

Natural Areas Program Volunteer Steward Photo Monitoring

Taking pictures and establishing photo monitoring points –

The intent of photo monitoring points is to maintain a visual record of an area or areas within the site that can serve to record change over time. The exact location of the points are at the stewards discretion – you know your site - but here are some instructions for establishing photo monitoring points in general –

1) How should I pick the photo monitoring point?

- Choose an area with the most potential for environmental change, either natural or man-made. For example: streams, areas near campsites, areas with weeds nearby, etc.
- Pick a permanent natural feature (such as a mature tree or unusual rock formation) for use as a landmark to identify the location.
- Don't drive a stake or other marker into the ground. The landmark should be distinctive enough for others (such as Natural Areas staff) to locate it.

NAMING PHOTO MONITORING POINTS: Please name each photo monitoring point with the 4-letter code of your Natural Area, and then a sequence beginning with 001, and then the letter P. For example, the first photo monitoring point at Aiken Canyon is AICA001P.

2) How many photo monitoring points are necessary?

- The number of points will depend on:
 - The size of the site.
 - The number of potentially impacted or sensitive features and areas.
- Multiple points will probably be necessary, but please establish no more than 10 per site (more than that may become difficult for us to keep up with)

PHOTO MONITORING POINT DESCRIPTION: Please record detailed descriptions to re-locate the photo monitoring points. Include landmarks and distances as needed.

3) How should I take the photos?

- We welcome photos in a digital format, but we can also accommodate color slides (if necessary, prints are OK).
- From the photo-monitoring point, photos should preferably be taken in the four cardinal directions– North, East, South and West. Verify each direction with a compass bearing before photographing.

- Sometimes, the four cardinal directions do not show the best features; if necessary, take four photos in the best four directions, but please record the compass bearing of each photo.
- Many sites are located in canyons, riparian areas or areas where taking pictures in four directions may not be possible. If your site is a canyon or riparian area, one photo in each direction up and down will be sufficient.
- **IMPORTANT:** It is essential to record the following information for each photo taken:
 - The photo number on the camera (so you can locate it later)
 - Name of photo monitoring points (e.g. AICA001P)
 - Direction of Photo (usually N, E, S, W; please record compass bearing if different from four cardinal directions)

NAMING PHOTOS: Please use the name of the photo point and, for each of four photos taken from that point, put a N, E, S or W on the end of the photo point name (e.g. AICA001PN, AICA001PE, etc.). However, if you don't take the photos in the four cardinal directions, write an A, B, C or D on the end (e.g. AICA001PA); and be sure to send us information indicating what compass bearing the letter is associated with! Finally, add an underscore (_) and the year (e.g. AICA001PN_2006).

4) What should I send CNAP Staff?

- Please take GPS coordinates of the photo monitoring point location(s), or mark it on a map, and send the location(s) with your Field Form each year.
- Send us the directions to each photo monitoring point. Please be as detailed as possible.
- Please send all photos with all necessary information (name of photo point, direction or compass bearing of photo)
 - If you are sending digital photos, please name the photo file accordingly, **AND PLEASE ADD THE YEAR ON THE END OF THE FILE NAME** (e.g. AICA001N_2006)
 - If you are sending slides, please write the appropriate name of the photo on the slide, **AND INCLUDE THE DATE ON THE SLIDE.**

A few tips:

*** Consistency is more important than quantity. Once you've established photo monitoring points, and the directions the pictures will be taken, it's important to adhere to those locations and aspects year after year.

*** We ask that you ***at least*** take photos from these locations every year.

*** We also encourage you to take as many additional pictures throughout the site as you feel necessary. Details are welcome, especially animal sign and flowering plants.