

Special Designations

Presidential Designations (outside the scope of an RMP)

National Monument - An area designated by the President, under the authority of the Antiquities Act of 1906, to protect objects of scientific and historical interest that are located on federal lands. Criteria for a National Monument can be found in the legislation (June 8, 1906, c. 3060, Section 2, 34 Stat. 225).

Congressional Designations (Can be recommended through the RMP process)

National Conservation Area - An area designated by Congress to provide for the conservation, use, enjoyment and enhancement of certain natural recreational, paleontological, and other resources, including fish and wildlife habitat.

National Wilderness Area - An area designated by Congress and defined by the Wilderness Act of 1964 as a place “where the earth and its community of life are untrammelled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Designation is aimed at ensuring that these lands are preserved and protected in their natural condition. Wilderness areas, which are generally at least 5,000 acres or more in size, offer outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; such areas may also contain ecological, geological, or other features that have scientific, scenic, or historical value. Criteria for lands to be designated by BLM as Wilderness Study Areas and subsequently considered by Congress for designation as a National Wilderness Area can be found in the Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures Manual (H-6310-1).

National Wild and/or Scenic Rivers - A river or river section designated by Congress or the Secretary of the Interior, under the authority of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act of 1968 (WSRA), to protect outstandingly remarkable scenic, recreational, geologic, fish and wildlife, historic, cultural, or other similar values and to preserve the river or river section in its free-flowing condition. Criteria for National Wild and Scenic Rivers can be found at: BLM Manual, Wild and Scenic Rivers -- Policy & Program Direction for Identification, Evaluation, and Management (H-8351).

Definitions for River Classifications:

Wild river areas: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments and generally inaccessible except by trail, with watersheds or shorelines largely undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Scenic river areas: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are free of impoundments, with shorelines or watersheds still largely primitive and shorelines large undeveloped, but accessible in places by roads.

Recreational river areas: Those rivers or sections of rivers that are readily accessible by road or railroad, that may have some development along their shorelines, and that may have undergone some impoundment or diversion in the past.

National Scenic Trail - Designated by Congress under the National Trails System Act of 1968, an extended trail that offers maximum outdoor recreation potential and provides enjoyment of the various qualities - scenic, historical, natural, and cultural – of the areas through which these trails pass. Criteria for National Scenic Trails can be found at: 16 United States Code, Chapter 27, National Trails System, 1241-1251.

National Historic Trail - Designated by Congress under the National Trails System Act of 1968, a type of extended trail that follows as closely as possible, on federal land, the original trails or routes of travel with national historic significance. Designation identifies and protects historic routes and their historic remnants and artifacts for public use and enjoyment. A designated trail must meet certain criteria, including having a significant potential for public recreational use or interest based on historic interpretation and appreciation. Criteria for National Historic Trails can be found at: 16 United States Code, Chapter 27, National Trails System, 1241-1251.

Administrative Designations (Within the scope of an RMP)

Wilderness Study Area (WSA) - An area designated by a federal land management agency (Bureau of Land Management, Forest Service, National Park Service, or the Fish and Wildlife Service) as having wilderness characteristics, thus making it worthy of consideration by Congress for wilderness designation. While Congress considers whether to designate a WSA as permanent wilderness, the federal agency managing the WSA does so in a manner as to prevent impairment of the area's suitability for wilderness designation. Criteria for Wilderness Study Areas can be found at: Wilderness Inventory and Study Procedures Manual (H-6310-1). WSA's are managed under the Interim Management Policy for Lands under Wilderness Review (H-8550-1).

Areas of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) - Areas of special concern where special management attention is required to protect and prevent irreparable damage to important historic, cultural or scenic values, fish and wildlife resources or other natural systems or processes, or to protect life and safety from natural hazards. Criteria for ACEC can be found at: BLM Manual 1613 and 43 CFR 1610.7-2(b).

Outstanding Natural Areas (ONA) - An area with high scenic values that has been little altered by human impact. Under current BLM policy, outstanding natural areas must meet the relevance and importance criteria of ACEC's and are designated as ACEC's. Criteria for ONA's can be found at: BLM Manual 1613 and 43 CFR 1610.7-2(b).

Research Natural Area (RNA) - An area where natural processes are allowed to predominate and which is preserved for the primary purposes of research and education. Under current BLM policy, RNA's must meet the relevance and importance criteria of ACEC's and are designated as ACEC's. Criteria for RNA's can be found at: BLM Manual 1613 and 43 CFR 1610.7-2(b).

Special Recreation Management Areas (SRMA) - Areas where recreation is one of the principal management objectives; where intensive recreation management is needed and which require more than minimal recreation-related investments. Recreation activities in these areas are generally more concentrated, structured and regulated than in ERMA's. Criteria for SRMA's can be found at: BLM Manual 8300.

Extensive Recreation Management Areas (ERMA) - Areas where recreation is unstructured and dispersed with minimal regulatory constraints and where minimal recreation-related investments are required. The ERMA's include all public land exclusive of Special Recreation Management Areas. Criteria for ERMA's can be found at: BLM Manual 8300.