

## WILDERNESS FELLOWS & WILDERNESS CHARACTER MONITORING

Jesse Engebretson  
 CSS 496  
 February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2013

## WILDERNESS FELLOWS

✦ The Wilderness Fellows Program was established to advance wilderness stewardship in our federally protected areas while providing students and recent graduates an opportunity to gain valuable career experience.



Wilderness Fellows across the US in 2012



✦ Wilderness Fellows, with help from Interagency Wilderness Character Monitoring Team and local staff, develop baselines for measuring wilderness character to be used to measure trends at local and national levels.

✦ [Click here to apply for 2013!](#)

(http://www.blm.gov/info/wf/wfapply.html?file=2013-2014WFM&id=main&url=/info/wf/wfapply.html)

## THE PARKS...



SAGUARO NATIONAL PARK

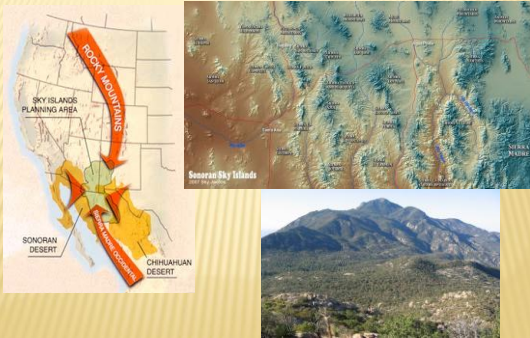
CHIRICAHUA NATIONAL MONUMENT



## LOCATIONS OF THE PARKS



## SKY ISLAND ECOSYSTEMS



## WILDERNESS CHARACTER NARRATIVE

- ✦ What is it?
  - + Qualitative description of unique features of the wilderness
  - + Discussion of the complex relationship between wilderness values and the reality of wilderness management
  - + Unique to National Park Service (as of 2012)

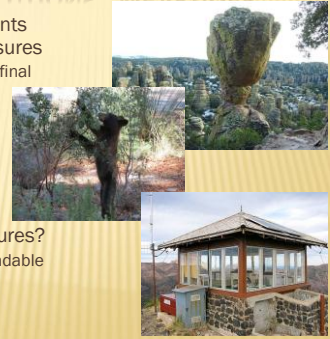


### PROCESS OF CONDUCTING AN ASSESSMENT

- ✦ With assistance from the wilderness fellow, National Park Service (NPS) staff determines indicative **measures** for the five qualities of wilderness character and help guide the narrative
  - + Focus groups with NPS staff
  - + Interviews/discussions with specialists at the park
    - ✦ Fire ecologist, biologist, maintenance staff, ecologist, etc.
- ✦ 3-4 months in duration
  - + Continuous and iterative process
  - + Weekly conference calls with interagency teams

### ISSUES AND SOLUTIONS - MEASURES

- ✦ Internal disagreements over indicative measures
  - + Superintendent has final say
- ✦ Inaccurate data for identified measures
  - + Data confidence?
- ✦ Usefulness of measures?
  - + Assessment is amendable and evolving



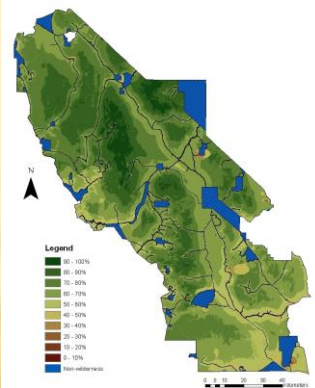
### QUESTIONS?



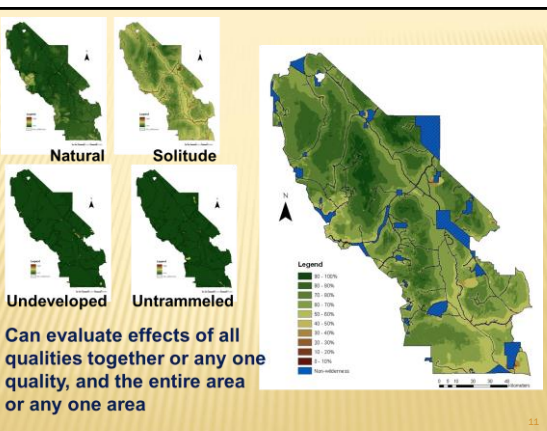
### MAPPING WILDERNESS CHARACTER

Wilderness character map showing the current condition of wilderness character for the Death Valley Wilderness

Map used to evaluate potential outcomes from different planning alternatives and establish a baseline to assess trends



Composed of equally weighted qualities, built from 41 weighted input variables



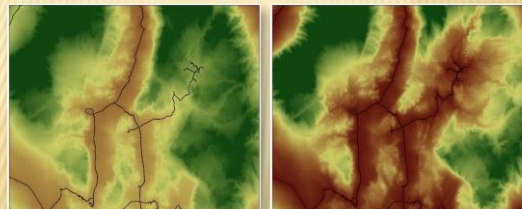
Can evaluate effects of all qualities together or any one quality, and the entire area or any one area

### USING WILDERNESS CHARACTER IN WILDERNESS PLANNING

Remoteness in the Racetrack area, Death Valley Wilderness

Existing Road

Improved Road



The darker the green the better the remoteness  
The darker the brown the bigger the adverse impact on remoteness