

## **Vermont Wilderness Observation Assignment**

You are to visit one of the legally designated Wilderness areas in Vermont. The duration of your visit is up to you. The purpose of your visit is to conduct systematic observation, not to recreate. In your observation, you are to be looking for the following:

### ***Wilderness Area Conditions.***

*Access:* Describe the access to the wilderness. How did you get there? Is there an established trailhead? How far did you have to walk before entering the legal Wilderness area?

*Signage:* Describe the boundary of the Wilderness area. Is it clearly identified? Is there any perceptible change in landscape or vegetation when entering the Wilderness area? Was there a self-registration station when entering the Wilderness?

*Trail conditions:* Describe the trail conditions at various intervals. Is the trail marked? How? Is the trail "hardened" at all? If so, how? Are there signs of trail erosion? Are there aids to foot travel such as steps, rails, waterbars, boardwalks, or constructed bridges?

*Flora and fauna:* Describe the general type of vegetation you encounter along with any fauna you observe.

*Visitor encounters:* Describe the number and type of encounters you have with other visitors to the Wilderness area.

*Visitor impacts:* Describe visitor impacts that you encounter (e.g., campsites, damaged trees, graffiti, litter, rock cairns) in the Wilderness area.

*Note:* You may want to create some observation data forms *\*before\** conducting your observations. This will assist you in being *\*systematic\** in your observations.

***Wilderness Area Background.*** In addition to your observations inside the Wilderness area, you should provide the following:

1. Citation of the actual public law where your Wilderness area was legally created.
2. Description of all management plans and prescriptions for the wilderness area in the applicable general land management plan, (e.g., Green Mountain Land and Resource Management Plan or more specific plan if available (e.g., Backcountry Recreation Plan).