



# United States Department of the Interior



BUREAU OF LAND MANAGEMENT

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To: District Managers

From: State Director

Subject: Cooperating Agencies: Inventory of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics

The Wilderness Program, within the Bureau of Land Management (BLM), experienced several changes in guidance and processes in 2011. Currently, there is some confusion and an expressed interest from Cooperating Agencies to gain clarification on the current guidance with regards to inventory of Lands with Wilderness Characteristics (LWCs), how inventories have been conducted, and how those inventories have and will be used in current or future land use planning.

The BLM is required, under the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (FLMPA) of 1976, to prepare an inventory of all public lands and their resources. Specifically, FLPMA requires that the BLM:

Prepare and maintain on a continuing basis an inventory of all public lands and their resources and other values (including, but not limited to, outdoor recreation and scenic values), giving priority to areas of critical environmental concern. This inventory shall be kept current so as to reflect changes in conditions and to identify new and energy resources and other values. The preparation and maintenance of such inventory or the identifications of such areas shall not, of itself change or prevent change of the management or use of public lands. 43 U.S.C. 1711(a).

FLPMA also directs the BLM, when preparing a land use plan to rely, to the extent it is available, on the inventory of public lands, their resources, and other values.  
43 U.S.C. 1712 (c)(4).

Per the guidance outlined in BLM IM 2011-154, all BLM Field Offices are directed to continue to conduct and maintain inventories regarding the presence or absence of wilderness characteristics, and to consider identified lands with wilderness characteristics in land use plans and when analyzing projects under the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA).

Therefore, at your next opportunity, please have a discussion with your County Commissioners and Cooperating Agencies to determine their level of interest as follows:

1. No interest in further information.
2. Attend a briefing, held locally, with slides, maps, and history of the Wilderness and LWC program.
3. Review existing completed LWC inventories with opportunity for discussion.
4. Participate in an open forum workshop, which could include field visits, where the BLM Field Office will demonstrate the inventory process to interested parties. During this workshop the BLM Field Office staff will answer questions and engage the interested parties in a discussion of the LWC Inventory process

Prior to engaging in items 3 or 4, suggested training on the wilderness and LWC program is available at: [www.wilderness.net](http://www.wilderness.net). It may be useful to provide a centralized location for more than one commissioner/cooperator to participate in training or briefings if a Resource Management Plan or large scale project Environmental Impact Statement will involve more than one county. Cooperating Agencies may elect to submit wilderness characteristics inventory information for consideration by BLM in the inventory or NEPA process (IM 2011-154 Attachment 1).

Questions regarding this information may be directed to Sherry Roche', Wilderness Program Lead at (307) 775-6484.

Signed By:  
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State Director

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Secretary

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