Addressing Visitor Use Management &

Comprehensive River Management Planning Processes

A Resource Crosswalk between the Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC) and Interagency Wild and Scenic River Coordinating Council (IWSRCC) guidelines

Wild and Scenic River (WSR) planning specialists and recreation management planning specialists realize the need to respond to field requests for public use management planning on WSRs. Members of the IWSRCC and the IVUMC have identified a way to efficiently support this common interest and shared need through a Visitor Use Management (VUM) and Comprehensive River Management Planning (CRMP) Resources Crosswalk. This Crosswalk tool is designed to help field practitioners —whether they possess mostly WSR technical expertise, or recreation planning expertise— identify the necessary fundamental elements present with effective management of rivers with VUM considerations to protect WSR resources, whether they be called River Values or Desired Conditions. In visitor use management planning, not occurring on WSR corridors, identifying a visitor capacity may not always be necessary. But in WSR management, identifying a user capacity is required. This Resource Crosswalk distills resources for achieving essential components of a capacity identification and relationships to other VUM aspects of river management planning by:

- providing background about intent of the work of two interagency councils to address capacities;
- clarifying the lexicon of key definitions surrounding capacities;
- synthesizing existing information developed through interagency cooperation and vetted by DOI and DOA solicitors; and
- demonstrating complimentary resources for phases of planning that represent recommendations and best practices for all federal land and water managing agencies, regardless of the setting or designation, or need for a capacity.

This crosswalks assumes practitioners will use the sliding scale concept in conjunction with their public use management planning processes on WSRs. The sliding scale concept is used in VUM to provide guidance for determining the level of analysis required to adequately address opportunities and issues on federally managed lands and waters. A misperception of previously standardized VUM processes was that they were complex in application and costly in time and money. Therefore, this led some to elect not to use standardized VUM methods or use a less detailed process for simpler visitor use management issues. The VUM sliding scale concept, developed by the IVUMC and applied in conjunction with its 14-step framework, asserts that regardless of the significance of the situation, all framework steps still apply. That is, a sound VUM process does not skip over some steps with project complexity; rather, the investment of time and resources varies along each step of a sound VUM process.

This sliding scale concept is consistent with direction given in the Council on Environmental Quality's interpretation of NEPA, applicable to all WSR-managing agencies. Applying this approach allows practitioners to match the investment made in analysis with the level of uncertainty and risk associated with the issues being addressed. For more information on the sliding scale see Chapter 2 of the IIVUMC's VUM Framework.

Background

So where did this resource cross-walk document come from?

- The resources are derived from two federal interagency councils and their products: the IVUMC's Visitor Use Framework (and its accompanying Visitor Capacity Guidebook), and the IWSRCC's publication Steps to Address User Capacities for WSRs. An important point to note is that though there are minor, yet significant differences between the definitions and scopes of visitor and user capacities; however, how

they are determined and what purposes they serve for protecting resources are exactly the same. Both the Framework and the User Capacities publication mentioned above guide similar outcomes, are compatible methods for establishing user capacities, and are iterative and flexible to meet specific WSR situations. The following information summarizes goals, identifies sources for more info, and specifies the driving legal bases for each council:

- The Interagency Wild and Scenic Rivers Coordinating Council (IWSRCC)
    - Goal: To improve interagency coordination in administering the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act, thereby improving service to the American public and enhancing protection of important river resources
    - Website: https://www.rivers.gov/council.php#:~:text=The%20overriding%20goal%20of%20the,protection%20of%20important%20river%20resources.
    - All WSR managing agencies must address user capacities, as per:
        - Statutory Requirements
        - Interagency Guidelines
        - Court Decisions
- The Interagency Visitor Use Management Council (IVUMC)
    - Mission: Provide guidance on long-term visitor use management policies and give direction on the most pressing needs by building technical competencies and improving interagency coordination.
    - Website: http://visitorusemanagement.nps.gov/
    - Visitor Capacity Legal Requirements:
        - 1978 National Parks and Recreation Act
        - 1968 Wild and Scenic Rivers Act
        - 1968 National Trails Systems Act

Key Definitions

IVUMC Framework	**IWSRCC Steps**
Use	
Visitor use - refers to human presence in an area for recreational purposes, including education, interpretation, inspiration, and physical and mental health.	**Public use** - the visitor use and WSR specific administrative use.
	Other use - use within a WSR corridor other than public use (mining, forestry, grazing, subsistence hunting and fishing
Capacity	
Visitor capacity - Component of VUM; the maximum amounts and types of visitor use an area can accommodate while achieving and maintaining the desired resource conditions and visitor experiences consistent with the purposes for which the area was established.	**User capacities** - The maximum amounts and kinds of public use that a WSR collectively or by analysis area can accommodate without degrading river values.

Crosswalk of the IVUMC Framework and the IWSRCC Steps

The Comprehensive River Management Plan's (CRMP) purpose is to protect and enhance "river values" while providing for public use and enjoyment of the designated wild and scenic river (WSR). Establishing user capacities is a CRMP decision. River managers develop management actions to ensure that use levels stay within the established capacities, using specific approaches that allow for flexible implementation.

The VUM Framework (IVUMC 2016) provides similar guidance and resources to the CRMP process, especially with regards to the steps to address User Capacities for WSRs. Therefore, this crosswalk provides a high level overview of what resources are available for each step of the process and where these two processes align.

	Interagency Visitor Use Management Council: VUM Framework	**CRMP Components and IWSRCC Steps to Address User Capacities for WSRs**	**Related Resources**
WHY	Step 1. Clarify the project purpose and need. (pages 23-24)	CRMP Component: "Set the Stage"	• "Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan" (IWSRCC) (page 3)
	Step 2. Review the area's purpose(s) and applicable legislation, agency policies, and other management direction. (pages 24-25)	CRMP Component: "Set the Stage"	• "Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan" (IWSRCC) (page 3)
	Step 3. Assess and summarize existing information and current conditions. (pages 25-26)	CRMP Component: "Set the Stage" CRMP Component: "Describe Baseline Conditions" CRMP Component: Describe resource conditions, including detailed description of river values (free-flow, water quality and ORVs). User Capacities Step 1. Describe the baseline and current conditions and uses for the WSR (pages 3-4)	• "Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan" (IWSRCC) (pages 3-4)
	Step 4. Develop a project action plan. (pages 27-28)	CRMP Component: "Set the Stage"	• "Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan" (IWSRCC) (pages 3-4)

	Interagency Visitor Use Management Council: VUM Framework	CRMP Components and IWSRCC Steps to Address User Capacities for WSRs	Related Resources
WHAT	Step 5. Define desired conditions for the project area. (pages 29-34)	CRMP Component: Develop goals and desired conditions to protect river's free-flowing condition, water quality and ORVs. User Capacities Step 2. Identify desired conditions for river values and classifications (pages 5-7)	• IVUMC Desired Conditions Guidebook [in development] • "Steps to Develop a Comprehensive River Management Plan" (IWSRCC) (pages 1-2, and 7) • "The WSR Study Process" (IWSRCC) • Instream Flow Protection Strategies for Wild and Scenic Rivers" (IWSRCC) • WSR Course of Study – Modue 3:Eligibility • WSR Course of Study - Module 6: Developing the Comprehensive River Management Plan • WSR Course of Study -Module 8: Addressing User Capacity
	Step 6. Define appropriate visitor activities, facilities, and services. (pages 34-28)	User Capacities Step 3. Identify the kinds of use that the WSR corridor can accommodate. (page 8) CRMP Component: Describe existing infrastructure (pg 5) and provide a framework for future development and activities (pg 7)	• WSR Course of Study – Module 6: Developing the Comprehensive River Management Plan • WSR Course of Study – Module 8: Addressing User Capacity
	Step 7. Select indicators and establish thresholds. (pages 38-42)	CRMP Component: Develop a monitoring strategy, specifically related to protecting river's free-flowing condition, water quality and ORVs. User Capacities Steps: • Step 4. Identify measurable indicators for the desired conditions (pages 8-10) • Step 5. Establish thresholds for each indicator (page 10) • Step 6. Identify triggers that elicit management response (pages 12-14)	• IVUMC Monitoring Guidebook • WSR Course of Study – Module 8: Addressing User Capacity • WSR Course of Study – Module 10: Monitoring

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HOW	Step 8. Compare and document the differences between existing and desired conditions, and, for visitor use-related impacts, clarify the specific links to visitor use characteristics. (pages 44-46)	N/A	N/A
	Step 9. Identify visitor use management strategies and actions to achieve desired conditions. (pages 47-50)	CRMP Component: Develop direction for visitor use and capacity management. User Capacities Step 7. Identify management actions to take when triggers are reached (pages 12-14)	• WSR Course of Study – Module 6: Developing the Comprehensive River Management Plan • WSR Course of Study – Module 8; Addressing User Capacity
	Step 10. Where necessary, identify visitor capacities and additional strategies to manage use levels within capacities. (pages 50-55)	CRMP Component: Develop direction for visitor use and capacity management. User Capacities Step 8. Determine the WSR corridor's user capacity (pages 14-16)	• IVUMC Visitor Capacity Guidebook • WSR Course of Study – Module 8: Addressing User Capacity
	Step 11. Develop a monitoring strategy. (pages 55-57)	Step 9. Establish a monitoring and adaptive management approach (page 17)	• WSR Course of Study – Module 10: Monitoring
DO	Step 12. Implement management actions. (pages 58-61) Step 13. Conduct and document ongoing monitoring, and evaluate the effectiveness of management actions in achieving desired conditions. (pages 58-61) Step 14. Adjust management actions if needed to achieve desired conditions, and document rationale. (pages 58-61)	Step 9. Establish a monitoring and adaptive management approach (page 17)	• WSR Course of Study – Module 10: Monitoring