

APPENDIX B



ARTHUR CARHART NATIONAL WILDERNESS TRAINING CENTER

MINIMUM REQUIREMENT DECISION GUIDE

“ . . . except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act.”

– Wilderness Act, 1964

Instructions and worksheets for the Minimum Requirement Analysis for actions, projects, and activities in Wilderness

The Minimum Requirement Decision Guide (MRDG) is designed for wilderness administrators to effectively analyze proposed actions to minimize negative impacts to wilderness character and values. It assumes a basic knowledge of the Wilderness Act of 1964, agency policies, and specific provisions of the wilderness designation legislation for each unit. This guide is suggested for wilderness administrators for the four federal land management agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, the National Park Service, the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and the U.S. Forest Service.

Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act of 1964 prohibits certain activities in wilderness by the public, and, at the same time allows the agencies to engage in those prohibited activities in some situations. Section 4(c) states:

“... except as necessary to meet minimum requirements for the administration of the area for the purpose of this Act (including measures required in emergencies involving the health and safety of persons within the area), there shall be no temporary road, no use of motor vehicles, motorized equipment or motorboats, no landing of aircraft, no other form of mechanical transport, and no structure or installation within any such area.”

Therefore, unless a generally prohibited use is allowed by specific unit designation, most of these activities are prohibited. However, in the above language, Congress acknowledged that there are times when exceptions are allowed to meet the minimum required administration of the area as wilderness.

How to Use This Guide

The MRDG displays a two-step process to assist in making the right decision for wilderness. First, the administrator must decide if a problem or issue in the wilderness unit needs administrative action, and then, and only then, the administrator must decide what tool/action/method, available from a range of identified alternatives, would minimize negative impacts on wilderness character and values. This guide includes templates for documenting both

steps of the decision-making process, instructions for completing each step, and a cover sheet for signatures. The MRDG and future revised editions of the MRDG can be found on the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center page at www.wilderness.net.

STEP 1 – DETERMINING THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT

SHEET 1

Is Administrative Action Needed?

What is the problem/issue that **may** require administrative action? Do not include methods or tools here. This sheet only refers to the issue or problem, not proposed action/project, or tools to be used. Include references from other legislation, policy, or plans, decisions, analyses, and how this issue is addressed in those documents.

Briefly describe the issue/problem:

Need to gather wild horses in the South Steens HMA. The HMA is within the Steens Mountain CMPA and portions of the HMA and surrounding lands are within the Steens Mountain Wilderness. Although wild horses are not addressed in the Steens Act or the Wilderness Act, management of wild horses requires the BLM to maintain wild horse numbers at an appropriate level. The most appropriate way to manage wild horses on the range is by periodic gathering of the horses. This issue addressed here is the most effective manner in which to gather the horses, including wild horse populations in the Wilderness.

The following questions assist in analyzing whether the issue needs to be resolved in wilderness. Do not consider what tools are to be used here. Please circle **Yes** or **No**, and explain your reasoning:

1. Is this an emergency? Yes **No** If yes, follow established procedures for Search and rescue (SAR), fire or other plans/policies. If no, please continue.

2. Is this problem/issue subject to valid existing rights, such as access to valid mining claim, state lands, etc? Yes **No**

If no, continue with **Sheet 1**.

If yes, briefly explain here and then proceed to **Sheet 3**

3. Can the problem/issue be addressed by administrative actions outside a wilderness area? (For example, the administrative actions could be an information program at the visitor center or trailhead instead of a physical action in the wilderness, etc) Yes **No**

If yes, conduct actions outside wilderness. If no, continue with **Sheet 2**.

4. Is there a special provision in legislation (the 1964 Wilderness Act or subsequent laws), that allows this project or activity? (For example, maintenance of dams or water storage facilities, access to private inholdings, etc.) Yes **No** **If yes, Go to SHEET 3; if no, Go To SHEET 2.**

STEP 1: DETERMINING THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENT (Continued) SHEET 2

Is Administrative Action Needed? (Continued)

The following questions are provided to evaluate whether resolving the issue protects wilderness character and values identified in the Wilderness Act. Answer the questions in terms of the need to resolve the issue/problem. If the answer to most of the questions is yes, then the issue/problem probably requires administrative action. **Please circle Yes or No for each answer, and briefly explain.**

1. If the issue/problem is not resolved, or action is not taken, will the natural processes of the wilderness be adversely affected?

Yes No Why/How?

If wild horse numbers are not maintained, overpopulation could occur. Increased numbers of wild horses could adversely affect the naturalness of the Steens Mountain Wilderness by effecting vegetation, soils and wildlife populations.

2. If the issue/problem goes unresolved, or action is not taken, will the values of solitude or primitive and unconfined type of recreation be threatened?

Yes No Why/How?

Without the horse gather there will be an increase in the wild horse population but this should not adversely effect solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation.

3. If the issue/problem goes unresolved or action is not taken will evidence of human manipulation, permanent improvements, or human habitation be substantially noticeable ?

Yes No Why/How?

Human improvements and/or manipulation will not be evident if wild horses are not gathered.

4. Does addressing the issue/problem or taking action protect the wilderness as a whole as opposed to a single resource?

Yes No Why/How?

Large numbers of wild horses could affect a variety of resources including vegetation, soils, fisheries, wildlife and riparian areas. All of these resources are important features of the wilderness.

5. Does addressing this issue/problem or taking action contribute to protection of an enduring resource of wilderness for future generations?

Yes No Why/How?

Wilderness values and resources would be managed and protected by maintaining the appropriate number of wild horses in the area.

6. Is this an issue for reasons other than convenience or cost of administration?

Yes No Why/How?

The management of wild horses herd populations is required by the Wild Horse and Burro Act and is necessary to protect wilderness resources and values from the adverse effects of an overpopulation of wild horses.

If administrative action is warranted, then proceed to Sheet 3 to determine the minimum tool or method for resolving the problem.

STEP 2: DETERMINING THE MINIMUM TOOL

SHEET 3: Determining the Minimum Tool: Fill out a Sheet 3 for each alternative.

Identify and describe a range of alternatives including those that utilize traditional tools and non-motorized and mechanized means as well as other methods.

Alternative # 1

Describe briefly or attach description:

Riders on horseback would be used to gather wild horses in Steens Mountain Wilderness. Riders would attempt to gather wild horses by horseback round-up methods of riding, hazing and roping. Traditional methods of gathering would be used rather than use helicopters or other mechanized means. No motorized or mechanized methods would be used to gather or transport captured horses.

In addition, horse traps or portions of horse traps could be placed in the wilderness to collect and hold horses which had been gathered.

Circle yes or no:

Does this alternative involve:

use of temporary road?	Yes	No
use of motor vehicles?	Yes	No
use of motorized equipment?	Yes	No
use of motorboats?	Yes	No
landing of airplanes?	Yes	No
landing of helicopters?	Yes	No
use of mechanical transport?	Yes	No
creating a structure or installation?	Yes	No
Other impacts to wilderness character?	Yes	No

Use of horseback riders gathering horses would have effects on the solitude of wilderness visitors as the period of time needed to gather would be increased and the riders would have to cover a large physical area of the wilderness.

The next set of descriptions may be put on Optional SHEET 3a, if desired:

Describe the biophysical effects/benefits of this alternative: *Wild horses would be gathered and the impacts of an increasing wild horse population on vegetation, soils, and wildlife populations in the wilderness would be reduced. The use of traps in the wilderness would have effects such as damage to vegetation, soil compaction and/or erosion*

Describe the social/recreation effects/benefits: *While wild horse gathering would occur traditional methods would be used as opposed to motorized or mechanized means. Visitors may not feel that their experience is as greatly affected when this method is used as opposed to the use of means of gathering such as helicopters.*

Describe societal/political effects/benefits: *None.*

Describe health and safety concerns/benefits: *Traditional gathering methods put both riders and their horses and the wild horses being gathered at additional risk. The possibilities of injury to riders and horses is greatly increased while working in rough country with the difficulties of terrain while riding at high rates of speed. The longer period of time needed to gather horses by this method would increase the possibilities of injury.*

Describe economic and timing considerations/benefits: *Gathering wild horses using horses and riders could take several weeks extending the amount of time wilderness visitors' solitude and experience may be affected. Due to the extended time needed to gather horses peak seasons of visitor would be affected. Chances of success in gathering horses are reduced. In addition, the costs for maintaining a gathering crew in the field for several weeks would be high.*

Describe heritage resource considerations/benefits: *None.*

SHEET 3: Determining the Minimum Tool: Fill out a Sheet 3 for each alternative.

Identify and describe a range of alternatives including those that utilize traditional tools and non-motorized and mechanized means as well as other methods.

Alternative # 2

Describe briefly or attach description:

*Helicopters would be used to gather wild horses from Steens Mountain Wilderness. Helicopters would be used for horse gathering rather than horseback riders and would fly over the wilderness during gathering operations.
In addition, horse traps or portions of horse traps could be placed in the wilderness to collect and hold horses which had been gathered. Traps could be carried to the needed site by hand and set by hand.*

Circle yes or no:

Does this alternative involve:

use of temporary road?	Yes	No
use of motor vehicles?	Yes	No
use of motorized equipment?	Yes	No
use of motorboats?	Yes	No
landing of airplanes?	Yes	No
landing of helicopters?	Yes	No
use of mechanical transport?	Yes	No
creating a structure or installation?	Yes	No
Other impacts to wilderness character?	Yes	No

Use of helicopters would have effects on the solitude of the wilderness visitor as the sights and sounds of the helicopter would directly effect that experience. There would be some short term impacts to solitude and naturalness by use of helicopters. An increase in human activity during the gathering operations would have the same affects on visitor solitude.

The next set of descriptions may be put on Optional SHEET 3a, if desired:

Describe the biophysical effects/benefits of this alternative: *Wild horses would be gathered and the impacts of an increasing wild horse population on vegetation, soils, and wildlife populations in the wilderness would be reduced. The use of traps in the wilderness would have effects such as damage to vegetation, soil compaction and/or erosion.*

Describe the social/recreation effects/benefits: *Wilderness visitors would be affected by the sights and sounds associated with helicopter over-flights resulting in the loss of solitude for those visitors. An increase in the number of persons in the wilderness associated with the gather would also affect visitor solitude. All of these affects should be short term and last no long that the length of time of the wild horse gathering operations.*

Describe societal/political effects/benefits: *None.*

Describe health and safety concerns/benefits: *Using helicopters for this type of operation involves a degree of risk. Standard OAS requirements and procedures would be followed. All safety procedures and protocols need to be observed.*

Describe economic and timing considerations/benefits: *The helicopter would be flying over the wilderness for as little time as necessary reducing the time of effects to wilderness visitors' solitude and experience. When possible flights would be conducted at times other than weekends or holidays. The success of gathers with the helicopter is high a making the operation more cost effective. There would be a one-time expenditure for the flights which could be less than maintaining a field crew for several weeks.*

Describe heritage resource considerations/benefits: *None.*

Alternative # 3

Describe briefly or attach description:

Helicopters would be used to fly over Steens Mountain Wilderness and gather wild horses. Helicopters would be used for gathering rather than horseback riders. In case of emergencies and threats to human health and safety, helicopters may be required to land in the wilderness. Motorized vehicles, such as trucks, would be used to transport captured horses. Such vehicles may have to intrude into the wilderness for short distances to load horses for transport.

In addition, horse traps or portions of horse traps could be placed in the wilderness to collect and hold horses which had been gathered. Traps would be transported short distances off open roads to needed sites within wilderness and mechanized equipment could be used as needed to place the traps.

Circle yes or no:

Does this alternative involve:

use of temporary road?	Yes	No
use of motor vehicles?	Yes	No
use of motorized equipment?	Yes	No
use of motorboats?	Yes	No
landing of airplanes?	Yes	No
landing of helicopters?	Yes	No
use of mechanical transport?	Yes	No
creating a structure or installation?	Yes	No
Other impacts to wilderness character?	Yes	No

Use of helicopters would have effects on the solitude of the wilderness visitor as the sights and sounds of the helicopter would directly effect that experience. There would be some short term impacts to solitude and naturalness by use of helicopters and motor vehicles and mechanized and mechanized equipment. An increase in human activity during the gathering operations would have the same affects on visitor solitude.

The next set of descriptions may be put on Optional SHEET 3a, if desired:

Describe the biophysical effects/benefits of this alternative: *Wild horses would be gathered and the impacts of an increasing wild horse population on vegetation, soils, and wildlife populations in the wilderness would be reduced. The use of traps in the wilderness would have effects such as damage to vegetation, soil compaction and/or erosion. The use of motor vehicles would cause some short term damage to vegetation and possible soil compaction. Such affects could be mitigated by re-naturalizing the site after the horse gathering operation has ended.*

Describe the social/recreation effects/benefits: *Wilderness visitors would be affected by the sights and sounds associated with helicopter over-flights resulting in the loss of solitude for those visitors. Similar affects may be associated with the use of motor vehicles and mechanized equipment. An increase in the number of persons in the wilderness associated with the gather would also affect visitor solitude. All of these affects should be short term and last no long that the length of time of the wild horse gathering operations*

Describe societal/political effects/benefits: *None.*

Describe health and safety concerns/benefits: *Using helicopters for this type of operation involves a degree of risk. Standard OAS requirements and procedures would be followed. All safety procedures and protocols need to be observed.*

Describe economic and timing considerations/benefits: *The helicopter would be flying over the wilderness for as short a period of time as necessary. The success of gathers with the helicopter is high. There would be a one-time expenditure for the flights which could be less than maintaining a field crew for several weeks. Use of motor vehicles to transport captured horses would be faster and more effective then attempting to herd wild horses over long distances to transport facilities located outside of wilderness. When possible flights would be conducted at times other then weekends or holidays.*

Describe heritage resource considerations/benefits: *None.*

STEP 2: DETERMINING THE MINIMUM TOOL

What is the method or tool that will allow the issue/problem to be resolved or an action to be implemented with a minimum of impacts to the wilderness?

The Selected alternative is # 3.

Describe the rationale for selecting this alternative:

There would be no biophysical impacts the wilderness from the use of helicopters to gather wild horses as opposed to the use of horseback riders. Some impacts would occur from the use of motor vehicles and traps in wilderness but these would be slight as the use would be located very near to open roads and would be the minimum amount needed. Using a helicopter to gather wild horses would provide appropriate numbers for management purposes and is the most appropriate tool available to effectively gather wild horses. Use of motor vehicles to transport captured horses is also the most effective method available for that purpose. All

Describe the specific operating requirements for the action. Include information on timing, locations, type of actions, etc. *Wild horse gathering operations would take place in the Fall of the year when visitor use in the wilderness is reduce, although some visitors may be affected by noise and an increase in personnel in the wilderness. Operations would take place during mid-week time periods. Gathering operations occurring in the wilderness would take place primarily in the western portions of the wilderness. Actions would include the gathering, trapping, holding and transporting of wild horses from within the boundaries of Steens Mountain Wilderness.*

What are the maintenance requirements? *None*

What standards and designs will apply? *None*

Develop and describe any mitigation measures that apply. *Wild horse gather in the wilderness would occur during the Fall season when visitor use is lower. Attempt to avoid holidays and heavy use periods associated with special events or wildlife hunting seasons. Post public notices informing wilderness visitors of the potential of encountering work crews, helicopters and motor vehicles in the wilderness during the gathering period. Restore, naturalize and/or rehabilitate any areas in the wilderness physically damaged by operations associated with the use of helicopters and/or motor vehicles during horse gather operations.*

What will be provided for monitoring and feedback to strengthen future effects and preventative actions to be taken to help in future efforts? *Area would be monitored for recovery and naturalization. Consider comments and suggestions from wilderness visitors and resource specialists regarding horse gather operations in wilderness for future efforts.*

Approvals:

Prepared by: /s/ John Neeling

Date: 7/30/04

Recommended by: _____

Date: _____

Recommended by: _____

Date: _____

Approved by: _____

Date: _____

Sheet 4: Selection of the Minimum Tool Alternative