

Monitoring for Outstanding Opportunities for Solitude Bridger, Gros Ventre, & Teton Wilderness Areas

Data Collection Process

Frequently Asked Questions and Definitions:

What is an “encounter”?

A “travel encounter” occurs when an observer sees or hears at least one other person, regardless of the duration or proximity of the contact. Encounters are recorded at two resolutions, as individual people and groups seen or heard while **the observer is within a monitoring area**. Travel encounters can include:

- Someone seen across a lake
- People camped at a site that you pass while hiking
- People who hike past you on the trail

What is a “monitoring session”?

A monitoring session includes travel encounter data collection on any given day, as long **the observer is within the boundary of the monitoring area**. A monitoring session can be either one continuous block of time, or broken up into multiple blocks throughout a given day, as long as the total time requirements are met. You must spend a **minimum of 4 hours** in the monitoring area to qualify as a “session”.

What if I see the same group of people twice?

If more than 15 minutes have passed since the most recent interaction, you should record the group as a new encounter.

What if I meet a group of people headed into the monitoring zone that I just left? Can I still count them?

No, for data consistency only people encountered or heard while **the observer is within the boundary** should be marked as an encounter for that monitoring session.

What if while monitoring, I come across an unoccupied campsite?

In this circumstance, you should count the campsite as a group and assume one person per observed tent at the site.

Solitude Monitoring Forms – Procedures for Data Collection

1. Monitoring requires a Solitude Monitoring Form (digital or paper). At the beginning of each monitoring session, record initial information including the total number of people in your group, monitoring area/Wilderness, and the date.
2. Once at the boundary of the monitoring area, record the start time for the session.
3. Begin tallying travel encounters on the back of this form as the number of people per group. You may also tally the number of dogs per group. Count all people seen or heard, no matter how close or far you are from them *as long as you are within the monitoring area*. If you hike past a group camped, include the number of people you see as traveling encounters. If you can't get an exact count of the number of people (for example, if they are off in the distance), make your best estimate. If you encounter stock users, tally the number of riders within the group. You may record the number of riders per stock on the monitoring form using a backslash. For example, 2 riders each leading a pack horse would be recorded as 2/4, meaning 2 riders per 4 horses in the group.
4. At the end of the monitoring session, record stop time and total hours monitored, write notes in the comments section, and tally the total number of hikers & backpackers, dogs, and stock users in the far-right column. Tally the total number of groups encountered in the bottom row.

Please note that none of the organizations gathering this data are liable for risks assumed while taking part in this citizen science project. We expect those that take part are familiar with how to safely travel in bear country and strenuous mountain terrain. All citizen science volunteers are going on these outings on their own accord.

SOLITUDE MONITORING FORM

Bridger-Teton National Forest

Travel Encounters

Lead Monitor Name:		Total # in Party:		Total Hours Monitored:												
Monitoring Area Name																
Wilderness (circle one)	Gros Ventre	Teton			Bridger											
Location of Monitoring Description	Start Location: Stop Location:		Type of outing (circle): Out-and-back Loop Through-hike													
Date (mm.dd.yyyy)																
Day of Week (circle one)	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday									
Please Circle	Weekday		Weekend			Holiday										
Time (AM or PM)	Start Time:		Stop Time:		(Monitoring session must be at least 4 hours)											
Weather (circle best choice)	Sky: Sunny Partly Cloudy Cloudy Overcast		Temp (F): 80+ 80-60 60-		Moisture: None Light Rain Persistent Rain Snow/Sleet											
	Presence of Wildfire Smoke: YES NO		Other:													
Directions: Tally number of encounters within the monitoring area by group from categories below. Count all people seen or heard, no matter how close or far you are from them. Please add total of tallies and record in last column.																
	Grp 1	Grp 2	Grp 3	Grp 4	Grp 5	Grp 6	Grp 7	Grp 8	Grp 9	Grp 10	Grp 11	Grp 12	Grp 13	Grp 14	Grp 15	Total # People/Dogs
Day Hikers & Backpackers <small>(record # of people per group)</small>																
Dogs <small>(record # of dogs per group)</small>																
Stock Users: Riders/Stock <small>(record # of riders per group)</small>																
Total # Hike and Stock Groups <small>Total groups encountered during session</small>																

Comments: