

# HOW DO YOUR PERSONAL WILDERNESS VALUES RATE?

BY KENDALL CLARK AND SUSAN KOZACEK

**A** PERSON'S PERSONAL PHILOSOPHY ABOUT WILDERNESS and its management can be an important factor in their perception of what are appropriate policies and actions for wilderness stewardship. We've found that helping wilderness managers identify their personal orientation and philosophy toward wilderness is helpful in wilderness stewardship training. Just recognizing that one's colleagues may have a slightly different philosophy contributes to understanding that wilderness stewardship is not a cut and dried business; rather, there is a lot of room for interpretation in what the right decision to make is. So we constructed a Personal Wilderness Values Test and have used it now in several interagency wilderness stewardship training sessions.

## Put Your Values to the Test!

How do your wilderness values rate? Take the test and see. It's easy—and you may be interested in seeing where you fit compared to some others who have taken the test. Remember, answer these questions based on your personal values—not what you think The Wilderness Act or agency policy requires.

Stop here and answer the questions on page 13. When you have finished the test, count your number of "yes" answers and then continue reading below. There you will find the rest of the story and see how your score compares. We suggest you take the test before seeing how your score compared with others.

## Biocentric and Anthropocentric Philosophies

Two contrasting orientations are often used to characterize philosophies of wilderness stewardship: biocentric and anthropocentric. A biocentric philosophy "emphasizes the maintenance of natural systems at the expense of recreational and other human uses, if necessary, because wilderness values depend on naturalness and solitude. The goal of this philosophy is to permit natural ecological processes to operate as freely as possible . ." (Hendee et al. 1990, p. 531). An anthropocentric philosophy "sees wilderness primarily from a human-oriented perspective. The naturalness of wilderness is less important than facilitating human use and convenience. Programs that would alter the physical and bio-

logical environment to produce desired settings are encouraged." (Hendee et al. 1990, p. 531).

## The Wilderness Values Test

To devise our wilderness values test we developed 35 questions that could be answered "yes" or "no," such as question 9: "Do you feel we should be suppressing any fires in wilderness?" A "yes" answer would place a person on the anthropocentric end of the wilderness values scale, and a "no" answer would reflect a biocentric philosophy. The test is scored by tabulating the number of "yes" answers recorded after all 35 questions. Of course the questions present choices that are oversimplified compared to the real world, so you have to respond in a generalized way. And you must keep in mind that it is your "personal" wilderness values that are being measured—not The Wilderness Act or an interpretation of policy.

Our experience is that most of the managers we've tested respond with between 15 and 25 "yes" answers—and we would characterize them as being ecocentric, "in the middle" of the anthropocentric-biocentric continuum. We always find a few who respond with fewer than 15 "yes" answers, which we believe puts them on the biocentric side of the continuum. And there are always some who have more than 25 "yes" answers, reflecting an anthropocentric view.

We haven't used the test on populations of wilderness users, but at the interagency wilderness stewardship training session at Eagle Lake, California, in September 1996, the lowest score by several points was nine "yes" answers by a wilderness vision quest guide who was at the session to participate in a user panel. We think it will be interesting and valuable to try the test on wilderness user populations in the future. *IJW*

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## REFERENCES

Hendee, John C., George H. Stankey, and Robert C. Lucas. 1990 *Wilderness Management*. North American Press. Golden, Colo.

### Wilderness Values Questions

1. Do you feel hunting is an appropriate activity in wilderness?
2. Do you feel it is OK to stock native fish in lakes that historically have not had fish?
3. In an area that has established wildlife watering devices (e.g., guzzlers), do you feel it is appropriate to maintain these and leave them in wilderness?
4. Do you feel it is appropriate to control predators in wilderness that are killing a substantial number of livestock?
5. Are low-level aerial-game surveys in wilderness acceptable to you?
6. Do you feel we should be protecting known threatened and endangered species habitat from Prescribed Natural Fires (PNF)?
7. Is it acceptable to you to have Managed Ignited Fires (MIF) in a wilderness area?
8. Do you feel it is appropriate to have technologically advanced data collecting stations in wilderness to monitor temperature, moisture content, wind, and other factors that would allow better information for PNF and MIF?
9. Do you feel we should be suppressing any fires in wilderness?
10. In your opinion, is it OK to maintain historic cabins in wilderness?
11. Do you feel that there is a point when air quality is more important than allowing extended periods of PNF?
12. Is it OK to interpret in a publicly available book historic structures and cultural resources that are in wilderness?
13. Do you feel that cattle or sheep grazing is an appropriate use for wilderness?
14. Do you feel grazing permittees should be allowed to use motorized equipment for maintaining water developments in wilderness where this has been a historical method of maintenance (for example, using a dozer to clean out a dirt stock tank in wilderness)?
15. Do you feel a hazard tree along a well-used trail should be cut to protect public safety?
16. Do you feel that cutting logs in trails to facilitate passage by pack strings is appropriate in wilderness?
17. Do you feel we should be placing signs by natural caves in wilderness that pose safety hazards?
18. Do you feel it is appropriate for a visitor center to be giving users more information about hazards in wilderness so we can lessen the potential of search-and-rescue operations?
19. Do you feel that signs should be placed at historic structures to warn people of the potential for hantavirus?
20. Do you feel we should rescue a person with a broken leg (but not in a life-threatening situation) in wilderness with a helicopter?
21. Do you feel it is OK to use llamas or pack goats in wilderness?
22. Do you feel that it is appropriate to leave some established rock-bolt routes for climbers in wilderness areas?
23. Does the value of having the number of users controlled by a permit system outweigh the value of unregulated use and freedom in wilderness (i.e., do you believe permit systems should be used in wilderness?)?
24. Do you feel it is OK to allow people to collect crystals in wilderness?
25. Do you feel it is OK to allow people to collect antlers in wilderness?
26. Do you feel that recreation opportunities are the dominant value of wilderness?
27. Do you feel it is OK to have trail signs in wilderness?
28. Do you feel it is OK to put mileage on signs in the wilderness?
29. If a free one were available to you, would you take a cellular phone into wilderness with the intention that it would only be used to help in an emergency situation?
30. Do you feel OK about burying decomposable garbage in wilderness?
31. If you had a well-behaved dog, would you feel OK about taking it with you to the wilderness?
32. Do you think it is appropriate for outfitters to have business operations dependent on wilderness?
33. Do you feel it is OK to film in wilderness a movie about wilderness values?
34. Do you feel it is appropriate to allow a one- or two-week window for chain-saw use to open trails after an intense blowdown event?
35. Do you feel it is OK to apply a mandatory party size or limited permits to promote solitude in wilderness?