

FSH 1909.12 - LAND MANAGEMENT PLANNING HANDBOOK

CHAPTER 70 - WILDERNESS EVALUATION

Amendment No.: 1909.12-2007-1

Effective Date: January 31, 2007

71.11 - Criteria for Including Improvements

Areas may qualify for the inventory of potential wilderness even though they include the following types of areas or features:

1. Airstrips and heliports.
2. Cultural treatments involving plantations or plantings where the use of mechanical equipment is not evident.
3. Electronic installations, such as cell towers, television, radio, and telephone repeaters, and the like, provided their impact is minimal.
4. Evidence of historic mining (50+ years ago). Do not include areas of significant current mineral activity, including prospecting with mechanical or motorized earthmoving equipment. The inventory may include areas where the only evidence of prospecting is holes that have been drilled without access roads to the site. Potential wilderness also may include:
 - a. Areas that otherwise meet inventory criteria if they are covered by mineral leases having a “no surface occupancy” stipulation.
 - b. Areas covered by mineral leases that otherwise meet inventory criteria only if the lessee has not exercised development and occupancy rights. If and when these rights are exercised, remove the area, or portion affected, from the inventory unless it is possible to establish specific occupancy provisions that would maintain the area in a condition suitable for wilderness.
5. Structures or evidence of vegetative manipulation resulting from past management practices in National grasslands and prairies. National Grassland and Prairie areas that contain the following features may qualify for the inventory:
 - a. Areas where vegetation type conversions are reverting to native vegetation with minimal evidence of cultivation.
 - b. Areas with less than one mile of interior fence per section.
6. Federal ownership of less than 70 percent if it is realistic to manage the Federal lands as wilderness, independent of the private land.
7. Minor structural range improvements (FSM 2240.5), such as fences or water troughs. Exclude areas where nonstructural range improvements are readily visible and apparent. Areas with spray or burning projects are permissible if there is little or no evidence of the project.
8. Recreation improvements such as occupancy spots or minor hunting or outfitter camps. As a general rule, do not include developed sites. Areas with minor, easily removable recreation developments may be included.

9. Timber harvest areas where logging and prior road construction are not evident, except as provided in Section 71.12 for areas east of the 100th meridian. Examples include those areas containing early logging activities related to historic settlement of the vicinity, areas where stumps and skid trails or roads are substantially unrecognizable, or areas where clearcuts have regenerated to the degree that canopy closure is similar to surrounding uncut areas.

10. Ground-return telephone lines, electric lines, and powerlines if a right-of-way has not been cleared.

11. Watershed treatment areas if the use of mechanical equipment is not evident. The inventory may include areas where minor watershed treatment has been accomplished manually such as small hand-constructed gully plugs.