Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute

Providing scientific leadership to sustain the enduring values and benefits of wilderness
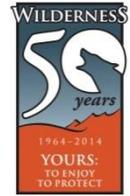
March 2016

BRIEFING: Wilderness Character Monitoring Database

What is the database?
- The Wilderness Character Monitoring Database is an online, interagency resource for wilderness character monitoring data entry, data storage, data analysis, and reporting.
- The database is intended to be used as the source of local, regional, national, and interagency trend reports for wilderness character monitoring.

Who is responsible for the database?
- The Aldo Leopold Wilderness Research Institute is currently responsible for oversight and management of the database. Individual wildernesses are responsible for entering their selected measures and keeping up with data entry.
- In the future, an interagency database steering committee will be formed that will have responsibility for database oversight and decision-making.
- The Keeping it Wild 2 (KIW2) interagency team has recommended to the Interagency Wilderness Steering Committee that each agency develop a formal mechanism for managing use of the database and that they designate one or more data stewards to facilitate use.

What is the current status of the database?
- The database is currently operational and continues to be improved. As an online resource, the database is relatively new; it was beta-tested in 2014 by the interagency wilderness fellows who provided feedback and suggestions for its improvement. The process of incorporating that feedback and updating the database began in 2015 and continues into 2016.
- The first set of priority changes—which included updating to the final KIW2 indicators and automating trend calculations—were completed in February 2016. A second round of priority changes—which will update the agency-standard measures and eliminate shared measures—is scheduled to begin soon.
- The database is now fully functional for FWS and NPS users. Once the second round of updates to FS and BLM required/standard measures is completed, the database will be functional for all users.

What are the plans for continuing to update the database?
- A final set of lower priority updates is also scheduled for implementation once the priority changes have been completed. These tertiary updates will improve ease of use and functionality.
- For all wildernesses that already have measures or data entered, the database updates will require some minor revisions (for example, wildernesses using the indicators from the 2008 KIW will need to manually convert measures to use the final indicators from KIW2).
- The interagency database steering committee will need to make additional decisions about regional and national trend reports as well as the creation of a read-only site.

What if I have more questions about the database?
- Agency administrators are the first point of contact for users to request access to the database or ask questions. Administrators are also aware of the current status of the database and will be informed of all progress as the updates continue. The current agency administrators are: Steve Boutcher (FS), Erin Drake (NPS), Peter Dratch (FWS), Nancy Roeper (FWS), Emily Simpson (BLM), and James Sippel (BLM).
- At this point, there are no formal training materials for learning how to use the database. There are plans to write a database user guide once all updates have been completed.