

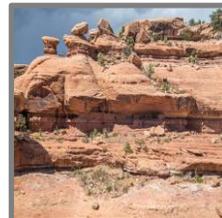
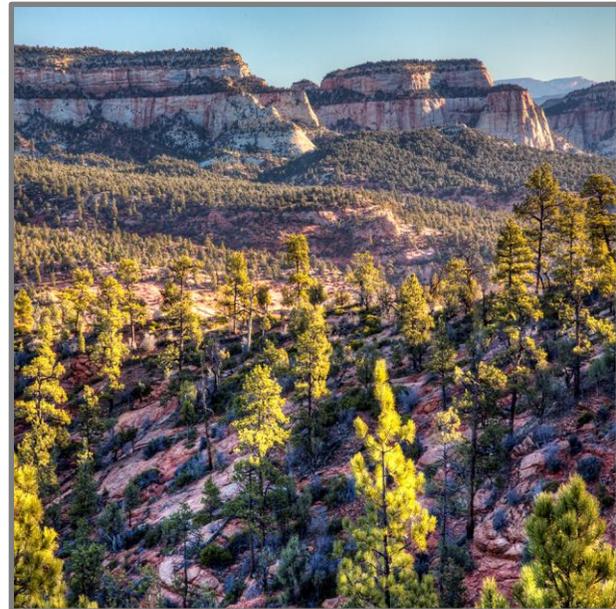


**NATIONAL
CONSERVATION
LANDS**

Utah

General Orientation Guide

Basics of Wilderness Study Area Monitoring



1 General Information

Welcome to WildSNAP

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and American Conservation Experience (ACE) partnered to develop an electronic citizen-science based monitoring program for Wilderness Study Areas (WSAs). The application, called WildSNAP, is hosted on an external website (wildsnap.org) and will initially be available for download only to iPads. The app will be available to members of the public who complete a brief required training module available on the wildsnap.org website. The app allows users to collect information about disturbances, impairments and resources within certain WSAs managed by BLM-Utah using the internal GPS system in an iPad.

The WildSNAP application has several major components:

- An Online Training Module for Users with foundational information about WSAs
- A General Orientation Guide within the app with generic WSA management information (i.e., this document)
- Site-Specific Guides for certain WSAs
- The iOS app itself
- Monitoring Reports electronically submitted to BLM for each WSA visit

WildSNAP app users have an individual account that stores information they collect in the field within the app. Once the user reaches a WiFi connection, they can submit a complete report to the appropriate BLM office. BLM and ACE are grateful for your contributions to monitoring efforts in WSAs!

“What is a Wilderness Study Area?”

A WSA is a special designation that applies to lands managed by the BLM to protect wilderness characteristics until Congress designates the area as wilderness or directs BLM to manage the area for other uses. From the definition of wilderness characteristics in Sec. 2(c) of the Wilderness Act, wilderness characteristics are summarized as: size, naturalness, and outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and can potentially include “other features,” sometimes referred to as “supplemental values”. Since only Congress can designate a wilderness, WSAs remain under the BLM’s “non-impairment” protection until Congress makes a decision about them. Additionally, these areas often do not receive as much

visitation as designated wilderness areas, making them one of the “best kept secrets” on public lands.

BLM’s WSA Management Strategy

WSAs are managed to ensure they are unimpaired for preservation as wilderness until Congress has determined to designate them as wilderness or release them from WSA status. BLM must also protect and maintain wilderness characteristics so that they remain in the same or better condition as existed at the date of WSA establishment (generally considered 1976, with some exceptions), as documented in the original inventory file.

WSAs are managed according to the non-impairment standard, which requires that new (meaning since the date of the WSA’s establishment) uses and facilities must be temporary and create no new surface disturbance. For example, placing a temporary electric fence to exclude cattle from grazing for two growing seasons after a wildfire would meet the criteria of temporary. The second part of the non-impairment standard requires that the use or facility creates “no new surface disturbance”, which means no new disruption of the rock, soil, or vegetation that would necessitate reclamation, rehabilitation, or restoration in order for the site to appear and function as it did prior to the disturbance. In the practical sense, this management strategy involves preventing the mechanical maintenance of routes or placement of any new permanent structures.

Certain activities and uses that are allowed in wilderness areas (e.g., recreational hiking, use of pack stock, domestic livestock grazing) are also recognized as acceptable within a WSA even though, in the literal sense, they do cause surface disturbance.

Additionally, in certain situations, the BLM may authorize a use or facility that creates surface disturbance or that is not temporary. Such authorizations must meet one of the seven allowable exceptions: emergency, public safety, restoration of impacts from unauthorized use, valid existing rights, grandfathered use, protection or enhancement of wilderness characteristics or other legal requirements. However, even when an exception applies, BLM must still manage the project to minimize impairment to wilderness characteristics.

Motorized use is not allowed except on pre-existing routes that have not been closed to off-highway vehicle (OHV) use within the WSA. Construction of vehicle routes or

trails and cross-country OHV travel is strictly forbidden (except in emergencies). Additionally, while the public may gather dead and downed wood for campfires, standing trees may not be cut for personal or commercial use.

Permissible activities include camping, backpacking, traditional rock climbing, skiing, caving, hunting, and other primitive pursuits. Installing fixed anchors or bolts for climbing is generally prohibited unless the anchors were placed prior to the WSA designation. Activities such as geocaching, rock hounding, gold panning, and aerial activities like hang gliding or paragliding may be permissible as long as they do not create new surface disturbance or establish the precedent of a new discretionary use in a WSA where it did not previously exist. If you have a question regarding specific types of use, including whether or not a permit would be required, please contact the local BLM office. If you encounter an issue in the field and experience any doubt about its authorization, document the issue and bring it to the attention of the BLM.

Additional information is available at <http://www.wilderness.net/BLM> or in BLM [Manual 6330 – Management of Wilderness Study Areas](#).

2 Monitoring

Monitoring Objective

BLM's objective is that all WSAs will be monitored to ensure continued suitability for designation as wilderness, as required by law. The BLM endeavors to protect the **wilderness characteristics** of a WSA from impairment. In essence, monitoring is the first step in identifying potential adverse impacts to such characteristics and whether or not the areas are being managed so as not to impair the suitability of the WSA for preservation as wilderness.

Wilderness Characteristics

In agency terms, WildSNAP users are collecting valuable data about the WSA's **wilderness characteristics**, as defined in the 1964 Wilderness Act. Characteristics include size, naturalness, outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation and may also include supplemental values.

Size: Areas with wilderness characteristics, including WSAs, are either roadless areas of public lands that are greater than 5,000 acres, roadless islands within lakes, rivers or oceans, or areas found to be of a size practicable for management as wilderness (i.e., small tracts of BLM-administered land adjacent to wilderness areas managed by another agency). *Note: The BLM has adopted the "road" definition in FLPMA's legislative history in the House of Representatives Committee Report 94-1163. The word "roadless" refers to the absence of roads that have been improved and maintained by mechanical means to ensure relatively regular and continuous use. A way maintained solely by the passage of vehicles does not constitute a road.*

Naturalness: The BLM defines naturalness as, "The degree to which an area generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature with the imprint of people's work substantially unnoticeable" (BLM Manual 6310, p. 10). Thus, a WSA may have fences, non-motorized trails, campsites, and even livestock reservoirs, so long as they are substantially unnoticeable within the context of the WSA's surrounding landscape. *Note: Naturalness differs from "natural (ecological) integrity."*

- Document any evidence of mechanical construction within the WSA, such as berms, gravel, etc.

- Monitor existing vehicle routes for widening, significant deterioration, or motorized use beyond any marked closure points. Provide photos and GPS points at key locations. Report all violations observed within the app. If you witness any potential illegal activity (e.g., people who are driving off-road in the WSA), avoid approaching the illegal use or engaging in potentially confrontational discussions. Your personal safety is your highest priority. Only attempt to collect identifying information (e.g., license plates and photos) if you feel it is safe to do so.
- If possible, rake out vehicle tracks found beyond closed routes so that they are no longer visible from the closure point. Place dead and downed vegetation across closed routes to provide camouflage. Document and report signs that have been damaged or need replacing.
- Document and pack out modern trash or debris whenever possible. Objects that may be historic (older than 50 years) should not be disturbed.
- Document with photos and GPS any structures or surface disturbance found away from designated routes.

Outstanding opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation:

Solitude: The state of being alone or remote from others; isolation.

Primitive and Unconfined Recreation: Non-motorized, non-mechanized (except as provided by law), and undeveloped types of recreational activities.

Information about the visitation and uses within WSAs can also assist in documenting the current opportunities for solitude or primitive and unconfined recreation. However, members of the public should not approach other visitors under the pretense of enforcement or engage in any potentially controversial discussions. Simply record the following information:

- Document the number of vehicles or persons encountered
- Document any unauthorized uses, such as mountain biking or OHVs

Other Features of Interest/Supplemental Values: Supplemental values include ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value. These values may or may not be present in a given WSA. The site-specific monitoring guide will include possible or known supplemental values. However, WildSNAP users may uncover potential undocumented resources. Please document:

- Threatened or endangered plant or wildlife species
- Significant cultural resources (*Note: Please do not disturb any cultural or archeological resources. Additionally, information regarding the location of such resources is sensitive and may be redacted from public records in order to prevent destruction, looting, or vandalism. Please do not disclose the location of any archeological sites to other members of the public.*)
- Outstanding scenic or geological features

Most WildSNAP users will be using the app to document potential violations of WSA policy and identify any unauthorized uses in WSAs and their associated impacts. The BLM has identified several key observation points (KOPs) for each WSA as suggested locations to visit and collect panoramic photos. You may also document any other physical disturbances or issues within the app.

Monitoring information and photographs assist in recording the location and extent of impacts so that the area can be restored or reclaimed. Information collected during your visit may also assist in identifying resource conditions (e.g., rangeland health) or features that could constitute supplemental values. Even when no disturbances are encountered, submitting a record of a monitoring visit where no unauthorized conditions exist is still valuable in assessing the condition of an area over time.

Other requested information:

The BLM also requests that WildSNAP users document:

- Impairments to access points (i.e., major washout of the primary vehicle access route that prevents vehicles from reaching the WSA boundary)
- Missing or damaged signs, particularly at WSA access points
- Other maintenance concerns (e.g., broken gate)

Refer to Site Specific Monitoring Guides for each WSA

Each WSA within the WildSNAP app will have a corresponding site-specific monitoring guide that includes a map of the boundaries of the WSA. WSA boundaries are usually delineated by land tenure (WSAs exclude state or private land) or other legal subdivision (such as a section line) or some form of development including roads, power lines, or other rights-of-way. Occasionally, WSA boundaries use physical features such as the edge of a cliff. BLM makes every effort to ensure that the GIS

data to create the maps is correct. BLM also attempts to mark boundaries near access points and in strategic locations. However, if you encounter information in the field that causes confusion or concern, please report it.

Many WSA boundaries also include a “cherry-stemmed” road, which is a maintained road that partially enters (but does not completely bisect) the WSA and is not technically within the WSA. These routes are not part of the WSA and you may encounter vehicles on such routes. Such routes should be clearly displayed on a map within the WSA’s site-specific monitoring guide.

Note: Please limit the amount of general photos that are taken for the WildSNAP app. All photos taken through the app become part of the administrative record and a large quantity creates a filing challenge. However, BLM-Utah’s social media team welcomes photos taken on your personal camera or phone. Photos can include, but are not limited to, landscape photos, WildSNAP users at work, staged photos, sunrises and sunsets, wildlife and vegetation. While archaeological resources are listed on the app, they should not be submitted to social media due to modern camera geo-tagging. If interested, please follow the Bureau of Land Management-Utah on our social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter, Flickr and YouTube. When posting to your personal social media accounts please tag @BLMUTah and use the hashtag #mypubliclands. The social media team love to have access to these photos for future media projects. If willing to share, please email photos with a detailed description to: blm_ut_newmedia@blm.gov. If you actively use Flickr, we encourage you to join the BLM-Utah Group and share your photos on that forum. Photo credit will be given for all pictures used. We thank you for your assistance in this project.

Monitoring Activities Must Conform to the Non-Impairment Standard

Monitoring activities need to meet the non-impairment standard. Thus, your use of vehicles or motorized travel for monitoring purposes must follow the same rules that the general public is required to follow. In other words, please do not drive off of any established routes and be sure to follow the information in the WSA’s Site-Specific Monitoring Guide regarding vehicle access and parking or trailhead locations.

Adjust the timing of your visit to avoid negative impacts to resources. For example, avoid using primitive routes when they are wet and driving would cause rutting, and avoid visiting during periods of high sensitivity for wildlife. For example, if a Site-

Specific Monitoring Guide notes that elk are present, avoid visiting that WSA when elk are calving or nursing their calves (late spring and early summer).

3 Practice Leave No Trace

The Seven Principles of “Leave No Trace™”

Plan Ahead and Prepare

- Know the regulations and special concerns for the area you'll visit.
- Prepare for extreme weather, hazards, and emergencies.
- Schedule your trip to avoid times of high use.
- Visit in small groups when possible. Consider splitting larger groups into smaller groups.
- Repackage food to minimize waste.
- Use a map and compass to eliminate the use of marking paint, rock cairns or flagging.

Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces

- Durable surfaces include established trails and campsites, rock, gravel, dry grasses or snow.
- Protect riparian areas by camping at least 200 feet from lakes and streams.
- Good campsites are found, not made. Altering a site is not necessary.
 - In popular areas:
 - Concentrate use on existing trails and campsites.
 - Walk single file in the middle of the trail, even when wet or muddy.
 - Keep campsites small. Focus activity in areas where vegetation is absent.
 - In pristine areas:
 - Disperse use to prevent the creation of campsites and trails.
 - Avoid places where impacts are just beginning.

Dispose of Waste Properly

- Pack it in, pack it out. Inspect your campsite and rest areas for trash or spilled foods. Pack out all trash, leftover food and litter.
- Deposit solid human waste in catholes dug 6 to 8 inches deep, at least 200 feet from water, camp and trails. Cover and disguise the cathole when finished.
- Pack out toilet paper and hygiene products.
- To wash yourself or your dishes, carry water 200 feet away from streams or lakes and use small amounts of biodegradable soap. Scatter strained dishwater.

Leave What You Find

- Preserve the past: examine, but do not touch cultural or historic structures and artifacts.
- Leave rocks, plants and other natural objects as you find them.

- Avoid introducing or transporting non-native species.
- Do not build structures, furniture, or dig trenches.

Minimize Campfire Impacts

- Campfires can cause lasting impacts to the backcountry. Use a lightweight stove for cooking and enjoy a candle lantern for light.
- Where fires are allowed, use established fire rings, fire pans, or mound fires.
- Keep fires small. Only use sticks from the ground that can be broken by hand.
- Burn all wood and coals to ash, put out campfires completely, then scatter cool ashes.

Respect Wildlife

- Observe wildlife from a distance. Do not follow or approach them.
- Never feed animals. Feeding wildlife damages their health, alters natural behaviors, and exposes them to predators and other dangers.
- Protect wildlife and your food by storing rations and trash securely.
- Control pets at all times, or leave them at home.
- Avoid wildlife during sensitive times: mating, nesting, raising young, or winter.

Be Considerate of Other Visitors

- Respect other visitors and protect the quality of their experience.
- Be courteous. Yield to other users on the trail.
- Step to the downhill side of the trail when encountering pack stock.
- Take breaks and camp away from trails and other visitors.
- Let nature's sounds prevail. Avoid loud voices and noises.

Visit <https://lnt.org> to learn more about the Leave No Trace program.

4 Safety Considerations

Safety Recommendations

WildSNAP users should have a foundational understanding of outdoor safety and backcountry travel. Users of the WildSNAP app are responsible for personal safety and for researching conditions and properly planning for a site visit. The following table of safety recommendations should be adhered to before and during monitoring visits.

Never compromise your personal safety for the sake of monitoring. Be vigilant at all times about the weather, terrain, and personal physical condition.

A number of reputable sources, including this [Forest Service Outdoor Safety website](#), provide information on preparedness and risk management. Be sure you have sufficient shelter, clothing, equipment, food, water (1 gal/person/day), artificial light sources, first aid, and survival gear for potential backcountry conditions. Be sure to wear bright colors (specifically orange) during hunting season. Additionally, adjust the timing of your visit to avoid negative impacts to resources. For example, avoid using primitive routes when they are wet and driving would cause rutting, and avoid visiting during periods of high sensitivity for wildlife, such as areas/seasons that elk are calving.

The table below summarizes the potential hazards visitors may experience in the field, and recommended measures to manage the hazards.

Table 1: Risk Management

Hazard: Slipping, tripping or falling on rocky or uneven terrain
Be aware of conditions. Wear lug soled boots with good ankle support. Walk, don't run. Side step down hills. Carry any heavy items on downhill side.
Hazard: Snakes, insect bites, bees, encounters with wild animals and poisonous plants.
Walk slowly through brush. Be aware of surroundings. Wear long sleeved shirts, long pants, and leather boots. Avoid scented lotions. Familiarize yourself with regional hazardous species, such as insects and poisonous plants. Carry medication if you have known allergies; over-the-counter allergy medicine is recommended for all first aid kits. Avoid attracting predators and other hazardous wildlife by keeping a clean camp. Be bear aware and know how to react if encountered by bears or other wild animals. Visit the Center for Wildlife Information website for additional information.

Hazard: Cuts, scrapes and splinters from fencing and/or barrier materials

Use gloves, long sleeved shirts, long pants and boots. Keep first aid kit close by.

Hazard: Sprains, strains from hiking, lifting loads, etc.

Use caution crossing uneven terrain. Use proper lifting techniques. Hike with a group or in pairs.

Hazard: Weather related illness or injury; extreme heat or cold

Check weather forecast prior to going to the field and avoid traveling in inclement weather. Monitor weather closely. Wear clothing suited to weather. Carry and drink plenty of water. Research signs of heat stroke, heat exhaustion, frostbite, hypothermia and understand initial treatment options. First aid training is recommended.

Hazard: Lightning or thunderstorm

Check weather forecast prior to going to the field and avoid traveling in inclement weather. Monitor weather closely and watch for approaching storms. Get to vehicle if possible, but be careful to avoid touching any bare metal portions of the vehicle and do not use the car radio. Do **not** seek shelter under a tree. Stay away metal objects, and high ground. First aid training is recommended.

Hazard: Flash flood

Check weather forecast prior to going to the field and avoid traveling in inclement weather. Monitor weather closely when travelling in slot canyons as flash flood danger can be high and roads become impassable when wet. Watch flow in streams and washes, do not enter or cross if water is rising.

Hazard: Confrontation with verbal and/or abusive public

Maintain a calm demeanor. Do not engage in confrontation. Walk away and retreat to a safe position. Contact BLM or Law Enforcement when necessary.

Hazard: Lost, missing, or overdue hiker

Travel with a group or in pairs, whenever possible. Leave a trip itinerary and your return time with the ACE WildSNAP coordinator, friends, and/or family. Plan routes in advance and minimize deviation. Carry both hard copy maps, and GPS units. Regroup at predetermined times and locations.

Hazard: Motor vehicle breakdown or accident

Inspect vehicle prior to departing for the monitoring visit. Ensure that the vehicle is in proper functioning condition and that lights, brakes, and other mechanical features are working. Ensure that tire pressure is within recommended limits and always bring a spare tire, or two. Check weather forecast prior to going to the field

and avoid inclement weather. When in the field, park the vehicle and walk potentially dangerous portions of a route prior to driving them. Drivers and vehicles should not attempt to drive into areas beyond their capabilities.

Liability Disclaimer

The WildSNAP app is a citizen-science project developed to assist in connecting interested members of the public to their public lands. Use of the app and participation in the monitoring program is completely voluntary and self-directed. Persons using the app are not considered “volunteers,” unless they have signed a separate Volunteer Agreement with the BLM. The BLM and American Conservation Experience accept no responsibility related to any potential incidents related to the use of the app or associated visits to public lands.

What it’s all about...

Enjoy yourself and have fun! Take pride in your contribution to public land conservation. Remember to submit your final reports through the WildSNAP app. Thank you for your public service!



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