

ZONING THE FOREST FOR ADAPTATION: A “PORTFOLIO APPROACH” (1G)

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For the past few years, The Wilderness Society has been exploring the idea of spreading the risk of climate change by allocating the landscape to a “portfolio” of management approaches that includes accepting change, resisting change, and guiding change. We recommend assigning the landscape to three zones dedicated to observation, restoration, and innovation corresponding to the three strategies. These zones are intended as a loose overlay of the land that helps guide how individual land unit objectives shall be met. For example, old-growth forest conservation may be accomplished merely by leaving the forest to develop on its own in the observation zone, by actively managing to sustain historical pattern and process in the restoration zone, and, within the innovation zone, anticipating climate change by managing landscapes to yield sustainable, if novel, ecosystems in the future. The Wilderness Society would like to explore with land managers and conservationists the potential for this approach to aid climate change adaptation in the Southern Sierra Nevada region. We have prepared a white paper that illustrates the concept, copies of which we will have with us, and we will present posters of a few key graphics to aid in the conversation. We also plan to develop a prototype GIS decision support system to aid in the question of where these zones should be located. We believe the approach has tremendous potential, but we would like it to be informed by perspectives beyond our own.

Key words: climate change adaptation, conservation planning, restoration, wilderness, GIS