



Memorandum

To: Secretary of the Interior, U.S. Department of the Interior
Secretary of Agriculture, U.S. Department of Agriculture

From: Minimum Requirements Decision Guide (MRDG) Working Group for Alaska:
Judy Alderson, National Park Service
Brian Anderson, US Fish & Wildlife Service
Dick Anderson, National Park Service
Trish Clabaugh, USDA Forest Service
Tina Cunning, AK Dept. of Fish & Game
Sally Gibert, State of Alaska, ANILCA
Susan Magee, State of Alaska, ANILCA
Marti Marshall, USDA Forest Service
Bill Overbaugh, Bureau of Land Mgt.
George Weekley, AK Dept. of Fish & Game

Subject: Alaska Supplement to the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide

The Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center developed the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide as a tool for use by wilderness managers throughout the United States. This MRDG Working Group for Alaska is pleased to provide the Alaska Supplement to the Minimum Requirements Decision Guide, which is designed to assist managers in adapting the MRDG for use in Alaska's wilderness areas established by the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA). This document will be posted on the wilderness.net website along with the other related MRDG documents where it will be a key reference for all managers of designated wilderness in Alaska. It will also be valuable to other entities authorized to conduct administrative activities in wilderness.

This Supplement is the result of a collaborative effort by federal and state government representatives to address the need for additional guidance in applying the MRDG, and the unique provisions of ANILCA, to administrative activities in Alaska wilderness areas.

History and Background:

- At the direction of the four federal agencies responsible for wilderness management, the Carhart Center developed the MRDG as a tool for use by wilderness managers throughout the United States. The legislative basis for the minimum requirements decision process is contained in Section 4(c) of the Wilderness Act. Both the Departments of Agriculture and Interior use a formal process to determine and document the minimum requirements for agency actions within wilderness. This process is generally tied to, and incorporated within, National Environmental Policy Act reviews for compliance with a variety of laws, including the Wilderness Act.

- In formal comments to the Carhart Center regarding an earlier version of the MRDG, the State of Alaska expressed concern that there was insufficient attention to the unique provisions of ANILCA applicable to wilderness management in Alaska. After additional correspondence from Governor Frank Murkowski, the Secretaries of Interior and Agriculture directed their respective agency representatives in Alaska to work with the State to address these concerns. An interagency MRDG Working Group was established in the fall of 2004.
- The MRDG Working Group met regularly to produce the "Alaska Supplement" to the MRDG for use in Alaska. It is designed to help managers adapt the MRDG for use in Alaska's wilderness units established by ANILCA. The following are important clarifications about the "Alaska Supplement:"
 1. Addresses administrative and management actions only.
 2. Relies on existing laws and policies.
 3. Addresses public use provisions of ANILCA to the extent they may influence the minimum requirements analysis for administrative activities in wilderness.
 4. Does not create new policy.
 5. Does not usurp existing agency discretion; individual agency policies prevail.
- The "Alaska Supplement" underwent internal agency, general council and solicitor reviews and was modified in response to those comments. Existing agency policy in Alaska requires a documented process for determining the minimum requirement for administrative activities in wilderness. The MRDG, along with the "Alaska Supplement," is the primary tool available for accomplishing this for wilderness areas in Alaska.

Concurrence:

<p><i>Marcia Blaszyk</i> 6/30/06 <u>Regional Director, National Park Service</u></p>	<p><i>Randy Johnson</i> 7/5/06 <u>Regional Director, US Fish & Wildlife Service</u></p>
<p><i>Dennis E. Becker</i> 7/12/06 <u>Regional Forester, USDA Forest Service</u></p>	<p><i>Julia Dougan</i> 7/6/06 <u>State Director, Bureau of Land Management</u></p>

Attachment: Alaska Supplement to the MRDG

cc (with attachment):

Frank Murkowski, Governor, State of Alaska
 John Katz, Office of the Governor, Director of State/Federal Relations
 Drue Pearce, Senior Advisor to the Secretary of the Interior for Alaska Affairs
 Hans Neidig, Special Assistant for Alaska to the Secretary of the Interior
 Connie Myers, Director, Arthur Carhart National Wilderness Training Center