wilderness Act and subsequent legislation pertaining to wilderness, including all areas identified as designated, potential, recommended, proposed, and eligible wilderness.
 3. Assist the VRP, WSD, and parks in developing and implementing programs and projects that improve the accountability, consistency, continuity, and commitment for National Park Service wilderness stewardship.
 4. Facilitate Servicewide understanding and appreciation of wilderness stewardship as a core mission of the National Park Service (NPS) in which virtually all disciplines in the NPS workforce have important crosscutting roles and responsibilities including visitor and resource protection, natural and cultural resource management, science and research, interpretation and education, facility and trail maintenance, planning, environmental compliance, and training.
 5. Facilitate the NPS to be a leading interagency partner in wilderness stewardship efforts within the framework of the National Wilderness Preservation System.
- III. **ROLE AND FUNCTION:** The NWLC integrates disciplines across the organizational structure of the NPS to accomplish the following:
 1. Review, update, and establish NPS Management Policies and other guidance documents on Wilderness Preservation and Management: The NWLC develops and/or reviews any needed additions, updates, or modifications to 2006 Management Policies, Chapter 6 (Wilderness Preservation and Management), Director's Order #41, Reference Manual #41, Guidance White Papers, and Decision Guides.
 2. Monitor Wilderness Program Progress: The NWLC periodically reviews program monitoring of field response to approved policies, director's orders, and/or directives and serve as a repository for information needed by the Directorate to assess the status of the Service's wilderness program. This program information provides the Directorate with impartial assessments of the Service's wilderness management efforts, including identification of problems and issues, recommendation of management responses to these issues, and development of the specific programs and products needed to implement recommended solutions.



3. Review and Provide Input to the NPS Wilderness Program Information, Communications and Outreach System: The NWLC reviews and advises the program on its NPS wilderness program information system and databases that are under development or being made available to park managers. This includes the development and maintenance of internet and intranet websites and archiving related information. Information from these databases is the basis of NPS Wilderness Reports and the information for addressing Department and Congressional inquiries, internal reviews, and public interest. NWLC members and liaisons with specific wilderness and crosscutting program expertise are expected to ensure that their expertise is incorporated into the websites and databases, or that links are made to other sources of information.
4. Provide a Forum for Assisting Parks with Wilderness Issues: As requested, the NWLC serves as a forum for park managers to use in assessing and formulating recommendations and solutions to specific wilderness management issues, such as planning, wilderness character monitoring, interpretation and education, emerging technology, and minimum requirements decisions.
5. Facilitate a Wilderness Interpretation and Education Strategy: The NWLC helps promote and implement the NPS Wilderness Interpretation and Education Strategy (Strategy) as published in Reference Manual 41 in 2023.
6. Provide In-Service Liaison: The NWLC addresses issues that Directorates, Programs or NWLC members identify as vital to the preservation of wilderness character in the NPS. The NWLC provides a forum for integration of the Service's wilderness initiatives into other NPS management programs and operations as appropriate. The NWLC facilitates and encourages program efforts to inform and coordinate its own projects and programs with other NPS offices to insure adequate and timely cooperation.
7. Review the NPS Wilderness Training Program: The NWLC reviews the NPS wilderness training program and its implementation as developed by the interagency Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center (ACNWTC) and the WSD.
8. Review Needs and Facilitate Access to Wilderness-related Research: The NWLC aids the assessment of NPS wilderness-related research needs (natural, cultural, and social) and facilitates liaison with the Interagency Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute (ALWRI) and other providers of the information needed to inform wilderness stewardship decisions.
9. Conduct regularly scheduled NWLC meetings: Meetings will be conducted via Teams on a regularly scheduled monthly basis and one annual in-person meeting will be conducted at a NPS wilderness park.

III. REPORTING: The NWLC reports to the Associate Director for VRP (ADVRP), or their designee, who will attend meetings in a non-voting role as needed or as necessary per request of the NWLC Chair and/or the WSD Program Manager.



IV. MEMBERSHIP: The NWLC is comprised of individuals in Wilderness decision-making positions and/or individuals supportive of the values and benefits of wilderness, desirous of contributing to improving wilderness stewardship in the National Park System. Members are expected to actively support and contribute to the NWLC's purpose, programs, and projects, including attending and participating in NWLC meetings and functions, completion of assignments, participation in work groups, and facilitation of communications and collaboration with parks, regions, and programmatic contacts. From time to time, members may also be requested to assist associated program implementation efforts. Members will have access to all NWLC files and meeting minutes.

NWLC membership shall reflect an inclusive and diverse representation of NPS personnel, disciplines, functional areas, and NPS regions and will be comprised of the following representatives:

1. **Permanent Voting Members:** Incumbents in the following positions will serve as permanent voting members:
 - a) Program Manager, Wilderness Stewardship Division: The incumbent serves on the NWLC as a permanent voting member and principal representative of the WASO national wilderness stewardship program. The WSD Program Manager will assist in maintaining NWLC archives, membership rosters, annual member recruitment, and coordination of the annual in-person general membership meeting.
 - b) Regional Wilderness Coordinators (3): The regional wilderness coordinator incumbents from the Alaska Region (1), Pacific West or Intermountain Region (1) and Midwest, Northeast or Southeast Region (1) serve on the NWLC as permanent voting members and principal representatives of their respective regions.
 - c) Chief, Fire and Aviation Management Division (or their designee): The incumbent serves on the NWLC as a permanent voting member and principal representative of the nexus between fire management and wilderness stewardship.
 - d) WASO Native American Affairs Liaison: The incumbent serves as a permanent voting member and represents tribal and indigenous persons perspectives.
2. **Permanent, Non-Voting Members:** Incumbents in the following positions will serve as permanent, non-voting members:
 - a) Wilderness Training Manager (WSD/ACNWTC): The WSD Wilderness Training Manager who is assigned to the Interagency Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center (ACNWTC) as the NPS Training Representative serves on the NWLC as a permanent non-voting member and principal representative for the ACNWTC.
 - b) Director, Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute (ALWRI): The Director of the Interagency ALWRI will serve as a permanent, non-voting representative of ALWRI's wilderness science and research program.



3. **General, Term Limited, Voting Members:** General membership will be comprised of the following representatives:
- Three (3) superintendents from wilderness parks, to include at least one Alaska superintendent,
 - One (1) park-based wilderness manager or coordinator,
 - One (1) natural resource stewardship and science representative,
 - One (1) cultural resource representative,
 - One (1) facilities management/trails representative,
 - One (1) interpretation/education representative,
 - One (1) visitor and resource protection/law enforcement representative,
 - And if needed, up to two at-large members, appointed as needed by the ADVRP; and are invited to serve on the NWLC for specific purposes and limited time periods.
- a) General Member Recruitment: The recruitment of new NWLC members will be advertised annually at the Servicewide level through a memorandum distributed by the ADVRP to wilderness park superintendents through regional directors and to WASO associate directors. Prospective members may submit a self-nomination form used to generate a list of candidates. All nominations require approval by supervisor, superintendent, and/or regional director; WASO and regional staff member nominations require approval by their supervisors and the appropriate associate director or regional director.
- b) General Member Selection: Nominations will be reviewed by a panel consisting of at minimum the NWLC Chair, NWLC Co-Chair, and WSD Program Manager, and preferably two additional members selected from the general council membership. The panel's recommended selections will be submitted to the ADVRP, who retains the right to approve, refuse or modify these recommendations.
- c) General Member Term Limits: Members serve three- and one-half-year terms which are staggered so that no more than three-four members are replaced in any given year. Terms will typically end immediately following the annual NWLC meeting during the last one-half year of service. Membership is generally for one term; however, members seeking a second term may be considered through a new application to a vacant position.
- d) Chair and Vice-Chair: The NWLC will request nominations from two general members to serve as the NWLC Chair and Vice-Chair for a minimum of one and one-half year terms. These selections will be made by a nomination and vote and are subject to approval by the ADVRP. The Vice-Chair assists and backs up the Chair and typically becomes the new Chair when the Chair's term concludes. The duties of the Chair include:
- Scheduling and facilitation of NWLC meetings
 - Oversight of NWLC business operations, including approval of meeting agenda items, schedules, meeting locations, meeting minutes, subcommittee



operations and other activities affecting NWLC purpose and functions and facilitation of any issue requiring a vote.

- Coordination, with the assistance of the WSD Program Manager, of the assignment of NWLC members to various projects and duties and oversees the completion of these projects.
4. **Directorate Advisors, Non-Voting:** The incumbent associate directors (or their designee) for Natural Resource Stewardship and Science; Cultural Resources, Partnerships and Science; Interpretation, Education, and Volunteers; and Park Planning, Facilities and Lands will function in a non-voting advisory role, will attend meetings as necessary, provide liaisons to the NWLC as requested, and communicate and collaborate directly with the ADVRP, WSD Program Manager, and NWLC Chair on all issues related to NPS wilderness stewardship. Directorate Advisors will not be requested or expected to attend every monthly meeting and may be excluded from the annual in-person meeting based on optimal group size considerations.
 5. **Liaisons, Non-Voting:** NPS division and program representatives, upon invitation by the NWLC Chairperson or WSD Program Manager, may serve in temporary, non-voting liaison positions for the purpose of facilitating communications between interdisciplinary, crosscutting programs and the NWLC and to ensure that diversity and inclusion is properly integrated into NWLC operations. Liaisons may serve on work groups and will be afforded the opportunity to review and comment on all NWLC work group products.
 - a) **Liaison Term:** Liaisons serve three- and one-half-year terms, generally for one term; however, liaisons seeking a second term may be considered through a new application to a vacant liaison position. Liaisons will not be requested or expected to attend every monthly meeting and may be excluded from the annual in-person meeting based on optimal group size considerations.
 6. **Guests, Non-Voting:** The NWLC Chairperson and the WSD Program Manager may invite regional directors, regional wilderness coordinators, superintendents, program specialists, and other guests to participate and/or make presentations in NWLC meetings and/or activities as appropriate and necessary. The Director of the Interagency ACNWTC may be invited to participate in NWLC meetings as a non-voting guest on a case-by-case basis to present and discuss significant training issues and/or information of national importance.
- V. **ORIENTATION AND TRAINING:** All voting members will be expected to complete the following orientation and training sessions:
1. **Orientation:** Before or early in their terms, all member and liaisons will be required to participate in a NWLC orientation hosted by the Chair, Co-Chair, and WSD Program Manager.
 2. **Training:** Before or early during their terms, all members will be required to complete one or more of the following wilderness training opportunities: 1) the National Wilderness Leadership Training course sponsored by the ACNWTC; 2) a Regional Wilderness Leadership Training Course sponsored by the ACNWTC; 3) a Wilderness Park/Unit Workshop sponsored by the WSD.



VI. VOTING PROCEDURES: All NWLC motions, recommendations, or proposed actions subject to a vote shall require a general membership quorum. While the group will first seek to reach consensus, each decision will require a simple majority of present voting members to be approved by the Council.

VII. RECORDS AND REPORTS: The NWLC Chair, Vice-Chair, and WSD Program Manager will be jointly responsible for maintaining a SharePoint site to archive and share the following records and reports:

1. NWLC membership roster; updated annually.
2. NWLC member recruitment records.
3. NWLC monthly meeting agendas and minutes.
4. NWLC Annual Work Plan and Annual Report; based on the results of the annual in-person meeting.

VIII. APPROVAL

Recommended:

**DANIEL VAN DER
ELST**

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Chair, NWLC

Concurrence:

ROGER SEMLER

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Chief, Wilderness Stewardship Division

Approved:

WILLIAM SHOTT

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Associate Director, Visitor & Resource Protection