



Wilderness Stewardship Plan and Environmental Impact Statement



Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks



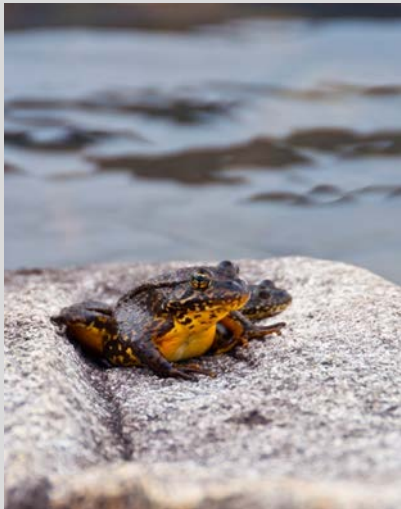
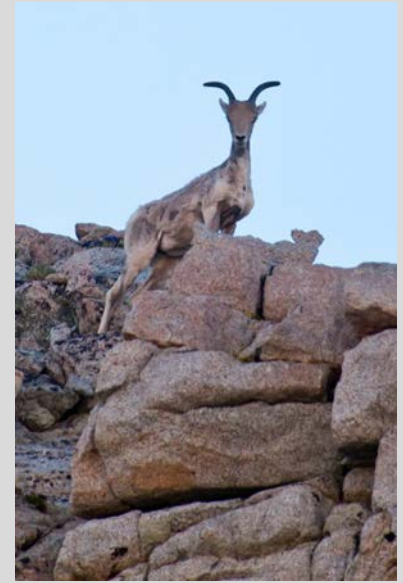
The Wilderness Act

Wilderness areas ...

“shall be administered for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such manner as will leave them unimpaired...as wilderness... and ...to provide for...the preservation of wilderness character...”



Proper Activities



Preserve the natural and cultural resources




Wilderness Character Qualities

- **Untrammeled** – essentially unhindered and free from the actions of modern human control or manipulation
- **Natural** – ecological systems are substantially free from the effects of modern civilization
- **Undeveloped** – retains its primeval character and influence, and is essentially without permanent improvement or modern human occupation



Wilderness Character Qualities

- **Solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation** – provides outstanding opportunities for primitive wilderness-based activities.
- **Other features of value** - features such as archeological resources or historic structures, whose contributions to wilderness character are *not captured by the other four qualities*.

A full-page photograph of a rugged mountain landscape. A person in silhouette stands on a rocky foreground, looking up at a massive, steep mountain face. The mountain has patches of snow or ice. The sky is blue with large white clouds.

Today, over 96% of parks' total acreage is managed as wilderness (808,079 acres is designated wilderness; 29,500 acres is managed as wilderness per NPS policies).



The purpose of the presentation:

- **Provide an overview of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan**
- **Highlight several key topics**
- **Provide information to assist with your review and comment**





Wilderness Planning Timeline

April 26, 2011	Public notice to prepare WSP/DEIS published
April 11 – August 31, 2011	Public scoping
June 5, 2012	<i>Sequoia and Kings Canyon Backcountry Access Act</i>
October 2 – Nov. 16, 2012	Preliminary draft alternatives provided to the public
January – July 2013	Draft alternatives updated based on public input
Fall 2013 -Spring 2014	Preparation of WSP/DEIS
June 27 – August 25, 2014	Public review of draft WSP/ DEIS



Navigating the Wilderness Stewardship Plan

Executive Summary – Brief summary of WSP/DEIS

Chapter 1 – Background, purpose and need, related laws, legislation, plans, policies, desired conditions, key planning issues and impact topics

Chapter 2 – Alternatives, actions common to all alternatives, mitigation, alternatives / elements considered but dismissed

Chapter 3 – Description of resources expected to experience environmental effects

Chapter 4 – Analysis of the effects of each alternative

Chapter 5 – Consultation and coordination



Volume 2 - Appendices



Trails



Climbing

Background Information

Wilderness Monitoring



Stock Use and Meadow Monitoring



Commercial Services

Nonnative Species



Education



Additional Information

Fact Sheets

Stock Access, Grazing, and Campfires Interactive Maps

Other supplemental materials

Planning, Environment, and Public Comment Website:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild>



The purpose of the Wilderness Stewardship Plan is to establish a framework for the management of wilderness in these parks in order to preserve the wilderness character and provide opportunities for access and use in accordance with the Wilderness Act and other laws and policies.



Overall planning objectives:

- **Preserve wilderness character;**
- **Provide opportunities and encourage public use and enjoyment of wilderness in accordance with the Wilderness Act and other laws and policies;**
- **Improve conditions in areas where there may be unacceptable levels of impacts on wilderness character; and**
- **Protect the natural and cultural resources within wilderness.**



WSP Alternatives

Alternative 1 – No Action – Current management practices continue per Backcountry Management Plan and Stock Use and Meadow Management Plan

Alternative 2 – Implement site-specific actions to reduce recreational impacts to wilderness character

Alternative 3 – Provide more opportunities for primitive recreation

Alternative 4 – Emphasize undeveloped quality and non-commercial recreation

Alternative 5 – Emphasize opportunities for solitude



Alternative 2 – NPS Preferred Alternative

Implement site-specific actions to reduce recreational impacts to wilderness character

Recognizes that *current management is meeting the goal to protect wilderness character*. Thus no significant shifts in management direction are proposed.

Management would be modified in specific areas where impacts to wilderness character are occurring now, or potentially could occur in the future (based on resource sensitivity) to solve site-specific problems.

Our overall goal is to encourage wilderness use while preserving wilderness character.



Common to Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5

- A wilderness education strategy would be implemented.
- The parks would work with Federal Aviation Administration to permanently disallow commercial air tours over the wilderness.
- Administrative actions and wilderness operations would continue to be analyzed through the minimum requirement analysis process.



Common to Alternatives 2, 3, 4, and 5

- Research and science in wilderness would continue to be supported.
- Winter use would be promoted.
- A climbing management strategy and permit system would be implemented.
- Coordination with U.S. Forest Service and Yosemite National Park, including initiating a John Muir Trail working group, would continue.



Elements of the Alternatives

- 
- A background photograph showing a rocky, mountainous trail. Two people are standing on the trail, one wearing a hat and the other in a uniform. Two horses are also visible, one of which is saddled. The terrain is rugged and rocky.
- 1 – Visitor Use**
 - 2 – Access**
 - 3 - Campfires**
 - 4 – Food Storage**
 - 5 – Human Waste Management**
 - 6 – Party Size**
 - 7 – Camping/Campsites and Night Limits**
 - 8 – Stock Access and Grazing**
 - 9 – Administrative Structures and Facilities**
 - 10 – Frontcountry Facilities that Support Wilderness Use**
 - 11 – Commercial Services**



Access - Trails

Current condition (No Action Alternative)

The 1986 Backcountry Management Plan (BMP) recognizes two types of managed travelways:

- maintained trails
- designated unmaintained routes





Access – Desired Conditions

The trail system would facilitate access for visitor use and enjoyment of the wilderness. Trails would be well suited to the types and levels of visitor use.

Managing the trail system must strike a balance between providing access for recreation and protecting resources (both natural and cultural) and opportunities for solitude and self-reliance.





Access – Trails

We will partially adopt the U.S. Forest Service system of trail development class (Class 1, 2, or 3).

Some designated unmaintained routes will be adopted into the maintained trail system; some will be abandoned, depending on the alternative.





Stock Access and Travel

Stock (horses, burros, mules, and llamas) have been used to support exploration, recreation, development, and administration in the remotest areas of the parks since their establishment.

Stock use is a historically and culturally significant traditional use that is an appropriate means for fulfilling the purposes of wilderness.





Stock Access and Travel

Current condition (No Action)

Stock are allowed on most maintained trails. Stock parties may travel more than 0.5 mile from maintained trails in four areas:

- **Hockett Plateau**
- **Monarch Divide including Hotel Creek**
- **Roaring River drainage**
- **Western side of the Kern River watershed south from Chagoopa Plateau**





Stock Access and Travel – Desired Condition



Visitors would have opportunities to travel with stock, from day rides to multi-day trips, in a manner that ensures the protection of wilderness character.



Trails, Stock Access and Travel

Trails are addressed as Element 2 in each alternative and in Appendix K.

Table 45 and Tables 47a through 47e at the end of Chapter 2 summarize the trail alternatives.

Stock travel is addressed in Element 8 in each alternative, and in Table 45 and Table 50 at the end of Chapter 2.

An interactive map showing how trails and access are addressed in each alternative is available at:

<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> under “Document List.”



Stock Grazing – Current Conditions

Under current plans, grazing is allowed in most areas that are open to camping by stock.

In areas that are closed to grazing but open to overnight stock use, stock users are required to hold and feed their animals. Use of certified weed-free supplemental feed is not required, but we recommend its use.

A number of meadows are closed to grazing to maintain these meadows in a more natural state.





Stock Grazing – Desired Condition



Provide for recreational and administrative stock use in a manner that will protect natural and cultural resources, and visitor experience.

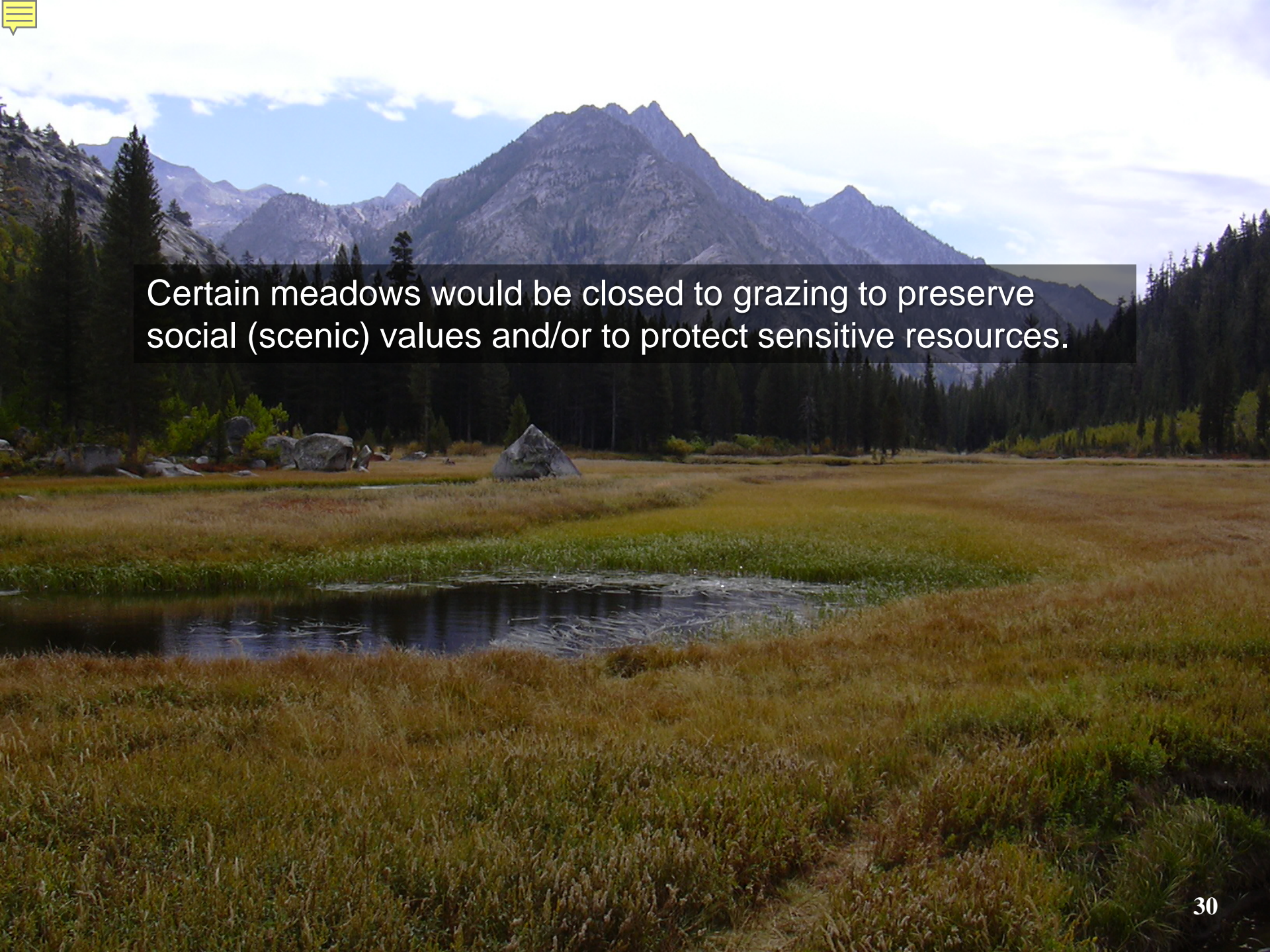


All alternatives would allow for a certain amount of grazing except alternative 4, which would prohibit grazing wilderness-wide.

Under each of the alternatives that allow for continued grazing, current methods (e.g., monitoring to determine opening dates, head limits and night limits, and temporary closures) would continue to be used to manage grazing.

Where grazing is allowed, specific grazing capacities would be established for each open meadow.



A wide-angle landscape photograph of a mountain meadow. In the foreground, there is a field of tall, dry, golden-brown grass. A small, dark, still pond is situated in the middle ground, reflecting the sky. Behind the pond, there is a line of green grass and some scattered rocks. In the background, a dense forest of evergreen trees covers the lower slopes of the mountains. The upper part of the image shows jagged, rocky mountain peaks under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

Certain meadows would be closed to grazing to preserve social (scenic) values and/or to protect sensitive resources.



Stock Use - Feed Requirements

- **In wilderness, commercially processed pellets, rolled grains, or fermented hay would be required whenever supplemental feed is provided in lieu of or in addition to grazing**
- **In frontcountry areas in the parks, the use of state-certified weed-free feed would be required.**





Stock Grazing – Drift fences, gates, and related facilities

Current developments in wilderness to help control animals and prevent resource impacts include hitch rails, drift fences, pasture fences, and gates.





Stock Grazing – More Information

Stock use is addressed as Element 8 in each alternative in the WSP/DEIS.

Appendix D includes the proposed Stock Use and Meadow Monitoring and Management Strategy.

The proposed strategy for preventing nonnative-plant introductions is in Appendix N.

An interactive map showing the alternatives and how stock use and grazing is addressed in each alternative is available at <http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild> under “Document List.”



Visitor Use – Desired Conditions



Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation would be provided to support visitor use and enjoyment of the parks' wilderness areas in balance with the protection of other wilderness character qualities

Visitor use and enjoyment of wilderness would be provided while ensuring the preservation of wilderness character.



Visitor Use



The plan establishes a strategy to ensure that the number of visitors in the wilderness is not causing unacceptable impacts.

Based on the overall desired condition of each alternative, trailhead quotas would be adjusted when monitoring indicates a change is needed.



Visitor Use

For more information:

Visitor capacity or quotas are addressed in Elements 1 and 7 in each alternative.

Table 46 in chapter 2 includes specific trailhead quotas by alternative.

Appendix A includes a full discussion of visitor capacity.





Commercial Services

Commercial services help visitors experience their wilderness in a variety of appropriate ways.





The Wilderness Act

Under the Special Provisions section of the Wilderness Act, in §4(d)(5), it states that

“Commercial services *may be* performed within the wilderness areas designated by this Act *to the extent necessary* for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas.”

The “purposes” per §4(b),

“... *recreational, scenic, scientific, educational, conservation, and historical use.*”





Commercial Services - Desired Conditions

Commercial services may be performed to the extent necessary for activities which are proper for realizing the recreational or other wilderness purposes of the areas and in a manner that ensures the preservation of wilderness character.

Commercial services would support visitor use and enjoyment of wilderness in a variety of appropriate ways.





Commercial Services

What is a “Specialized Finding?”

Determines both the “proper” commercial activities, and to what extent (i.e., the amount) these activities will be allowed in wilderness.

The purposes of the finding:

-to ensure that commercial services support appropriate visitor activities that achieve desired conditions and objectives, and preserve wilderness character while allowing for the public’s use and enjoyment of wilderness.



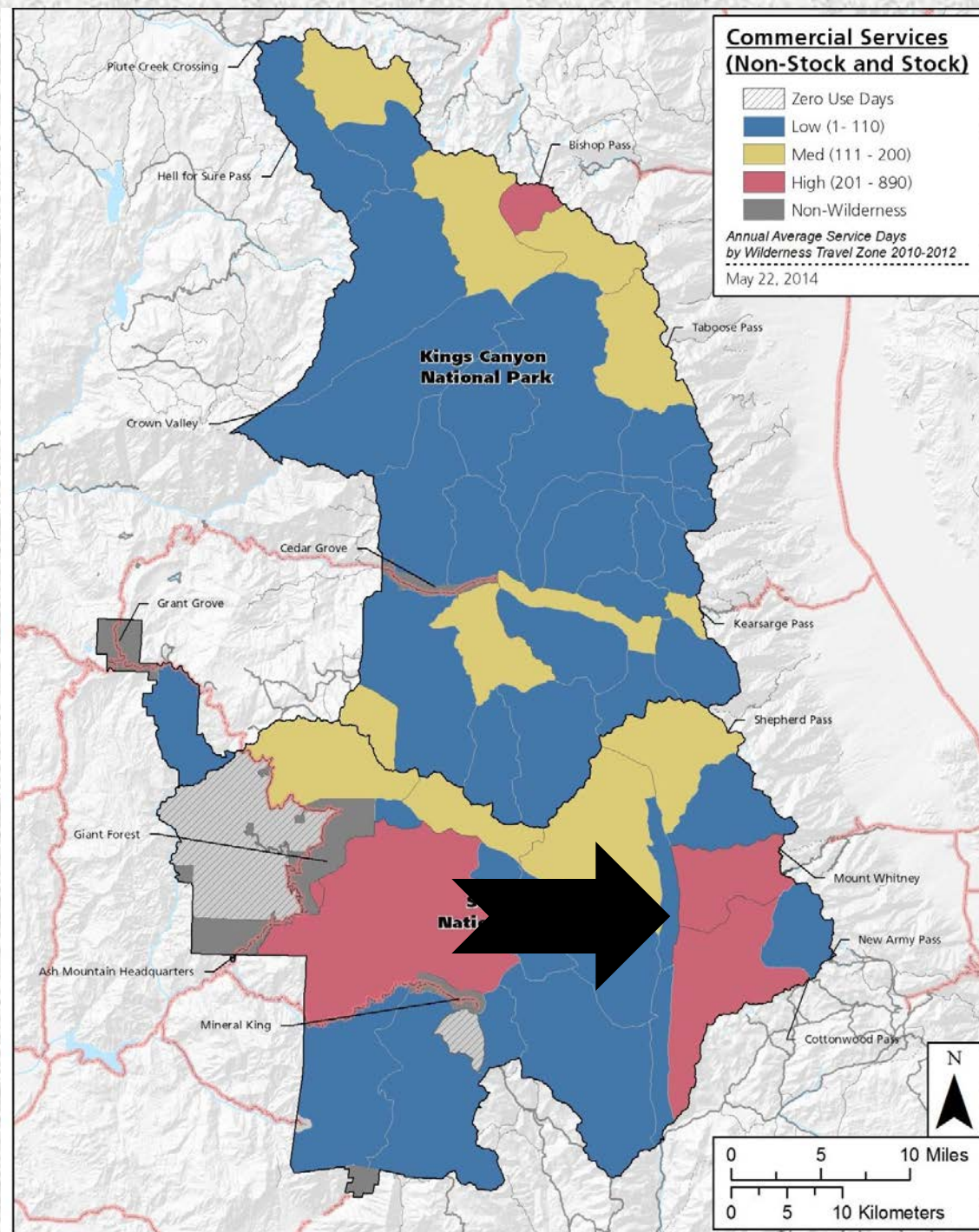


Current Conditions

Current Visitor Use Days (VUD) averages 111,000 per year.

Approximately 7 to 8% of all wilderness use is supported by commercial services per year.

Most places in the wilderness are not experiencing unacceptable impacts on wilderness character, with the exception of one area.





Management Concerns

Degradation of wilderness character



Campsite at Guitar Lake



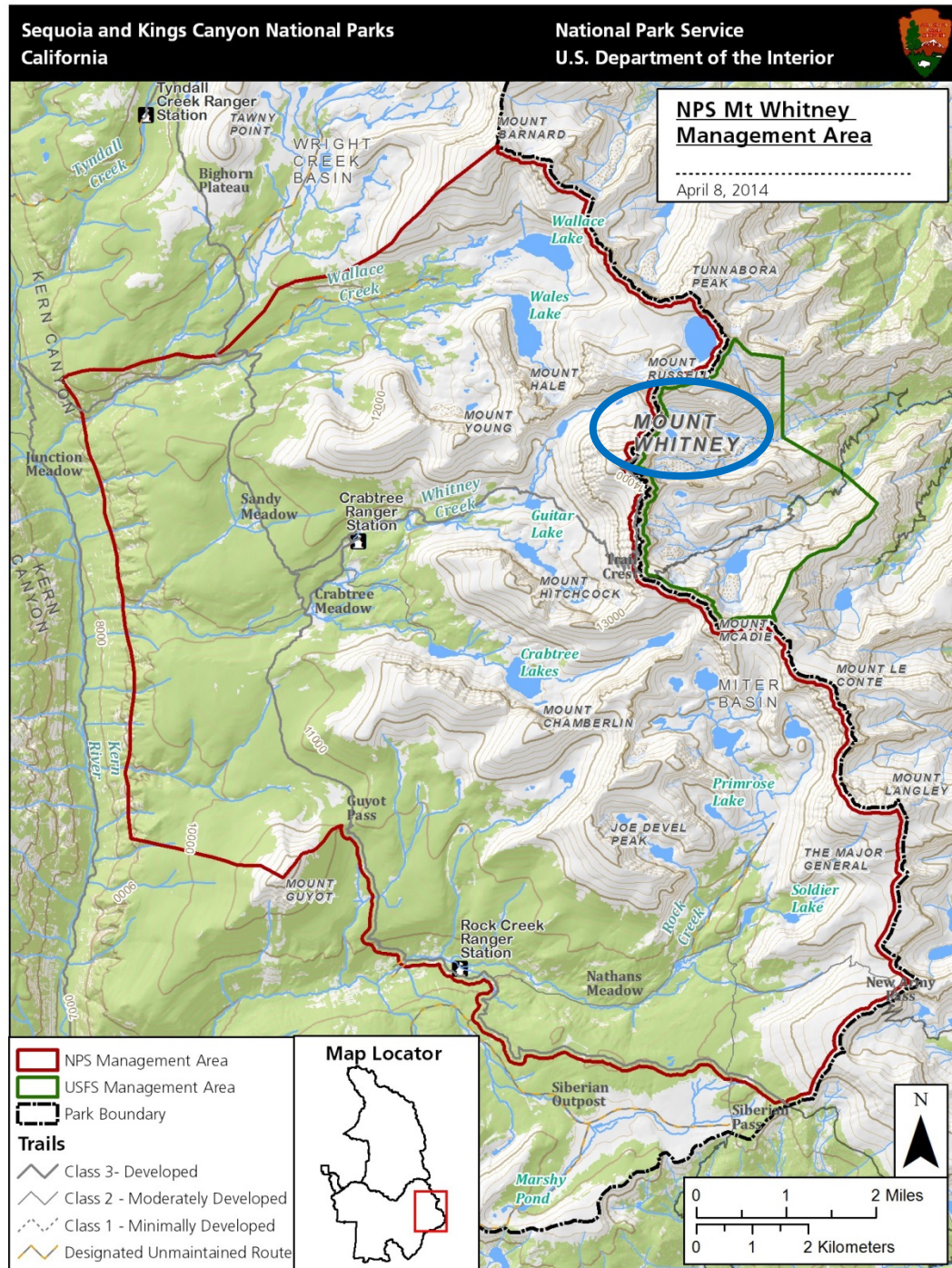
Mount Whitney summit

Mount Whitney Management Area (MWMA)

A special management area would be applied to a 37,000 acre area around Mount Whitney.

25% of the commercial use in the parks occurs in 4.5% of the wilderness.

Use in this area continues to increase.





Commercial Services

The Extent Necessary Determination and the proposed changes to commercial services in park wilderness are addressed as Element 11 in each alternative and in detail in appendix B.





Elements of the Alternatives

- 
- A background photograph showing a rocky, mountainous trail. Two people are visible: one wearing a hat and a light-colored shirt, and another in a darker shirt and shorts. A horse is also present, partially obscured by the text overlay. The scene is set in a high-altitude, arid environment with sparse vegetation.
- 1 – Visitor Use**
 - 2 – Access**
 - 3 - Campfires**
 - 4 – Food Storage**
 - 5 – Human Waste Management**
 - 6 – Party Size**
 - 7 – Camping/Campsites and Night Limits**
 - 8 – Stock Access and Travel (including grazing)**
 - 9 – Administrative Structures and Facilities**
 - 10 – Frontcountry Facilities that Support Wilderness Use**
 - 11 – Commercial Services**



Dates	Planning Phase
June 27 to August 25, 2014	Draft WSP/EIS open for Public Review and Comment
Fall 2014	Analyze Public Comments
Fall/Winter 2014	Prepare Final WSP/EIS
Spring 2015	Release Final WSP/EIS
	30-day no action period
By June 5, 2015	Legislatively mandated deadline for Record of Decision to be signed by RD



***We read every
comment we receive -
it is important to
understand what
types of comments
are the most valuable.***



Comments can be

Substantive or Non-substantive



Substantive comments:

- ❖ Bring forward an issue or a question
- ❖ Provide new information related to a law, regulation, guidance
- ❖ Provide new research or studies
- ❖ Provide information on other projects in the area
- ❖ Provide new reasonable alternatives
- ❖ Provide ideas for reducing impacts



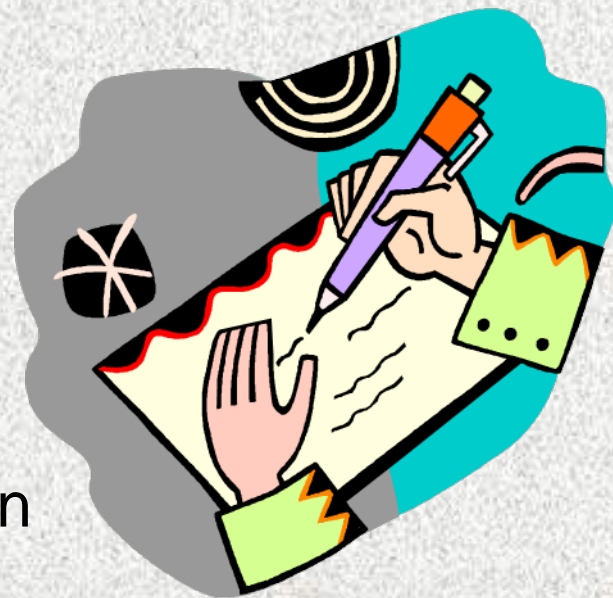
Non-substantive comments include...

- Information outside the scope of the document (i.e. criticism on existing policies, laws, guidelines outside the scope of the plan)
- Information on other projects not related to the document
- Opinions, personal judgments, grievances, complaints
- Support or opposition for a project; votes (for or against the project, mass mailings of form letters, petitions)



The best comments...

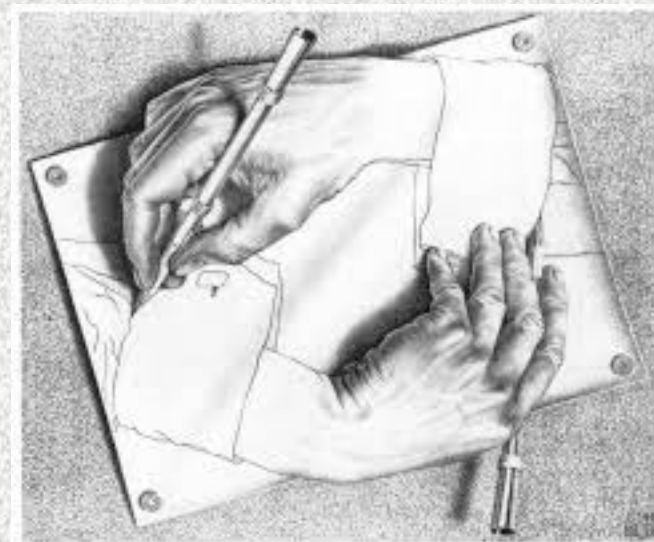
- Are from YOU!
- Discuss a particular plan element or alternative that you like and why
- Identify incorrect or incomplete information
- Provide constructive feedback about the alternatives, their feasibility, or the analysis of the effects





The best comments...

- Offer reasonable new alternatives
- Point out discrepancies between laws, mandates, and proposals
- Highlight errors in the analysis
- Provide info on how the proposal would affect YOU!





For more information and to submit comments:



<http://parkplanning.nps.gov/sekiwild>

Superintendent

ATTN: WSP/DEIS

Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

47050 Generals Highway, Three Rivers, CA 93271

Fax: (559) 565-4202

Submit written comments by August 25, 2014



Upcoming Public Webinar

The Wilderness Stewardship Plan Management Preferred Alternative (Alternative 2)

August 14 at 3 to 4 p.m.

For more information and to register:

yose.webex.com



The End

