SIERRA CLUB WILDERNESS ADVISORY
WORKBOOK

FOR USE IN DEVELOPING AND IMPLEMENTING WILDERNESS CAMPAIGNS
AND SUBSEQUENT STEWARDSHIP OF WILDERNESS
Sierra Club Wilderness Advisory

Approved by the Conservation Governance Committee on June 26, 2008.
Updated May of 2015.

This advisory is appended to the Sierra Club’s Wilderness Management Policy, at http://www.sierraclub.org/policy/wilderness-management/wilderness-management

Thank you to the members of the Wildlands and Wilderness Team and its many friends and advisors for making this effort happen.

Want to join the Wildlands and Wilderness Team online or search for more information? Go to our Grassroots Network page at: https://content.sierraclub.org/grassrootsnetwork/teams/wildlands-and-wilderness-team

Updates on Wilderness and places we are working to protect are frequently posted to our Facebook page. Like us at: https://www.facebook.com/sierraclubwildlandsandwildernesssteam
The purpose of this advisory is to increase the effectiveness of grassroots campaigns to designate and permanently protect wilderness. This document will help you prepare and implement your campaign.

Your Chapter is the local authority on the campaign to protect the special place(s) in your local area as part of the national wilderness preservation system. Achieving passage by the U.S. Congress requires a larger constituency, greater resources, and a wider range of viewpoints and authorities to consider. We are One Club. Accordingly, there is help you can get and there are policies and entities which you need to consult. Policies are mandatory. Sierra Club support of national legislation must have the approval of the Vice President of Conservation and the National Program Director. Typically, they will seek guidance from the Our Wild America Campaign, related Grassroots Network Teams and Staff. This advisory will help you to navigate those waters.

Wilderness system is defined by statute, in the Wilderness Act of 1964 (Public Law 88-577). You should review the complete definition in Appendix I to this advisory. This law contains certain exceptions to its general rule. You may face pressure to expand the exceptions. As you begin your campaign, it is wise to assess where this might occur in your local situation and make plans on how to deal with these pressures, thus protecting the Wilderness Act along with the land. Look for opportunities to reinforce it, avoid actions that weaken it.

The objective of any Wilderness Campaign is to maximize the extent of the area to be protected while recognizing that the final product will be a product of the political process. Since politics is a complex activity involving give and take, it is important to recognize that exceptions to the Wilderness Act may be proposed and must be recognized as such by advocates. Such Wilderness Act exceptions are clearly a
concern and all considerations surrounding a final package must be kept in balance and viewed in context.

Wilderness designation is a highly political process where local interests require national support to become a reality. The complexities of the situation on the ground and the politics involved will necessitate compromises of some nature in order to arrive at a satisfactory protection package. Assess the likely compromises you may have to make at the front end of the campaign and do not be seduced into compromising too early – in general, once you compromise you cannot go back. Keep in mind that it is our job to ask for what we want, and it is our Congressional champions’ job to obtain it, so be very careful about any compromises your group enters into. Departures from the options and approaches outlined in this advisory should be well thought out and the reasoning written down and be prepared to defend them.

**Develop and document a campaign plan that includes the following:**

1. Thoroughly documenting and mapping the land, resources and values to be protected, current management direction, existing impacts, impacts of designation (or the lack there of), and non-federal land ownerships;
2. Prepare a proposal map and briefing book that collects the information noted above
3. Prepare an outreach plan that defines campaign outreach goals: allies, other friends, Congressional champions, local elected officials, faith community, hunter angler, etc.
4. Consult the appropriate Sierra Club conservation committees and staff, because they can advise you and help you;
5. Building a coalition of organizations, constituent allies and non-traditional allies who conduct a coordinated campaign in support of the wilderness proposal;
6. Conducting a public education campaign that will cultivate a knowledgeable and supportive majority among the general public which supports the broad goals of the citizens’ proposal; and
7. Engaging Congressional representatives to craft legislation embodying the citizens’ proposal which follows “best practices” (see Appendix V for an example of a “clean” bill) in legislative language so the law will effectively support the public’s efforts to protect the wild character of the land in question.

**What action steps does your campaign need to take to achieve these 7 steps?**

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________

____________________________________________________________________________________
WILDERNESS, GLOBAL WARMING, AND FOSSIL FUELS

Wilderness has an essential part to play in the effort to protect our planet from global warming resulting from the excessive use of fossil fuels.

Wilderness designation assures the ability of healthy habitat to absorb excess amounts of carbon in the atmosphere. As the planet suffers the inevitable consequences of the excessive use of fossil fuels, plant and animal life will be forced to migrate in order to survive. The chances for successful migration will be greatly improved by the protection of large core areas of healthy habitat linked together by connecting migration routes. Wilderness designation is one of the premier ways to protect those core areas. The excessive use of fossil fuels has all too often been characterized by the abuse or destruction of natural areas in order to extract those fuels for use. The need to protect land and wildlife from these practices has motivated many wilderness campaigns. Wilderness designation protects the land from destructive mining practices and is an effective means of preventing the release of carbon into the atmosphere. The more wildernesses we have, the healthier the planet will be.

It may help your campaign to include global warming in its case statement. What will you say?
STEPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL WILDERNESS CAMPAIGN

(1) INVENTORY POTENTIAL WILDERNESS AREAS

Your proposal’s boundaries must be defined and mapped. If your proposal is to succeed, the land’s appropriateness for wilderness designation must be thoroughly documented so that it will withstand challenge and include all worthy areas. Your inventory should demonstrate how special the place is you are trying to protect. As part of the inventory you should identify issues that are likely to develop as a result of the designation. Wilderness campaigns are driven by issues and our success as advocates may be determined by how we anticipate and respond to those issues. To the greatest extent possible the land should be walked, ground-truthed, and documented via notes, photographs, and GPS coordinates. Include the invisibles such as underground pipelines (see Resources in Appendix VII).

Though Congress itself is the ultimate arbitrator, the Wilderness Act suggests that land meet certain criteria for designation. Ask yourself these questions. Is your special place primarily impacted by forces of nature rather than humans? Does it provide outstanding opportunities for solitude and unconfined recreation? Is it of sufficient size to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition? Does it contain features of ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value? (NOTE: Use this definition as a starting point to define the extent of a Wilderness proposal that may include environmental disturbance and damage either currently or in the past. The Agencies will use these descriptions as absolute criteria in order to exclude areas from their recommendations for Wilderness.)

Document the location and frequency of Wilderness attributes. Assess any ongoing uses that might not conform to the terms of the Wilderness Act. These uses typically include, mechanized or motorized forms of entry, or use of the land for commercial purposes. Certain uses that do not conform with the Wilderness Act, and any facilities associated with them, may be allowed to continue at the same level after your proposal becomes law if you are unsuccessful in getting them removed or reduced. It is helpful to have documentation of non-conforming uses at that moment in time so that incremental increases can be avoided later if they cannot be eliminated first.

A briefing book or justification document
should be assembled that addresses a number of issues and elements that you will need to understand for both the development of your proposal and the public portion of your campaign:

- **LIVESTOCK GRAZING CONSIDERATIONS.** Livestock grazing is generally the most widespread of uses that may be allowed to continue after designation and therefore a high priority should be given to understanding the trends of usage and the current level of permitted activity so that the cap allowed under the Wilderness Act will become a reality. Opportunities for an overall reduction of grazing and/or for eliminating it in portions of the proposed wilderness area should be identified and pursued. It will be essential to develop an understanding of the current levels of grazing use within the proposal area in terms of animal unit months (AUMs) allotted (active and suspended), number of active grazing permits, number of animals grazing, season of grazing use, any motorized use that takes place in support of grazing, etc. Review grazing permits and watch for special conditions and restrictions. In addition, define the grazing trends on Federal lands over time (is grazing increasing or decreasing), etc. Understand the total amount grazing activity that takes place on all lands in the region near your proposal. Consult the Grazing Policy and grazing experts.

**An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No**  What needs to be done?

---

- **ISSUES THAT MAY ARISE FROM WILDERNESS DESIGNATION.** Examples include what the agencies may call non-conforming uses, as noted below; access to public lands when roads are closed and obliterated; potential water developments such as low head hydro; acquisition of non-Federal lands (state and private inholdings); timber cutting levels; economic impacts to local communities; etc.

**An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No**  What needs to be done?
• **NON-FEDERAL LANDS.** Only Federal lands can be designated as Wilderness. Any non-Federal lands within your proposal must be identified. A mechanism for acquisition (purchase, exchange or donation) should be developed early in the campaign. These ownerships could include patented mineral claims, industrial forest owners, ranches, local irrigation districts, etc. Consider the implications of each acquisition mechanism on the ultimate land ownership patterns.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No  What needs to be done?

---

• **CURRENT LAND MANAGEMENT ALLOCATIONS AND WILDERNESS STUDY AREAS.** Know the current management direction for your proposal with particular emphasis on Wilderness Study Areas (WSA). You should strive to propose all of the WSA for Wilderness if possible. Even the agency’s failure to manage the area compatibly for Wilderness, should not preclude its consideration for designation. Know the legislative or administrative source of all designations. For example, Congress enacted specific WSA language for certain National Forest units in Montana.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No  What needs to be done?

---

• **ECONOMIC IMPACTS OF THE PROPOSAL.** Before the campaign goes public, an assessment of the proposal’s impact on the local economy should be prepared if significant levels of economic activity may be affected either positively or negatively.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No  What needs to be done?

---
CURRENT LEVELS AND TYPES OF RECREATION ARE ALSO IMPORTANT TO CONSIDER. Document the negative impact of motorized recreation and determine where motorized use occurs within the proposal area and the adjacent region. Off-road vehicle use, and its patterns of growth, is a primary threat to the health of the land. Motorized recreational interests will be one of your most difficult opponents. Mechanical and motorized access related to non-recreational uses (such as off-road vehicle use for commercial livestock management) should also be carefully documented so that your proposal can avoid their inclusion within designated wilderness. Consult the Off-Road Vehicle Policy.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No What needs to be done?

MINING. Mining is not allowed in Wilderness. If mining or prospecting has occurred within the proposal area, document the locations and damage (including the potential for Superfund sites along with clean-up considerations). Determine if any future mining or prospecting is under consideration within your proposal.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No What needs to be done?

FOREST CONSIDERATIONS. If forested landscapes where management activity has occurred will be part of your proposal (prior cutting does not eliminate eligibility), document stand age, cutting locations, and access methods (i.e. roads). Timber cutting is prohibited in Wilderness (see Sections 4(b), 4(c)). If forested landscapes are included in the proposal, advocates for protection should understand the effect on Agency cutting plans when designation occurs. Understand cutting trends as defined in agency plans and actual cutting levels (volume of logs).
An issue? □ Yes □ No What needs to be done?

• **WATER CONCERNS.** Water resources and statutes relating to reserved water rights should also be thoroughly researched and inventoried. Consult Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) data base to understand the potential for hydro development. Understand the viability of each water development proposal.

An issue? □ Yes □ No What needs to be done?

- **ROAD ISSUES.** If roads and/or vehicle routes are within the proposal area, they should be inventoried to ensure that their purpose and status is fully understood (i.e. open, closed, decommissioned, four-wheel drive only, passenger car, etc.). Any road closures will raise access questions. Inventory the entire road system associated with your proposal, as well as adjacent Federal and non-Federal roads, so that closure mileage driven by the proposal can be placed into context against the total road net used by the public.

An issue? □ Yes □ No What needs to be done?

• **EXTRACTION THREATS MAY LOOM.** When you document the current condition of the proposal, pay attention to any planned or potential extraction threats.

An issue? □ Yes □ No What needs to be done?
• **Vegetative Health.** Determine the health and populations of native plants and wildlife (flora and fauna) in the area. Wilderness designation may be an effective means for protecting habitat for threatened or endangered species, so you should determine if any species listed under the Endangered Species Act are present. The existence of such species on the land in question may be a powerful argument for your proposal.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No  What needs to be done?

• **Military Use.** Potential conflicts with military use should be evaluated and considered in an initial inventory. Engaging local military authorities with an eye towards negotiating an agreement should be considered.

An issue? ☐ Yes ☐ No  What needs to be done?

These factors may influence your strategy. You may need to consider whether there are actions you can take in the interim that will reduce rapidly advancing damage. It might also affect the compromises you would be willing to consider in order to obtain designation sooner than might otherwise be the case. These can be tough, sometimes controversial, calls. Be sure you are making well informed decisions based on solid documentation.

**How will the above factors influence your strategy?** Reread the inventory considerations above, paying particular attention to the ones that are an issue for the wilderness proposal you are working. List below some additional factors or things you might consider changing in your strategy.
A major purpose of an inventory is to assist in preparing proposal maps and briefing books. Boundaries are best located on physical features or legal lines so that they include the ecological features and wilderness values for which you are seeking permanent protection. Roads are often among the most identifiable features and, where they cannot be closed, may provide a logical place for boundaries. Locate boundaries as close to roads as practicable. Previously disturbed land that can be expected to recover over time may enhance the integrity of the proposal. Such lands should be included inside the wilderness boundaries. Your final product should include photos (including aerials if available) and maps depicting the proposal, the resources to be protected, trails, roads, structures, and relevant issue descriptions, etc.

Conducting the inventory will also serve as an early means of expanding activist support for an eventual citizens’ proposal. An inventory necessitates cooperative work among organizations, the enlistment of volunteers, and the acquisition of financial and other resources – it is the point at which you will begin to build your coalition. The inventory will also provide “institutional memory” for your campaign – collecting, storing, and archiving the documentation on which your cause is based. The photos can be used to develop slide shows which are an excellent outreach tool.

Foreseeing the issues associated with your proposal is important not only to defend your proposal but also to support your champions (lead sponsors and other primary Congressional supporters). Be prepared for opposition from off-road vehicle (ORV) groups, cattlemen’s organizations, mountain bikers, the timber industry, developers, etc., depending on your local circumstances.

When other organizations are conducting an inventory in preparation for an eventual citizens’ proposal it is recommended that Sierra Club Chapters or Groups in the area participate prominently in the process, especially the mapping and documentation, so the Club’s interests will be reflected in the ultimate product.

(2) GET THE POWER OF “ONE SIERRA CLUB” BEHIND YOUR PROPOSAL

The historical and institutional experience of the Sierra Club with wilderness campaigns is an immense resource. You can begin to take advantage of this as soon as a decision is made to pursue a wilderness designation. The Sierra Club has substantial staff and volunteer resources that can be of benefit. You can start by identifying and contacting the Wildlands and Wilderness Grassroots Network Team and the Our Wild America Campaign as well as any other relevant Grassroots Network Team. Here you will find wilderness expertise and those with supplemental knowledge regarding issues important to your particular proposal. Local and national staff assigned to your area should be consulted as your efforts begin. Other Programs can provide advice for engaging non-traditional allies and coalition partners for your campaign. The Advancement staff may be able to provide advice and support for fundraising efforts. The staff of the Lands Team in Washington D.C. will
be essential to the ultimate passage of the legislation implementing your proposal. Avail yourself of these resources.

There are several Sierra Club policies with which any proposal must comply. Be certain to review them in the earliest stages of your campaign. The policies are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Policy</th>
<th>Applies to my campaign</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Forest Management in the United States</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Lands Forest Management</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ancient Forests</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperate Rainforests</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tropical Rainforests</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial Logging</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Off-Road Vehicles</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Resources</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Federal Public Lands Grazing Policy</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Military Use of Civilian Airspace and Public Lands</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Land Exchanges</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wilderness Management</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fire Management on Public Lands</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Natural Quiet</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Temperate Rainforests</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User Fees of Public Lands</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Winter Sports</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Water</td>
<td>Yes □ No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

All of these policies can be found at [http://sierraclub.org/policy](http://sierraclub.org/policy). Follow up on all policies marked yes above.

Experience has led to the establishment of several processes and policies intended to assure the best total organizational support for each individual campaign. The Planning Matrix contained in the Grassroots Training Manual mentioned below is the product of Club experience in effective campaign planning.

No federal wilderness legislation may be supported or opposed by any Sierra Club entity, including Chapters, until approved by the Vice President of Conservation and the National Program Director. This requirement is found in the Jurisdiction within Sierra Club section titled II. Positions and Discussion Documents, posted on Clubhouse at [https://community.sierraclub.org/page/jurisdiction-within-sierra-club](https://community.sierraclub.org/page/jurisdiction-within-sierra-club)

---

1 In the new 2006 Energy Resources Policy, see especially Section VI. “Consideration for Special Designations” and Section VII.6.B. “Resources Preferred by the Sierra Club” paragraphs three and four. These sections of the Energy Resources Policy discuss the impact of alternative energy developments on lands including those designated as or being considered for designation as wilderness. See also Forest Biomass. Energy campaigns as well as wilderness campaigns need to comply with these portions of the Energy Policy.
Sierra Club policy “Jurisdiction within the Sierra Club” addresses which Club entities have authority regarding the taking of positions on legislation, regulations, and other matters. The policy states: Positions on national legislation may be taken only by the Vice President of Conservation and the National Program Director. Either may delegate decision making to another person or entity. This same decision making pair also has authority to take positions on federal regulations, administrative actions (designations, Executive Orders, miscellaneous Washington Office direction to agencies, or Presidential proclamations and the like), and other matters of national significance.

An important role of national committees is to serve as advisors to groups, chapters and other Sierra Club entities throughout this process. Consultation should take place before participation in the drafting of legislative language. You must do this before agreeing to any specific terms in your legislative proposal. This requirement includes legislation related to land designations, authorization and appropriations. Start by identifying and contacting the national committee(s) with wilderness expertise and those with supplemental knowledge regarding issues important to your particular proposal. See the Process at: https://content.sierraclub.org/grassrootsnetwork/documents/taking-federal-positions-wildlands-issues

What action steps need to be taken to gain Sierra Club approval for the wilderness legislation you are working on?

(3) FORM A COALITION

Before an official citizens’ proposal is announced, it is wise to develop the broadest possible formal coalition of organizations who will support it. Achieving up-front unity among environmental organizations with an interest in the land will help avoid subsequent disagreements and divide-and-conquer strategies by the opposition. A coalition is vital to maximize the political and financial resources available for what is likely to be a lengthy campaign. It may be useful for the coalition to have an executive committee made up of representatives from the primary participating organizations and empowered to make decisions. The Utah Wilderness Coalition Protocol is a good example for maintaining an effective working coalition over the long haul (see Appendix III). Your coalition should develop a written campaign plan. Develop both a solid proposal and well-
thought-out campaign plan prior to public release of the proposal, in order to be best prepared for the opposition that occurs with any Wilderness campaign.

The coalition should strive to gain support from allied constituencies beyond the traditional environmental community. These might include the faith community, businesses, hunters and anglers, scientists and other academics, archeological societies, etc. Where possible it would be wise to gain endorsements from groups such as mountain bike associations, ranchers, units of local government, individual elected officials (such as county commissioners, state legislators, mayors, and city council members), Native American tribes, labor unions, religious leaders and organizations, and other non-traditional allies. These endorsements might eventually necessitate some bargaining that could affect the boundaries and legislative content of the final citizens’ proposal. The Club’s leadership may have useful information regarding potential allies among such constituent groups. Your coalition will have to analyze the costs and benefits of such agreements for the overall goal of wilderness protection.

*Any Sierra Club entity proposing to formally affiliate with other groups (join or form a coalition) must apply for and receive national approval. Please see Appendix II for the details.*

Attaining the widest and deepest possible support prior to the release of the citizens’ proposal will put you in the strongest possible political situation for ultimate victory.

**GENERATE POSITIVE PUBLIC OPINION**

Public opinion is an essential element of any successful legislative campaign. Congress designates and agencies administer, but it is the quality and quantity of public support that motivates them to do their job well. Elected officials are extremely sensitive to public opinion on matters as visible as wilderness designation. It is advisable to conduct a public education campaign (including a media campaign) in order to attain and demonstrate the support of the majority of the general public.

What you say is important. The more you can ascribe local values to your threatened place, the stronger your local support will be. Likewise, when addressing a broader audience, the more you can ascribe national values, the stronger the support. Connect your proposal to children. Wilderness is a family value. You are protecting a national treasure for future generations. People support wilderness because they value it, so speak in terms of values that the majority of people can identify with, legacy, heritage, stewardship, responsibility, “caring for God’s Creation,” freedom, and fairness.
Who speaks is important as well. People don’t like conflict. Ask ranchers, hunters, church goers, and business owners to speak for your proposal. Make the broad range of support your proposal has gained visible to the general public. Creating events which garner extensive earned media coverage is important. Consider public hearings and reports from elements of your coalition or allies relating the proposal’s benefits to their area of interest. Door-to-door education in sympathetic communities is a good means of building support and expanding your volunteer base. Large public meetings, scientific polling, and formal endorsement from local governmental entities can demonstrate the extent of your support. Use public events (such as fairs and festivals) to reach out broadly to the public.

The quality of your coalition, allied community, and public education efforts will go a long way to determining how much of the wilderness land you will actually be able to get designated. It will also be vital to assuring the successful long-term implementation of your ultimate legislative victory.

_The Sierra Club Grassroots Training Manual_ is especially useful in preparing this step of your campaign (see Chapter 6, “Crafting Your Campaign Communication”).

### (5) CULTIVATE YOUR CHAMPIONS

If your potential champion(s) already sympathizes with our positions, this process is likely to be happening throughout all the above steps. Even if our targets are not automatic supporters it is wise to develop a relationship with key staff members early on. Show them high-quality photographs. Take them out for field trips, tours, outings and other activities to educate them on the issues and begin to build their understanding of and support for wilderness. It is important to meet regularly with the Representative’s and Senator’s staff members to keep them informed of our progress and address their questions and concerns as the campaign proceeds. This is a relationship-building effort and involves a lot of time, care and commitment.

Most members of Congress require excruciating attention to addressing potential conflicts and opposition before any bill is introduced. Your credibility with decision makers will be built upon the careful attention to detail with which you have prepared your proposal, coupled with
your knowledge of the land as well as your understanding of the related issues. It is essential that we answer all their questions. Your honesty, thoroughness and credibility will go a long way toward garnering the respect and trust you will need from your Congressional supporters. Be very forthcoming about allies and opponents. Your credibility will increase not only your supporters’ enthusiasm but also the likelihood of achieving protection for what you seek. Sierra Club may be asked to consider compromises, such as where to shave acreage, how to address conflicts, etc. Your credibility is your most important asset. Provide accurate and timely information to Congressional staff. A top quality inventory (including maps and photos) will be invaluable at this stage.

In addition to regular communication, there are many things we can do to tighten relationships with champions or potential champions. A strong letter-writing, petition, postcard and/or email campaign is important to moving your targets forward. Also, unless there is a request not to, remember to database all contact information into Helen with your campaign as an Interest. That way, you will have a ready list of people to call on as your campaign moves forward.

“Power maps” are a great tool to define how to influence the member of Congress through his or her friends and other influential people. If appropriate, provide evidence that the proposal will enhance the local economy, jobs and income in the community. Positive support from local legislators (cities, counties, state) from across the state, but particularly those representing the local area, will be viewed by others as a strong indicator of public opinion and a motivator for your member of Congress. Mentioning wilderness in unexpected ways or places (say, at a Kiwanis breakfast she is attending) is a big boost. And don’t forget working on their re-election campaigns, which is something almost no other wilderness group except the Sierra Club can legally do.

If your Congressional representatives are unlikely to support your campaign you will need to devise a strategy to protect the land without their support. The quality of your early inventory, coalition, and public outreach efforts is essential. Dealing with the opposition is largely a matter of political power which in turn will depend on the strength of your coalition and alliances and the level of support you have attained among the general public. Your inventory will tell you whether the land can afford to wait out the opposition and whether there are opportunities for an interim strategy.
built around agency management decisions and/or the judicial system. It is best to consider all of your alternatives before starting down the road of substantial changes to your proposal.

LIST YOUR TARGETED CHAMPIONS

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

_________________________________________________

Secured? □ Yes □ No

Secured? □ Yes □ No

Secured? □ Yes □ No

Secured? □ Yes □ No

Secured? □ Yes □ No

Secured? □ Yes □ No

[6] APPLY THE JEMEZ PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZING IN WILDLANDS PROTECTION: GUIDANCE FOR COLLABORATING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE

In 2014 the Sierra Club Board of Directors endorsed the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing and in 2015 committed to becoming a more just and equitable organization by adopting its first multi-year equity plan. Since then the Jemez Principles are becoming more integral to Sierra Club organizational culture, internally and externally. In fact, the first goal listed in Sierra Club 2019 Multi-Year Equity Plan is creating a “Welcoming and Inclusive Organizational Culture” with the desired outcome to “Increase the practice of Jemez Principles and Equity Values across the Sierra Club and with partners.”

So, what are the Jemez Principles and why are they important? Created in 1996 to build common understandings between participants from different cultures, politics and organizations, the six Jemez Principles are:

Be Inclusive
Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing
Let People Speak for Themselves
Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality
Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves
Commitment to Self-Transformation

The Wildlands and Wilderness Grassroots Network Team (WWT) is fully committed to advancing the Sierra Club’s journey to become a more just, inclusive, and powerful force for positive change. We focus on protecting wild nature and are especially concerned with building transformational--instead of transactional--relationships with Native Americans and other community partners. The Jemez Principles offer a framework, but wildlands activists need guidance on how to apply them in our everyday work. So, the WWT compiled experiences of Sierra Club staff and volunteers, resources of the Sierra Club Equity Department, and other relevant materials and created this Guidance. The goal is to encourage chapters and groups to elevate and incorporate Native American and Tribal voices into the development of proposals, implementation of campaigns, and content of legislation for wilderness and wildlands. We look forward to updating and improving it as we receive feedback and learn more going forward.
The Sierra Club Wildlands and Wilderness Grassroots Network Team's Guidance for Collaborating with Native American People is located in Appendix VII.

**LEGISLATIVE PROVISIONS**

Once your proposal is public you may face some tough choices when it comes to addressing the concerns of unexpected opposition. A well-crafted proposal taking into account both the ecological and political circumstances of your locale should help reduce these difficulties. The information below is intended to help you anticipate some of those circumstances.

In drafting legislation, avoid language that could lead to precedents that would weaken the Wilderness Act. What is good in one area may do harm in another. Begin with as “clean” a proposal as possible. An example of a “clean” bill is in Appendix V of this advisory. If you eventually feel it necessary to add other provisions because of specific local circumstances on the land or in the politics, you should do your research and obtain approval from the appropriate Sierra Club entities before proceeding.

You can find all past wilderness laws and wilderness management policies for federal agencies at www.Wilderness.net which is a partnership project of the Wilderness Institute at The University of Montana's College of Forestry and Conservation, the Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center, and the Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute.

Before developing legislative language, consider contacting the Wildlands and Wilderness Team and other national team(s) with wilderness expertise as well as those with supplemental knowledge regarding issues important to your particular proposal. This will help you achieve the strongest possible bill, while complying with the One Club policy.

Aim high. Having created a strong and broad coalition of support you want your proposal to contain the best deal for the land. You or your Congressional champion may have to negotiate later, so don’t give things away at the start. Begin with the best – because once a bill is written it is very hard to improve. Achieving “clean” legislative language requires up-front organizing. To get the best possible language in your law, organize before the language is written. Your proposal should reflect the strength and vision of your coalition.

The following advice on specific legislative issues is subject to the above caveats:

**ADVISORY BOARDS**

Advisory boards complicate land management and are unlikely to promote wilderness values. Don’t include them in your proposal. Such committees have tended to advocate increased logging of federal forests and they shift power to localities where the Club has few members. Permanent committees often burn out volunteers leaving paid industry staff to attain their goals.
Recent laws have incorporated Advisory Boards as a means of gaining support from potential opponents. Several negative lessons can be learned from these experiences. First, if the bill sponsors insist on including an Advisory Board, the statutory language should be crystal clear that the Advisory Board is just that – advisory. Any such entity should not preclude use of the National Environmental Policy Act or the Administrative Procedures Act. Second, seek at least a 50 – 50 split in membership between wilderness and non-wilderness users. Since wilderness is about land protection, that fact should be reflected in the composition of the advisory panel. Third, include a sunset provision where the Advisory Board would automatically expire unless reapproved by Congress.

**What are you doing about advisory councils?**

---

**ALTERNATIVE DESIGNATIONS**

Alternative designations (such as Backcountry Area, Scenic Area, National Recreation Area, etc.) complicate land management and are less likely to promote wilderness values. Don’t include them in your proposal for those lands that are best protected as Wilderness -- the Wilderness Act provides the strongest protection for such land. You may want to consider such a designation if a use that does not conform to the Wilderness Act appears politically unavoidable.
What are you doing about alternative designations?

BOUNDARY ISSUES

Draw boundaries that protect all of the critical features of the area. Your unit boundaries should generally conform to natural boundaries in the landscape such as watersheds but follow geographic features and legal lines that can be identified on the ground. Include the broadest spectrum of the ecological communities in the area. Sometimes there are benefits to aligning with a political boundary. Inside the proposed boundary, rarely used roads and off-road vehicle routes will be closed. Where pre-existing uses or inholdings are involved, access may not be denied. Allowed access should be limited to non-motorized means if possible. If this is not possible, the access will be legally limited to parties such as land managers or the local rancher under specified circumstances. Provisions for purchasing or exchanging inholdings or sunsetting pre-existing use privileges will serve to increase the land’s wilderness character. Boundaries should facilitate management of the area as wilderness. The larger the contiguous core, the greater the integrity of the proposal. Your campaign plan should assume inholdings will be acquired after designation.

In general, the proposal should consist of units 5,000 acres or greater, subject to exceptions in the Wilderness Act of 1964 or the Eastern Wilderness Act (smaller units are allowable east of the
Mississippi. A proposal that is contiguous with an existing conservation unit (National Park or Wilderness Area) may be smaller than 5,000 acres.

Cherry stemming is the practice of using existing roads or trails already open to motorized or mechanized use (such as mountain bikes) as non-wilderness corridors (or “cherry-stems”) into the surrounding wilderness. In the case of regularly used or open roads and trails it may be unavoidable, because motorized and mechanized transport is illegal in wilderness and eliminating such use may be politically difficult. In such instances the non-Wilderness corridor should be as narrow as possible so as to preclude the possibility of commercial developments within the cherry stem. Where there are rarely used roads and trails it is advisable to have them closed via wilderness designation. Such closures may need to be negotiated with non-wilderness user groups or elected officials in order to attain overall wilderness goals.

**What boundary issues are present?**

**FIRE, INSECTS, DISEASES, INVASIVES, AND WILD LIFE HABITAT MANAGEMENT**

Fire, insects, disease, invasives and wildlife habitat management affecting the wilderness quality of the area will be retained in federal hands (be careful of state and local entities seeking to claim control – states retain authority for fish and wildlife management). Your proposal should remain silent on management techniques (silence in effect defers to the Wilderness Act). Fires will be managed primarily by the forces of nature, with minimal exceptions in the Wilderness Act such as fire threats to human safety. Any management activities will be conducted in accordance with the minimum tool standard as defined by regulations under the Wilderness Act.

**What are you doing about invasives and habitat management issues?**

**FOREST WILDERNESS**

Sierra Club has a policy, determined by vote of the members, to end commercial logging on federal lands. Wilderness designation for forested lands will eliminate the potential for commercial logging on the land proposed as wilderness. Do not accept legislative language regarding areas not
included in the wilderness designation that could facilitate increased logging in those areas. Activists should strive for proposals and resulting legislation which attain a net overall decrease in commercial logging activity.

National Forest regulations contain a number of provisions that protect roadless areas. Wilderness activists should be careful to assure that a wilderness designation does not result in a weakening of overall protection for larger forested roadless areas via release language or other legislative provisions. If the entire area deemed eligible for wilderness designation is not included in the legislation, activists should be careful to ensure that the option of attaining wilderness designation remains open to future campaigns.

While advocacy for site-specific protective designations of federal forests is often driven by a chapter or group, these bills have national impact and may set precedents. The overall strategy is to prevent a downward spiral of compromises where the prior compromise becomes the starting point of negotiations for the next land protection bill.

Use the principles of conservation biology when seeking wilderness designations. These principles are, protect the best remaining habitat, remove the stressors of that habitat, and restore damaged habitat. Here are three desirable outcomes to advocate for:

a. **Protect the Best**: The best remaining wild forests are permanently protected on a scale that allows natural disturbance (wind, fire, disease, and insects) to maintain biodiversity. Included are rare forest types, old-growth, riparian forests, large un-fragmented blocks of naturally regenerated forest, and the full range of natural landscape scale ecological types in the protected area.

b. **Remove the Stressors**: Commercial logging and associated road-building cease or are eliminated.

c. **Restore the Rest**: Forests damaged by human activity are restored as natural ecosystems.

Desirable wilderness bills are “clean,” meaning they do not contain “quid pro quos” such as legislatively mandated increased logging outside the protected wilderness areas, and other anti-conservation measures. Typical undesirable forest specific “quid pro quos” are outlined in the “provisions to avoid” section of this advisory. Specific desirable outcomes:

1. **Protect Forests Threatened with Logging** (lands that contribute to the cut volume are known as the timber base): In general, viable Wilderness proposals will be constrained in extent by unroaded landscapes. Include as much natural or restorable forest as possible in protected areas. Start big and inclusive. Boundaries should be drawn using landscape ecosystem concepts to include, for example, biologically rich lower altitude or riparian forests and not just include high altitude “rocks and ice”. Even small remnants of natural forests are worth preserving, especially in the eastern and southern regions where they are so rare.
2. Include Roadless Areas: It is very desirable to include the 2001 Roadless Conservation Rule forest areas in bills for designations offering even more protection. Where practicable, include all roadless lands, whether inventoried by the Agency or not.

Below is guidance on specific forest trade-offs you may be asked to make in stakeholder groups or in negotiations with Congressional or agency staff or allies:

1. **Ecological Harm**: Avoid increasing logging or specifying (i.e. guaranteeing) the volume of logging, or changing forest structure, patch size or vegetative composition away from natural patterns in forests outside the proposed wilderness boundary. Sierra Club opposes commercial logging of federal land. Be aware that a shift of logging from the protected area to federal forests in the vicinity may be facilitated by legislative language, research projects, stewardship plans or logging subsidies.

2. **Federal Forest Biofuels**: The Club’s Energy Policy (2006) specifically states that use of federal forest biomass for energy is opposed by the Club. Legislation you advocate should not require, subsidize or facilitate wood removals for forest biofuels on federal lands. Forest biomass removal on other ownerships may be supported only under narrow conditions—see the energy policy.

3. **Roadless Areas**: Oppose logging, oil and gas leasing and road building in the 2001 Roadless Area Conservation Rule inventoried areas and in other federal wild forests that the Club advocates being added to the roadless inventory.

4. **In-holding Trades**: It is acceptable to advocate trading federal lands for private or non-federal inholdings in accordance with the Club’s land exchange policy unless it creates a net increase in logging or fragments roadless area forests outside the wilderness boundary.

5. **Exceptions to Forest Protection Laws and Regulations**: Exemptions from forest protection laws, Forest Plan Standards and Guidelines, rules or agency policies for federal forests outside the proposed wilderness or other protective classification must be avoided. This includes a legislative determination (sufficiency language) that a federal action, forest plan or logging or roadbuilding project complies with NEPA or other environmental laws without the otherwise required agency study or public involvement. Respect full rights for public involvement in forest decisions. Do not support limits on administrative or court appeal rights on logging or roadbuilding outside the proposed wilderness.
6. **Transfers of Forest Management Authority to State or Local Governments or Private Timber Companies:** Delegation of management authority of National Forests must be opposed. Delegation would set a terrible precedent for all federal forests. Federal protections, while not strong enough, are still much stronger than most other jurisdictions.

In general, when working with federal wilderness legislation, consider contacting the Our Wild America Campaign or relevant Grassroots Network teams with advanced wilderness knowledge, roadless area expertise, and/or supplemental knowledge regarding issues important to your particular proposal.

**What forest issues are you dealing with?**

**LAND EXCHANGES**

See suggestions for non-federal lands inventory on page 3 and note the optional mechanisms for land acquisition. For legislated acquisitions, take care to safeguard judicial review, appropriate appraisals, and public disclosure and participation.

**What are you doing about land exchanges?**

**LAND SALES AND DEVELOPMENT ADD-ONS**

The success of the wilderness movement in combination with the countervailing pressures created by urban sprawl has given rise to a number of public lands bills which override established law and combine wilderness designations with public land sales and leases designed to accommodate development and water use plans.

Your proposal should not include any provisions for sale of public lands. Should such a sale become part of a wilderness bill, any provisions for land sales should comply with applicable law (including
NEPA, FLPMA and FLTFA) and meet the same standards as those outlined for land exchanges in the Sierra Club’s land exchange policy.

**What are you doing about land sales or development issues?**

**OFF-ROAD VEHICLES**

Do not support legislation that allows motorized vehicles inside wilderness and avoid any provisions that legislate specific ORV routes outside wilderness or otherwise facilitate ORV use as a quid pro quo. Contact national committee(s) with ORV expertise and those with supplemental knowledge regarding this set of issues.

**What are you doing about off-road vehicles?**

**RELEASE LANGUAGE**

Release language may be used in wilderness bills to address areas with interim protection that are NOT designated as wilderness but are released for other purposes. Your proposal should be silent on release language. This will allow the undesignated lands to be considered for designation at a later date. If the give and take of the campaign should require the inclusion of any release language it should be soft release (short term; limited) so that the general legal provisions allowing for consideration of future designation are retained. Oppose so-called hard release which prevents the area from being considered for wilderness again in the future.

**What are you doing with release language, if any?**
WATER RIGHTS

The specifics of this section await review of a Board appointed Task Force and final decision. In the meantime, good general advice is to strive to retain the maximum amount of federal waters rights possible. Water rights issues vary considerably from state-to-state so you may want to consult with local and national Sierra Club staff and the Wildlands and Wilderness Team.

What are you doing about water rights?

CONCLUSION

Be polite. Be patiently persistent. Be determined.

Don’t give up, and don’t give in. The Wilderness Act took many years to pass, as did most individual wilderness bills which came afterward. Wait for the best time to get the best protection for the land, and keep the door open for future wilderness advocates to come back for more. However, recognize that in waiting, time may not be your side if non-conforming uses are expanding.

John Muir fought for years to bring protection to the Yosemite Valley, and it took another century for the Sierra Club and others to incrementally bring protection to most of the rest of the Sierra Nevada, Muir’s Range of Light, and that struggle continues today. Use time to build support and be ready for the right time to act. Your legacy is not only the land you eventually save, but also the enhancement of the opportunity for others to do the same after you.
APPENDIX I – WILDERNESS DEFINITION IN THE WILDERNESS ACT

The Wilderness Act defines wilderness as, “A wilderness, in contrast with those areas where man and his works dominate the landscape, is hereby recognized as an area where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain. An area of wilderness is further defined to mean in this Act an area of undeveloped Federal land retaining its primeval character and influence, without permanent improvements or human habitation, which is protected and managed so as to preserve its natural conditions and which (1) generally appears to have been affected primarily by the forces of nature, with the imprint of man’s work substantially unnoticeable; (2) has outstanding opportunities for solitude or a primitive and unconfined type of recreation; (3) has at least five thousand acres of land or is of sufficient size as to make practicable its preservation and use in an unimpaired condition; and (4) may also contain ecological, geological, or other features of scientific, educational, scenic, or historical value.”

APPENDIX II - AFFILIATIONS

An affiliation is a formal association between a Sierra Club group, chapter, or regional conservation committee, or the national Sierra Club, and another organization or a coalition. Affiliations should be carefully considered, because inappropriate connections with organizations could lead to lawsuits or to a threat to the tax-exempt status of the Sierra Club.

Affiliations are for loose-knit working relationships between organizations with a common purpose. More complicated affiliations involving hired staff and assets will be handled on a case-by-case basis and may require review by legal staff.

Any chapter or group, or the national Sierra Club, may affiliate with another organization provided that the criteria listed below are met. The other organization or coalition must operate completely within the territory of the chapter or group requesting affiliation. For chapter applications, the chapter's executive committee must approve in writing. For group applications, both the group and the chapter executive committees must approve in writing. If the other organization operates in two or more chapters other than California or Nevada, it becomes a national affiliation and should be referred directly to the Campaign and Programs Co-Leads. In California or Nevada, affiliations involving more than one chapter should be referred to the California Nevada RCC.

All Club entities desiring affiliation with other organizations must receive national approval. A completed Application for Affiliation must be submitted and approved by the Campaign and Programs Co-Leads. A copy of this form is in Campfire Community https://community.sierraclub.org/page/affiliation-request-definition-and-application
APPENDIX III – EXAMPLE OF A COALITION PROTOCOL
(From Utah Wilderness Coalition)

All Coalition partners agree to jointly make collective decisions regarding the scope, nature, and message relating to our wilderness proposal and campaign.

This means that when new issues arise concerning our wilderness proposal or campaign, the coalition will endeavor to vet these new issues within the Coalition, preferably at regular Coalition meetings or, at a minimum, through a joint call with the coalition executive committee members before a conservation partner communicates with an elected official, the media, or an agency decision maker. New issues are those caused by a change in policy or tactics or an issue that is not covered by past policies. The presumption is that we will be able to make our decisions collectively. When we can’t come to an agreement on a common approach, we agree to respectfully disagree and discuss how we will handle this disagreement publicly.

Further, we agree as Coalition partners to stick to our strategy and message when communicating with the media, elected officials, and funders.

We will not denigrate the roles and/or positions of our partner organizations outside the coalition.

If a partner has criticism of another partner’s work on an issue in which we commonly work, then the criticizing partner agrees to talk to the person at the source of the perceived problem before talking to others.

We agree to share any information on our common issues equally with our coalition partners.

In communication to our membership, the media, or funders we give fair credit to our partner’s work.

We plan our work on our common issues together. This includes fundraising.

APPENDIX IV – WILDERNESS LANGUAGE

By way of introduction, research shows that despite the best intentions of the law the National Wilderness Preservation System is degrading. One of the main reasons is the preponderance of special provisions or non-conforming uses being included in Wilderness bills. This is something the Sierra Club’s Wildlands Wilderness Team has recognized and been concerned with for some time. These provisions not only allow activities within Wilderness that are inappropriate and degrade individual areas, but more importantly the cumulative impact of these provisions threatens to diminish the core values that distinguish Wilderness from other public lands.

- This brief report provides examples of problematic legislative language, why it is a problem, and alternative language--the Wilderness Act--to avoid problematic language.
Those who don’t know exactly what the Act says may find this useful. On the back of this report are examples.

- When talking with members of Congress, it is helpful to suggest that wilderness legislation avoid non-conforming uses. Suggest that Congress keep proposals for designating new Wildernesses clean. This is done by keeping wilderness bills brief and free of special management language, even if the intent of the language is simply to reiterate the provisions of the Wilderness Act. Some in Congress may be tempted to rephrase the provisions of the Wilderness Act. Saying the “same thing” in different words inevitably leads to different interpretations of what was intended by the new law.

- It may be possible to suggest that Congress place the non-conforming uses outside of the wilderness boundary. It could also be suggested to members of Congress that alternative designations, as suggested in the revised advisory, be used in instances where special provisions that compromise the ability of the agency (or agencies) to administer the area as Wilderness can’t be avoided. (NOTE: Potential wilderness has been designated in several bills. Once the nonconforming use is removed, the area becomes Wilderness) [Legislative language authorizing the Secretary to reclassify “potential wilderness” should clearly articulate that ONLY when the nonconforming use is eliminated can “potential wilderness” be designated Wilderness. There is the real threat that the nonconforming use will be allowed to continue at the discretion of a careless or malevolent bureaucrat].

Examples
Special language allowing motorized and/or mechanized access for fish and wildlife management provides an example of how a narrow exception in one bill evolves into highly destructive exceptions in future bills.

The Wilderness Act notes:
Nothing in this chapter shall be construed as affecting the jurisdiction or responsibilities of the several States with respect to wildlife and fish in the national forests.

Problematic Language:
Subject to paragraph (x), the Secretary may authorize structures and facilities, including existing structures and facilities, for wildlife water development projects, including guzzlers, in the wilderness areas designated by subsection (xy) if— (A) the structures and facilities will, as determined by the Secretary, enhance wilderness values by promoting healthy, viable, and more naturally distributed wildlife populations; and (B) the visual impacts of the structures and facilities on the wilderness areas can reasonably be minimized.

Consistent with section 4(d)(1) of the Wilderness Act (16 U.S.C. 1133(d)(1)) and in accordance with appropriate policies, such as those established in Appendix B of House Report 101–405, the State may use aircraft (including helicopters) in the wilderness areas designated by this subtitle to survey, capture, transplant, monitor, and provide water for wildlife populations, including bighorn sheep, and feral stock, feral horses, and feral burros.
Some bills have used the actual wording of the Wilderness Act noted above, which does not mention motorized equipment, rather than the problematic language that has appeared in various bills. Suggesting this be done could prevent problematic language from being inserted.

While there is broad discretion in the control of fires, some language would give agencies the ability to cut fire lines and thin in Wilderness before fires are even started (pre-suppression).

The Wilderness Act notes: In addition, such measures may be taken as may be necessary in the control of fire, insects, and diseases, subject to such conditions as the Secretary deems desirable.

**Problematic Language:**

PREVENTION OF WILDFIRES. The designation of wilderness under this section shall not be construed to interfere with the authority of the Secretary of Agriculture to authorize mechanical thinning of trees or underbrush to prevent or control the spread of wildfires, or conditions creating the risk of wildfire that threaten areas outside the boundary of the wilderness, or the use of mechanized equipment for wildfire pre-suppression and suppression.

**APPENDIX V – EXAMPLE OF A “CLEAN” BILL (e.g., Scapegoat Wilderness)**

Public Law 92-395

AN ACT

To designate the Scapegoat Wilderness, Helena, Lolo, and Lewis and Clark National Forests, in the State of Montana.

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled.* That, the area known as the Lincoln Back Country as generally depicted on a map entitled “Proposed Scapegoat Wilderness”, dated May 19, 1972, which is on file and available for public inspection in the Office of the Chief, Forest Service, United States Department of Agriculture, is hereby designated as the Scapegoat Wilderness within and as part of the Helena, Lolo, and Lewis and Clark National Forests, comprising an area of approximately 240,000 acres.

SEC. 2. As soon as practicable after this Act takes effect, the Secretary of Agriculture shall file a map and a legal description of the Scapegoat Wilderness with the Interior and Insular Affairs Committee of the United States Senate and House of Representatives, and such description shall have the same force and effect as if included in this Act: *Provided, however,* That correction of clerical and typographical errors in such legal description and map may be made.

SEC. 3. The Scapegoat Wilderness shall be administered by the Secretary of Agriculture in accordance with the provisions of the Wilderness Act governing areas designated by that Act as
wilderness areas, except that any reference in such provisions to the effective date of the Wilderness Act shall be deemed to be a reference to the effective date of this Act.

Approved August 20, 1972

**APPENDIX VI – EXAMPLE OF A WILDERNESS INVENTORY**
(From Utah Wilderness Coalition’s ten steps to preparing an inventory)

(These are headings only – to obtain full text, contact the Wildlands Committee)

1. Engage conservation partners early.
2. Identify those lands requiring field checking.
3. Identify conflicts, the invisible issues [including water rights].
4. Organize field checking packets and recruit field checkers.
5. Assign field checking, conduct, and coordinate field checking.
6. Review returned field work.
7. Technical team meetings.
8. Coalition partners resolve remaining tough calls.
10. Implement the inventory.

**APPENDIX VII – APPLYING THE JEMEZ PRINCIPLES FOR DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZING IN WILDLANDS PROTECTION: SIERRA CLUB WILDLANDS AND WILDERNESS GRASSROOTS NETWORK TEAM’S GUIDANCE FOR COLLABORATING WITH NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLE. MARCH 26, 2020**

The purpose of this update is to incorporate the Jemez Principles into the Sierra Club Wilderness Advisory Workbook. The goal is to encourage chapters and groups to elevate and incorporate Native American and Tribal voices into the development of proposals, implementation of campaigns, and content of legislation for wilderness and wildlands. Native Americans have a unique historic and contemporary relationship with many of the lands eligible for wilderness designation.

Tribes and Native peoples are under no obligation to be in partnership with Sierra Club. Any relationship that is developed should be mutual and reflect a desire by both parties to work together. White groups pursue Tribal nations and groups at high rates. Respect the time of Native nations and Tribal groups. Be mindful that for every request or invitation offered to Tribes a dozen other invitations sit in their inboxes from other predominantly white groups.

The Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing were developed by and for participants from different cultures, politics, and organizations. This Wildlands Advisory focuses on Native American people in the mainland United States. We acknowledge that this is not a comprehensive document and does not specifically include indigenous peoples of Hispanic or Pacific Islander descent.
It is critical that Sierra Club staff and volunteers embrace these principles if community partnerships are to be mutually supportive. Everyone in the organization is charged with engaging in strategic partnerships with intentionality and integrity.

To prepare this update the Equity sub-team of the Wildlands and Wilderness Team compiled the experiences of Sierra Club staff and volunteers, resources of the Sierra Club Equity Department, and other relevant materials. Links to key sources are given at the end.

#1 Be Inclusive

- **First, Offer Friendship:** To be inclusive regarding Sierra Club association with Native peoples it is beneficial to become trusted friends. This friendship is important before any discussions of matters of consequence, environmental or otherwise, be considered. It is also important to understand that the conservation movement has engaged in activities harmful to the interests of Native people. This has extended to elements within the Sierra Club as well.

- **Incorporate Input from the Frontlines:** For the environmental movement to remain relevant and effective it must increase and improve its practice of inclusivity and partnership. This is especially true in its relations with the Native nations. This means prioritizing the voices, views, and needs of those most marginalized by dominant culture, including Native peoples. Invite speakers and input in accordance with the protocols of their respective communities; pay for people’s time when appropriate. Recognize that communities living on the frontlines are uniquely informed, authentic in their place-based, historical knowledge of their ecosystems, and further advanced in their analyses of the human-made systems that affect them and the health of their ecosystems.

- **Honor the Unique Nature of Each Native Culture:** There are more than 500 distinct Tribal nations within the borders of the United States, each with a unique culture, history, and identity. In order to build true partnerships, Sierra Club entities must consider these distinct identities and strive always to respect cultural sensitivities. There are general rules to observe when engaging with Native nations, but it is especially important to be attentive to the specific lived experience of each Tribal nation and individual. Non-Natives have to understand the economic realities faced by Tribal nations, many of which have historic dependence on extraction industries.

- **Understand that Inclusivity Goes Both Ways:** In the case of Bears Ears, Sierra Club followed the lead of the Native peoples who gathered to discuss the possibility of asking for a new National Monument. Being inclusive was a mutual action. Strong Tribal leaders shaped their campaign and the Sierra Club supported their campaign. The Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition solicited letters of support to grow their campaign nationally, and the Sierra Club wrote such a letter. The Sierra Club is not always ‘in the driver’s seat’ for local campaigns. Staff and volunteers take ‘back seat’ roles and make sure those in the community most impacted by the work are the spokespeople.

- **Don’t Give Up:** In the words of a member of the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition, “There’s a reason why they’re called different Band names, different Tribes.” “They’re unique. They’re unique in how they perceive stuff, they’re unique in how they open up and discuss
things.” Native Americans are not always forthcoming in explaining their viewpoint to non-Natives, but non-Natives should still ask for input from Native Americans. “Don’t give up if you want to engage us, because one of the techniques we use a lot is to see how much you will try. And there’s a reason. Because we need to see if you’re sincere. We don’t know if they’re pot hunters, we don’t know if they’re somebody trying to get rich. We’re waiting to see, are you sincere, are you honest.” Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition provides “an actual conduit for people to engage us as Tribes.” However, it is important to respect "no" as an answer if Tribes don’t want to work with Sierra Club. No response is also a response.

#2 Emphasis on Bottom-Up Organizing

- **Native Peoples’ Deep and Lasting Relationship with Ancestral Lands:** Their knowledge of the plants and animals they share the land with can be remarkable from non-Natives’ perspective. Native peoples’ relationship extends to cultural, religious, spiritual, historical, and economic uses of the land. Many cultural and archaeological sites may not be evident to non-Native visitors. Burial sites and temporary living sites are difficult to see or recognize. Tribes look to their land and natural resources to provide and support essential elements of Native life and culture—from subsistence hunting, fishing, and gathering, to sources of economic development and Tribal sacred places.

- **Traditional Ecological Knowledge:** Indigenous knowledge has developed from understanding and documenting the processes in nature. Observing that animals did not eat certain plants and assuming that this was because they were toxic, communities took extracts and tested them for a range of uses. Because plants differ across ecological zones, each region has developed products and uses based on their regional flora.

- **Working Respectfully and Effectively with Tribal Nations:** 1) Acknowledge and respect Tribal sovereignty, 2) Understand that historically the federal government did not recognize all Tribes and engaged in disbanding or removing recognition for many Tribes through the middle of the last century—removing recognition continues to this day, it’s not over, 3) Recognize that all Native American Tribes represent distinct and independent governmental entities with specific beliefs, traditions and unique connections to lands that are their ancestral homelands, 4) Communicate and consult with Native American Tribes during the initial phase of decision-making processes that may affect Tribal lands, people, or cultural resources, 5) Recognize and respect the cultural resources of Native American Tribes, whether or not the cultural resources are located on Tribal lands, 6) Acknowledge the need for confidentiality regarding places, land, people, and cultural resources with traditional Tribal cultural significance, 7) Consider the potential impact of the Sierra Club’s activities or programs on Tribal lands and cultural resources, 8) Encourage collaborative efforts between Native American Tribes and federal, state, and local government entities to resolve issues of mutual concern. [modified from California Environmental Protection Agency Policy on Consultation with California Native American Tribes]

- **Examples of Successful Partnerships:**
  - **Best Practices by Our Wild America (OWA):** The OWA team has significantly shifted their practices and cultures to better embody their shared commitment to equity, inclusion, and justice. This has led to a new way of working where OWA selects
priorities for campaigns and plans the execution of work hand in hand with Native frontline community partners. This has manifested itself in deep, working partnerships in each priority campaign location—from leaders of the Gwich’ in Nation joining in Arctic Campaign planning meetings opposing oil drilling in the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge, to Navajo leaders working to co-draft campaign plans to protect the Greater Chaco Landscape, and to Tribal partners collaborating on lawsuits to protect Bears Ears National Monument, defeat the Line 3 tar sands pipeline, and successfully block the delisting of the grizzly bear.

- **A Successful Partnership in the Pacific Northwest:** Relationships have been built over the past five years between the Lummi Nation and Sierra Club organizers in the Pacific Northwest. The Lummi Nation have shown moral leadership in standing up for the natural world: from stopping coal exports at Cherry Point, to showing solidarity with Tribes fighting environmental degradation across the Americas, to protecting the Southern Resident orca and the Salish Sea. The Lummi Nation has never shied away from bold, necessary action.

- **Wilderness and Wildlands Examples:** Activists in the Sierra Club Redwood Chapter and conservation allies worked extensively with Tribal groups in northwestern California over many years developing the Northwest California Wilderness, Recreation, and Working Forests Act (HR 6596). In Nevada, Sierra Club staff and volunteers developed relationships with the Moapa Band of Paiutes and other groups while working on the campaign to make Gold Butte a national monument, and currently are working with the Las Vegas Band of Paiutes and other Native groups in the coalition campaigns to stop military expansion into the Desert and Stillwater National Wildlife Refuges.

- **Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition:** Navajo, Hopi, Ute Mountain Utes, Uintah and Ouray Utes, and Zuni organized themselves into the Bears Ears Inter-Tribal Coalition (BEITC). They were also the most effective activists at gathering Native American support from across the country. The Sierra Club and other conservation organizations wrote letters of support for the BEITC and agreed to follow their lead in pursuing a monument. The Sierra Club continued to follow their lead when it came time to challenge the legality of the actions of President Trump to reduce the monument and gut provisions of the original proclamation. The Sierra Club formed part of a loose coalition of organizations that gathered over a million comments to the BLM supporting the Bears Ears NM as proclaimed by President Obama.

- **A Missed Opportunity and Lessons Learned:** The Sierra Club Black Hills Group squandered a great opportunity to work with the Oglala Lakota Sioux on the 2009-2011 campaign to designate wilderness adjacent to the Pine Ridge Reservation on the Buffalo Gap National Grasslands in southwestern South Dakota. The Black Hills Group recognized that the Lakota should be approached to sign on as supporters of Wilderness designation—the Tribe was recognized by the USFS as representing Native American stakeholders. However, no one in the Group knew how to make cold contacts, citing stereotypes, cultural ignorance, and fear of making mistakes and offending the Tribe. Good community organizing techniques should have been followed by attempting to make the contacts and lay out their vision and proposal. The Group would have profited by learning about the Native land ethic and Lakota culture. The Group could have held events with the Lakota and invited them to
Steering Committee meetings. Eventually, other organizers entered the campaign and successfully contacted the Tribal Parks & Recreation Authority (OSPRA), resulting in OSPRA staff attending a significant Congressional staff tour down into the Grasslands, with Sierra Club unaware. Before the bill was introduced, OSPRA managers secured the Oglala Sioux Tribal Council’s formal resolution supporting Wilderness designation. Black Hills Group members attended the Council meeting but were not part of the presentation. They gained no lasting memory of how to make contacts in the Lakota community.

#3 Let People Speak for Themselves

- **Learn to Listen and Ask Questions:** Native Americans have a strong voice. However, in small informal groups it is too easy to speak as an ‘expert’ when Native Americans can speak for themselves. Learning to be silent, ask questions, and listen with humility are important skills in many situations. Patience is also requisite. Where European Americans have dominated politics and economics to the detriment of others these skills are particularly important.

- **Amplify the Voices of Native Peoples:** Do not simply regurgitate information. It is important to make indigenous peoples’ voices heard in debates and policies on biodiversity, ecosystems, and public lands protection. Always be careful not to speak for the Tribes and share their materials accurately.

- **Respect Tribal Governance:** Recognized leaders and spokespeople should be sought out—respect the Tribes' governance structures and traditions. Like all groups of people, they have strong leaders who speak passionately and eloquently. Work with Tribal leaders to identify knowledgeable individuals in the community, such as elders, and how to consult with them (consider providing gifts when seeking guidance or knowledge from elders or community members). Coordinate with multiple Tribal contacts and involve them early on. This could include the Tribal council, Tribal environmental and natural resources staff, and Tribal Historic Preservation Office. As with any nation, differences of opinion exist within Tribal nations, and individual members should not be taken as speaking for everyone within their communities, unless they are recognized leaders.

- **Economics May Cause Tribal Dissent:** Do not expect unanimity among members of a Tribe or Native American nation. It may take them some time to come to a consensus, if they can. Different Tribal groups, businesses, leaders, and individuals may have very different perspectives and positions on any given issue—especially grazing, herding, mining, drilling, and other sources of jobs and income. Economic concerns may override all others where people have been forced into extreme poverty.

- **Give Communication Assistance on Tribal Terms:** Let Tribal allies speak for themselves and in their own voices without a Sierra Club spin. Stretch the boundaries of what the Sierra Club would typically be comfortable with and elevate Tribal voices in saying things from their perspective. Work with Tribal leaders on Sierra Club materials, elevate their voices using the platforms that are likely to get the biggest audience in mainstream media. Assist behind the scenes drafting press releases and connecting to media contacts or deferring Sierra press engagement so the Tribal allies go first and are more likely to get picked up.
Serve as a bridge to help Tribal allies’ voices be most resonant in a world in which power is still occupied by white structures, with the long term aim to shift power.

- Native Peoples’ View of Their Lands and History: The Native American perspective on the land is different from the non-Native viewpoint, and land management agencies have, until recently, failed to solicit Tribal input on how areas should be managed and what aspects are important to Tribal people. Native people want to give a Tribal perspective on their history. Tribes have a different approach to history and the past than non-Natives. Understanding Tribal ways of the past requires consideration of the whole landscape, spiritual aspects, physical aspects, aesthetics, and sounds. They approach it comprehensively and holistically. Tribal members view the land as their home, former home, burial ground, or a place to gather certain things for their prosperity and culture. For nomadic Tribes, the whole landscape matters, not just where structures and artifacts are found. Natives’ perspective on archaeology is very different from non-Natives’; they view the area in the context of landscapes and not just an archeological site. Tribe members are still buried on the land even though the Tribe was relocated. There are taboos—they don’t mess with things that are gone. Recognize that many areas are sacred to Tribes and they do not go there.

#4 Work Together in Solidarity and Mutuality

- Be Dependable: Because of the Sierra Club’s history, it has a responsibility to work towards a level of trust that permits solidarity and mutuality. It is unrealistic to think the Sierra Club can step into any situation with Native Americans and expect instantaneous trust. When Club and Tribal allies share a goal to protect wildlands, build values on how you do the work. As Sierra Club members, be honest about what you can promise, say, or do without verifying such actions through the organizational decision-making processes. Set a realistic time frame for your ability to respond or act upon requests from Tribal allies. When Tribal allies ask non-Natives to show up, show up, including putting in monetary resources if necessary. Use Club resources to identify strategic opportunities for the Tribal allies to engage.

- Work at the Speed of Trust: Strategy and relationships evolve over time; rushing can hurt the relationship. Take time to be authentic, with ongoing conversations, being mutually supportive, and doing planned work together. Powerful partnerships don’t just happen by accident. It takes years of building trust and working together to forge deep and lasting partnerships that bring big wins for the environment and communities. Be cognizant of when to ask things of allies and when the relationship is not quite there and err on the side of thinking it’s not there yet.

- Assist with General Tribal Needs: Working to preserve wildlands can mean helping on a variety of issues important to the Tribes, even if it's not a central Sierra Club priority. Tribal allies may have issues that aren’t immediately seen or aren’t being directly worked on in the campaign. As good partners building relationships and trust, add capacity and support on those issues, where possible. Examples are assisting with fundraisers and campaigning for Native candidates.

- Promote Native Culture in Non-Native Communities: One approach to develop friendship and trust, is to bring the Native community to non-Native communities initially through the
arts and history of a given Nation or Tribe. Many Tribal individuals are, in fact, artists, writers, musicians, dancers, and storytellers. By bringing individuals and groups to a non-Native community in a public format, non-Natives can build a larger understanding of Native culture and appreciation in the quest for developing friendship and trust so that everyone might be comfortable in pursuing issues of concern to all.

#5 Build Just Relationships Among Ourselves

- **Consider Others’ Perspective:** Understand Tribal concerns and recognize the Sierra Club role as an outsider. Develop a continual practice of actively allying with each other, based on real relationships and open communication. As white people ask what support looks like for people of color; as men, ask what support looks like for women; as able-bodied people, ask what support looks like for disabled people, etc.
- **Be Accountable to Partners:** Relationships should extend beyond the current agenda and campaign goals. Set agreements and practices with internal and external partners that will lead to mutual accountability. Mutually agree on time and labor contributions of partners. Provide resources without strings for people to do work that they want to do, who are accountable to the community they are in.
- **Do Not Appropriately:** Cultural appropriation is the adoption or use of elements of one culture by members of a different culture. Recognize that Native peoples’ culture is not your own. Don’t speak the Native language unless you are specifically taught and asked to do so. Don’t share Tribal stories unless invited to do so.
- **Don’t Tokenize Native People:** Tribal partners should represent their community and not be tokenized. Don’t offer a leadership position to someone until you get to know them as a person. Find out what their values, interests, and skills are, what they do for a living, and what are their other time commitments. Show up for Tribal events and learn about them, not just for recruitment, but to get to know them as individuals, learn their names, and build trust.
- **Avoid Microaggressions:** Be mindful of microaggressions or unknowingly racist comments, such as being surprised that a Tribal member is articulate, expecting them to be an expert on Native American history, or assuming that everyone on a reservation is on food stamps. If Native people are invited to a meeting, give them enough time to explain cultural understanding.
- **Develop Internal Trust First:** Sierra Club entities need to have solid relationships within their organizations and with movement partners so that everyone can trust each other. Others probably can detect a lack of internal trust if it exists.

#6 Commitment to Self-Transformation

- **Take Care of Yourself:** Self-transformation means admitting a new set of people and activities into an already committed life. The struggle is balancing current activities with new commitments of time and actions. Be open to learning and growing but keep your own values and sense of self.
● **Research Regional History:** Research the history of the area, especially as relates to the local Tribes and their land, preferably written by local Tribe members. Identify and meet with Tribal Historic Preservation Officers and discuss the history of the local community. Each Tribe is culturally diverse, with their own language, culture, geographic areas or land base, and their own name.

● **Get to Know the Tribal Culture and Issues:** Learn about the Tribal communities, the top concerns, issues, opinion leaders, and power dynamics, and avoid making assumptions. Learn how to work with communities in respectful and non-offensive ways. Recognize cultural differences; not all Tribes are politically progressive (gender roles, elders, food), understand economic realities and possible historic dependence on extraction industries, and respect Tribal sovereignty.

● **Understand Sovereignty:** Native American Tribes are recognized in federal law as possessing self-determination over their members and their territory. Sovereignty means that Tribes have the power to make and enforce laws, and to establish courts and other forums for resolution of disputes.

● **Acknowledge Past Injustices:** Just like the United States, the Sierra Club has a complex history. Understand how past Sierra Club interactions and/or mis-steps have affected Tribal nations. The ‘preserved’ land was historically Tribal homelands, and many Native people were forcibly removed from Tribal lands that became national parks. Public ownership language may be difficult for many Native people. Acknowledge that specific Native peoples were the original stewards of lands that Chapters and Groups wish to protect.

### Sources

- [Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing](#)
- [Equity Language Guide](#)
- [Pivoting Principled Practice Growing 4 Change](#)
- [Native Voices Heard on Bears Ears](#)
- [3 Things to Keep Me from Rolling My Eyes at Your White Privilege](#)
- [CALEPA Policy on Consultation with California](#)
- [Working with Tribal Nations](#)
- [Sierra Club: Growing for Change Presentation](#)
- [Sierra Club Our Wild America Campaign Land Acknowledgement](#)

### APPENDIX VIII – RESOURCES

*The Sierra Club Movement Organizing Manual* is an excellent resource to assist in preparing a wilderness campaign. It’s available at [Movement Organizing Manual](#)

This Advisory will help you adapt its guidance specifically to a wilderness campaign.
Thank you to all who contributed photography for this effort.
Cover Photo © by Brian Pasko and used with permission
Photo page 5 © by the Allegheny Defense Project and used with permission
Photo page 6 courtesy of Mike Painter
Photo page 7 courtesy of Jill Workman
Photo page 9 courtesy of Clayton Daughenbaugh
Photo page 10 © by the Allegheny Defense Project and used with permission
Photo page 12 courtesy of Jill Workman
Photo page 14 courtesy of Karl Forsgaard
Photo page 15 courtesy of the Sierra Club
Photos page 16 courtesy of Jill Workman
Photo page 17 courtesy of Clayton Daughenbaugh
Photo page 20 courtesy of Bill Hart
Photo page 23 © by the Allegheny Defense Project and used with permission