

Backcountry Assessment Manuals

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Backcountry Recreation Site Assessment Manual

Date: July 1998

Call Number: IORT-PR-1998-1

Researcher: Peter Williams

Camping is a common recreational activity in backcountry areas. Camping can change soil and vegetation. It can also affect other visitors, local residents, and managers. For these reasons and others, backcountry campsites are some of the more important locations for public land managers to address.

This manual is a guide to surveying or assessing backcountry campsites and similar areas. 'Backcountry' refers to largely undeveloped or predominately natural wildlands. The following methods may also apply during assessments of areas that are not as remote as a backcountry location, such as full-scale campgrounds or multiple site picnic areas.

[Read the full assessment manual](#)

Backcountry Trail Assessment Manual

Date: July 1998

Call Number: IORT-PR-1998-2

Researcher: Peter Williams

This manual provides a guide for assessing backcountry trail conditions and may also apply to less remote trails. It follows an indicator-based assessment model, meaning that the survey form records trail conditions as they change according to a predetermined, yet flexible set of indicators describing trail elements or characteristics.

The current manual follows a format that begins with some general principles of trail work, design, and assessment. The manual then provides a description of indicators and a survey form for recording those indicators. Currently, the survey form is arranged to capture information in five general categories:

1. general trail characteristics and location features
2. resource conditions
3. design characteristics
4. interpretive features
5. hazards

Indicators within these five categories can capture trail characteristics of interest for trail maintenance, interpretation, and natural resource management programs.

[Access the complete manual](#)