United States Department of the Interior

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March 4, 1999

EMS TRANSMISSION:
Instruction Memorandum No. CDD-99-6
Expires: 09/30/00

To: Field Office Managers

From: District Manager, California Desert

Subject: Wilderness Management Planning DD: 7/30/99, 8/31/99

A Wilderness Implementation Schedule (WIS) is to be prepared for each Wilderness Area by July 30, 1999. The following provides background and procedures for their preparation.

Since passage of the California Desert Protection Act in 1994, the California Desert District has completed a significant percentage of the tasks outlined in the document "Wilderness Transition Policy and Guidance Document" (IM No. CA 93-309). As scheduled in that Instruction Memorandum, we are now ready for the next phase of wilderness transition which is the preparation of Wilderness Management Plans.

In anticipation for the wilderness planning effort, a planning strategy team was formed in September 1997 to design a blueprint for the wilderness planning effort desert-wide. The group developed a document titled "California Desert District Wilderness Management Strategy" (see Attachment C), which outlined six alternative wilderness planning approaches. They also completed an internal scoping of issues for each wilderness area by Field Office (FO). During the strategy development the team discussed the concept of a "hip-pocket plan" for each wilderness. This is now referred to as a Wilderness Implementation Schedule or WIS (further described in Attachment A). The WIS would be developed prior to any formal planning and would guide the day-to-day management actions, which are more custodial in nature (e.g., inventory, monitoring, resource protection, signing, and reclamation). Formal Wilderness Management Plans (WMP) would then be prepared as appropriate (e.g., Identified issues that are sufficiently intense and complex to warrant such a site specific plan).

On March 4, 1998, the California Desert District Management Team (DMT) met to discuss the team's recommendations and planning alternatives. The DMT selected planning approach alternatives A and C which included options to develop one Wilderness Management Plan for each wilderness area and/or one plan for a cluster of wilderness areas containing similar issues. They also requested a further refinement of the WIS approach.

Based on concepts presented by the planning strategy team and through further discussions with the DMT and State Office, the following factors were considered the most important when developing the final wilderness planning strategy.

- At this time, most wilderness areas do not appear to contain planning issues requiring formal WMPs.
- Most current and foreseeable actions could be carried out through existing law, regulation, and policy without additional planning. These actions could be specified through a simplified planning document, such as a WIS.
- To provide a common minimum level of planning, a WIS should be developed for each wilderness area.
- The determination of which wilderness areas require a formal WMP could be made largely based on the WISs and through public and internal review.
- A single formal WMP should be prepared whenever two or more wilderness areas with similar issues require a formal WMP.
- Any planning approach should use existing budget and staff and have a realistic schedule for completion.
- A Programmatic EA should be prepared for the Desert District for the actions identified in the WISs and a NEPA document should be completed for each formal WMP.
- Both the WIS and formal WMP should be simple and easily understood by both the public and BLM.

As a result of these factors, a two step wilderness planning process has been developed: Preparation of a WIS, and; If needed, preparation of a formal WMP. The following is the direction to be taken by all affected FOs in completing this two step process:

Step 1: Preparation of Wilderness Implementation Schedules

A. For each wilderness area, a WIS must be developed using the outline found in Attachment A.
B. WISs must be completed by July 30, 1999 and should be 5 pages or less (excluding a completed Table A of Appendix C and the maps).
C. WISs should briefly outline management actions to be completed within the wilderness area over the next ten years.
D. Each WIS should incorporate the information in Table A of Attachment C (the outline of actions allowed through law, regulation, and policy which is prepared as a part of the WIS).

E. Subsequent WIS Steps

1. At least one public scoping session should be held in each FO by July 30, 1999. The purpose of those sessions will be to identify additional wilderness planning issues and help identify, in priority order, those wilderness areas warranting preparation of formal WMPs. Unsigned preliminary copies of the WISs should be available at the meetings.
2. The WIS must be reviewed annually for new actions or issues which arise.
3. All actions listed in the WIS which require NEPA analysis prior to implementation should be covered through one programmatic EA prepared for the District.

Step 2: Preparation of the Wilderness Management Plan (if needed)

A. If intense and complex management issues are discovered through the WIS process that cannot be readily resolved through law, regulation, and policy, a formal WMP must be developed using the outline found in Attachment B. Tables B-1 and B-2 of Attachment C should be used when making this determination.
B. For all wilderness management plans currently being prepared, the plan must follow the Attachment B outline.
C. All plans/EAs must be less than 50 pages.
D. When developing future plans, FOs can use the options of one plan for each wilderness area and/or one plan for a cluster of wilderness areas containing similar issues.
E. A proposed schedule and priority list for the completion of WMPs must be submitted by August 31, 1999.
F. Wilderness areas requiring formal WMPs will be scheduled for completion in the Annual Work Planning Process.

If you have any questions, please contact Chris Roholt at (909) 697-5395 or Paul Brink at (916) 978-4641.

Signed by

Tim Salt
District Manager

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Records Management

Attachments

Distribution
WO 700
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Attachment A

Wilderness Implementation Schedule Outline and Example

I. Purpose of Implementation Schedule:

- Provides a table of custodial management actions to be completed within the wilderness area over the next ten years.
- Priorities, budgets, and schedules the custodial management actions.
- Generally describes the condition of the wilderness resource and any program emphasis.
- Provides a map showing the area, location of management features, and any future proposed actions.
- Summarizes custodial actions which can be readily implemented under law, regulation, and policy without further planning.
- Lists planning issues and determines which issues are easily resolved versus those which are more substantial and would be better addressed in a more comprehensive wilderness management plan for the area.
- Addresses NEPA compliance particularly cumulative impacts.
- Provides a single programmatic EA to be prepared on a district-wide basis for all actions in wilderness areas for day-to-day management.
- Will conform with 1980 CDCA plan and amendments.

II. Implementation Schedule Outline

A. Cover/Letter

Briefly explains the need for the document and how it will serve future management actions. Also has date and signature of Field Office Manager. (standardized format and statement)

B. Purpose and Goals

1. Purpose (standardized)
2. National Wilderness Goals (standard statement)

C. Wilderness Area Description

1. Location (Field Office(s), County(ies), direction from closest Community)
2. Description of the Area (standardized plus localized; 200 words or less)
3. Description of Wilderness Condition and Future Wilderness Management Emphasis (localized statement about impacts and opportunities to the wilderness area)
4. General Descriptions of Both External and Internal Issues for the Area

D. Wilderness Management Actions

1. Description of Planned Actions (describe your most important action from Table A)
2. Cost and Time-frame of Implementation

E. Determination of Need for Wilderness Management Plan

1. List of Issues which Will Require Additional Planning (describe the most important ones from Table B)
2. Statement of Need for Additional Planning (standardized)

F. Supporting Materials

1. Completed Tables A and B as found in Attachment C
2. Wilderness Area Map(s) (7.5' official hard copy)

Attachment B

Wilderness Management Plan/EA Outline

I. Draft Management Plan and EA (50 pages or less)

A. Introduction
   1. Need for the Plan
   2. Plan Conformance
   3. Location Map and General Description of Wilderness Area
   4. Wilderness Management Goals

B. Draft Management Plan and Alternatives
   1. Issues
   2. Objectives
   3. Management Actions (with accompanying map as necessary)
   4. Monitoring

C. Affected Environment

D. Environmental Consequences
   1. Impacts
   2. Cumulative Impacts
   3. Mitigation measures (if any)
   4. Residual Impacts (if any)

E. Consultation/Public Involvement

F. Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates

G. Appendix (supporting maps, Tables B1 and B2 of Attachment C (if necessary))

II. Final Management Plan

A. Decision Record/FONSI

B. Introduction
   1. Need for the Plan
   2. Plan Conformance
   3. Location Map and General Description of Wilderness Area
   4. Wilderness Management Goals

C. Final Management Plan
   1. Issues
   2. Objectives
   3. Management Actions (with accompanying map as necessary)
   4. Monitoring

D. Affected Environment

E. Consultation/Public Involvement

F. Implementation Schedule and Cost Estimates

G. Appendix